

Buying a used car can be safe, reliable and simple, as long as you follow these fast and easy steps.

1) Payment

Never send cash abroad it's frequently the preferred strategy of a fake seller taking money illegally. Pay for the vehicle when you physically collect it from the seller.

2) Vehicle history check

Likely the most important thing is the car's history. If you only do one thing, make sure you carry out a recognised car history check. It will tell you whether the motor is:

Recorded as stolen
Recorded as written-off
Recorded as having been scrapped.
Subject to any outstanding finance

It can also unearth mileage discrepancies and confirm registration details, the amount of owners and the Car Identification Number (VIN) permitting you to confirm these with the seller and the vehicle's paperwork.

NB History checks are also available for motorbikes and commercial vehicles.

3) Visit the seller

It's very important you physically check the vehicle and see the documentation. Never purchase a used car without seeing or driving it first, ideally in sunlight when it's easier to spot damage.

View the car at the seller's home and check the address is the same as the one noted on the registration document (V5C), also known as the logbook. Check the Car Identification Number (VIN) is the same as that on the V5C. This number is sometimes found on the framework, on the windscreen or on the floor by the driving seat.

NB it's a great idea to do a car, bike or van history check while you're viewing the vehicle, that way you've got access to all of the information that you want to test.

4) Price

Always check the vehicle's valuation by getting a valuation or comparing the price with other similar models advertised on Auto Trader or other car trading websites (www.autotrader.co.uk). If it's being offered at a much cheaper price, ask why.

NB If it looks too good to be true, it most likely is.

5) Paperwork

You have to see the original V5C document, service history and MOT certificates before handing over any cash.

NB Ensure that all documents are the originals and not photocopies. Inspect the providence of the V5C by holding it to the light where you'll see a DVL watermark.

Ensure the seller is the recorded keeper if not, they would possibly not be legally entitled to sell the vehicle.

Check the serial number at the top right hand corner of the V5C and contact the police straight away if the number falls in the following range as it may be a stolen document:

BG8229501 to BG9999030, and BI2305501 to BI2800000.