



Motor Vehicle Division

46-8504 R12/23 azdot.gov

CAR BUYING CHECKLIST

This checklist is a guide in the car buying and titling process and may not address all situations. The buyer should do research on the vehicle before finalizing the transaction with the seller.

Verify the seller's information:

- Verify that the person selling the car is the same as the owner listed on the title. A buyer should ask the seller to provide photo identification and vehicle documentation.
- Check the seller's signature on the back of the title. If there are multiple owners, they will be indicated by a "legal status," and the signature of all owners may be required.
- If someone other than the owner signs the title as seller, he or she must have authorization, such as a notarized power of attorney or court order.

Verify the vehicle information:

- Check the vehicle identification number (VIN) on the dashboard and on the sticker in the driver's door jamb to make sure they match. Record the VIN so that you can verify it later.
- Examine both sides of the vehicle title. Look for any alterations.
- Verify that the vehicle description on the title matches the actual vehicle. (Match the VIN, make, model, etc.). Note if there are any vehicle brands (salvage, etc.) listed on the title.

Inspect the vehicle:

- Visually inspect the vehicle and have a reputable auto mechanic or repair facility conduct a complete inspection of the mechanical and electrical systems. The vehicle inspection should uncover worn parts, water damage, poorly repaired collision damage and possibly other safety problems that should help in deciding whether to buy.

Verify the odometer:

- Check the odometer reading on the vehicle and look at the back of the title to see what odometer information has been entered. If the mileage seems abnormally low, an odometer inspection conducted by a reputable auto mechanic may be needed.

Be careful when buying online or from an out-of-state seller:

- Buying a used vehicle online from a private seller can have risks. It is strongly suggested that buyers inspect the vehicle in person before making a purchase.
- Vehicles that were not manufactured for the U.S. market (gray market) do not conform to federal DOT and EPA standards unless proper conversions by a licensed Registered Importer have been made. In most cases, the vehicle cannot be titled and registered in Arizona unless it has been converted.

Check the title for liens:

- Check for financial lienholder information on the front of the title. The seller must have and provide you with a paid receipt (lien release) from the lienholder describing the vehicle, the name of the seller and the date and amount of the lien.
- Check for other types of liens on AZMVDNow.gov. The vehicle information and VIN can also be researched through online services, such as Vehiclehistory.gov, Carfax.com, AutoCheck.com, VINcheck.com or Instavin.com. There is usually a fee for the service.
- Request the seller provide a current motor vehicle record from MVD to show other potential issues with the motor vehicle record.

Transfer the title:

- The eTitle Transfer service allows qualified sellers and buyers to transfer vehicle ownership electronically. Utilizing a [secure online system](#), customers can complete the process without visiting an MVD or Authorized Third Party office.
- The buyer and seller should go to an [MVD or Authorized Third Party office](#) together, if possible, to transfer the title. As the new owner of the vehicle, you must apply for a new title within 15 days from the date of purchase to avoid penalty charges.