Buying a car

Activity: used car checklist

Thinking of buying a second hand/used car? There are a few quick checks you can do yourself to assess the general condition of the car, before having a formal vehicle inspection.

Knowing what to look for in a used car

There are a few quick checks you can do yourself to assess the general condition of the car (before you have a formal vehicle inspection).

Engine & Vin Numbers
Check that there is a compliance plate. This shows the car was either built in Australia or has been imported.

Steering
Safe and positive

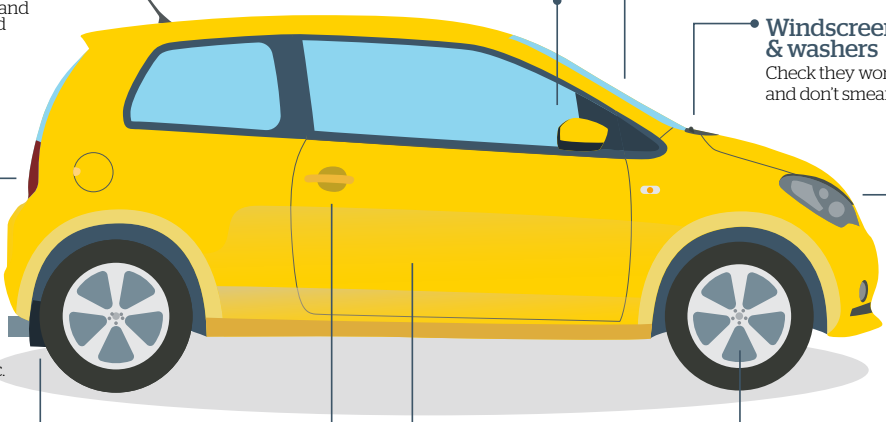
Horn
That is effective. Sirens and whistles are not allowed

Mirrors
You are legally required to ensure your vehicle complies with the relevant safety requirements. This includes ensuring the rear view mirrors are functioning. It's also illegal to have anything hanging from them.

Windscreen
Clear and clean and made of safety glass, with no visual defects and no more than the top 10% tinted.

Windscreen wipers & washers
Check they work properly and don't smear.

Lights
Correctly working rear lights and reflectors. Make sure your rear number plate is illuminated.



Headlights
That are properly adjusted and working correctly.

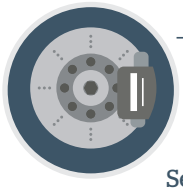
Engine
Check for fumes and exhaust smoke. If there is exhaust smoke check with a mechanic.

Mudguards
In good condition.

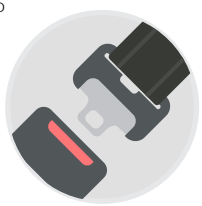
Door Latches
That work from the inside and outside

Paint Condition
Crash Damage: Look along the car's contours for ripples in the paintwork.
Rust: Look for obvious signs of rust.

Safety tyres
With a minimum tread of 1.5mm. However, we recommend replacing the tyres, before they get this worn.



Good brakes
That will allow you to stop promptly and hold securely.



Seatbelts
Check for frayed or damaged seatbelts and make sure the latch is in working order.

Alarms & Immobilisers
If you have a security alarm, it must not be able to activate when the car is moving. Make sure the car comes with an immobiliser.

RAC
For the better

Task: inspect the vehicle

Before you buy a second-hand car, or before your new car warranty runs out, it pays to have a professional conduct an expert vehicle inspection. RAC provides further details about vehicle inspections at rac.com.au/car-motoring/car-servicing-and-repair/vehicle-inspections

A. Using the information provided on this website, complete the following table.

Checks	What is the inspector checking?
Under Body	
Engine	
Lighting	
Tyres	
Battery and charging system	
Brakes	

B. What is a car history report and what should it include?

Extension

Create your own used car check list to use when buying your own vehicle! This checklist should include information to help you ensure you are buying the best and safest vehicle.

Contact us at
schooleducation@rac.com.au

RAC's School Education is committed to delivering road safety education in Western Australia. We have designed programs to keep students safe on the roads by influencing risk reduction, increasing resilience and encouraging responsible behaviour. We deliver free interactive road safety workshops in schools and a youth road trauma awareness event in metropolitan Perth (RAC bstreetsmart) and regional W.A (Project Road Smart).

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