

Used Car Test Drive Checklist

Driveability

- _____ Acceleration should be smooth
- _____ Pinging may indicate a needed tune-up or may be poor fuel. Some pinging under hard acceleration may be normal.
- _____ Blue smoke indicates burning oil.
- _____ There should be no delay between engine speed and speed of the car. If there is a delay, car may have transmission problems.
- _____ If car has a manual transmission, clutch should engage smoothly and should not slip.

Suspension

- _____ When safe, take hand from wheel. Car should not pull to one side. It's okay to drift slowly to the right due to the crown of road.
- _____ In a parking lot, make a few slow, tight turns in each direction. Turn the radio and everything else that makes noise off and roll the windows down. Listen carefully for any noise coming from front wheels that might indicate CV joint problems. CV joints are expensive to replace and a bad one can be dangerous!
- _____ Remember to check for "dog-tracking". The inspection checklist tells how.
- _____ After a quick stop, car should not rock back and forth repeatedly. If it does, car may need new struts or shocks.

Brakes

- _____ Make both slow and hard stops.
- _____ Car should not pull to one side under braking.
- _____ A spongy or low pedal may indicate leaks or other problems.
- _____ Squeaking may indicate need for new pads or may be caused by glazed-over pads.
- _____ If car shudders under braking, it probably needs new, expensive brake rotors.

Comfort Equipment

- _____ Check air conditioning for proper operation. A/C repairs and refills aren't cheap anymore!
- _____ Make sure heater and fan work properly. Drive car long enough for engine for warm up.
- _____ Check operation of defrosters.
- _____ Make sure all power options work.
- _____ If you still want car after test drive and inspection
- _____ Inspected by mechanic. If car passed your inspection, take it to an independent mechanic for a more complete inspection.
- _____ Inspected according to our Used Car Inspection Checklist.
- _____ Attempt to contact previous owner.