



Women's Southwest Fed'l Credit Union
Tel. 214-887-0700 ~ Fax 214-887-0099
WSFCUDallas@sbcglobal.net
www.FeministCU.org

VISUAL INSPECTION LIST FOR USED CARS, TRUCKS, VANS & SUVs

*Another service at **no extra charge** for WSFCU members*

Always try to take a friend along to assist with the vehicle inspection, someone who knows they will be going along to help ask questions and help evaluate the vehicle.

Take a flashlight, hand rags, newspapers, an old towel *and* this Visual Inspection List.

Exterior

View the car from a distance. Is it level? Are the wheels in line? If one side is lower than the other, it could mean a broken spring.

Walk around the vehicle for close inspection. Are there signs of an accident? Severe rust? Fresh paint? Rippled paint? Overspraying on bumpers and chrome?

Inspect doors, trunk and hood for proper fit and easy operation. Windows should fit snugly. Windows should not be pitted or chipped. They should operate easily.

Inspect tires for wear. Uneven wear could mean a wheel alignment or balancing problem or possibly a twisted frame.

Check for signs of leaking brake fluid or grease on the wheels.

Test shock absorbers by stepping on and off the front and rear bumpers. If the car keeps bouncing after you step off, the shocks are worn, indicating high mileage or rough use.

Interior

Check for heavily-worn upholstery, floor mats, clutch pedal, brake pedal and the floor and trunk mats for signs of rust. Be sure there is a spare, usable tire. Check for proper jacking equipment.

Test all inside lights, switches, gauges, flashers, horn, along with exterior lighting.

Check all optional equipment such as power windows and seats. (The more power equipment the vehicle has, the greater the potential cost of repairs.)

Turn the steering wheel to check for play. If there is more than two inches, the steering mechanism may be worn.

Engine

Inspect engine compartment for oil and water leaks. Do this:

- with the engine on;
- with the engine off

Check hoses, belts, air filter and battery for signs of wear.

Check oil dip stick. The oil should be gray in color; it should not be thick. Thick oil could mean something has been added to cover a noisy engine. Has the oil been changed regularly?

Check the radiator for signs of rust or leaks.

Put a towel on the ground and look under the vehicle for damaged exhaust system and muffler.

Inspect underside of car for excessive rust, leaks, new weld marks and general condition of frame.

Start the engine. It should start smoothly and make no grinding sounds.

Rev the engine: blue-white or black exhaust means trouble.

Run the engine at idle for more than five minutes. Does temperature indicator register hot or close to hot? If so, it could mean trouble later on.



Road Test

ALWAYS ROAD TEST A CAR BEFORE YOU BUY IT

Allow enough time to include a variety of conditions, such as hills, bumpy roads, city driving and freeways.

(continued on back)

Accelerate hard in a safe driving area. □ Failure to respond may indicate engine needs overhaul.

Listen for smooth running and idling with no unusual sounds. □

Check for a slipping transmission (manual or automatic). Do this by accelerating *rapidly* up a steep hill. □

In a safe place, test brakes with a hard panic stop. The car should stop smoothly, with no pulling to either side. □

Test steering and handling over a curving course, watching for excess wheel play or pulling to either side. □



Check at freeway speed for any strange noises from engine or body. Test quietness by driving with windows closed. Can you hear each other talk? □

Other Tests You Can Run

Park car over clean area of concrete or over sheets of newspaper and let idle for five minutes. Drive car off and inspect area for leaks of engine oil (black), transmission fluid (red) or gasoline (brown).

Wet all four tires. Then drive a short distance in a straight line on pavement or concrete. □ If tracks show four lines instead of two, the frame may be bent or the rear suspension may be out of alignment.

Before You Buy

Even if you are an experienced buyer, have a reliable, independent mechanic or diagnostic service center inspect the vehicle [You may want to give them our “Inspection Form for Used Cars” to complete.] □



From a mechanic, obtain a list of repairs and what they will cost. Use this list when bargaining with the seller.

Try to find out as much information about the car as possible. Ask to see receipts for repairs and service. □ You may wish to talk with the previous owner.

Sooner or later you may be faced with the prospect of selecting a good used vehicle. This is a major expenditure, with many factors to consider.

Costs include not only the price of the vehicle itself, but also sales tax, registration, renewal, insurance and possibly repairs that will be needed before the car is safe to drive.

The more you know, the better chance you will have of buying a good used vehicle instead of a “lemon.”

If you haven’t seen them already, you may want to read or request additional articles available to WSFCU depositors at no extra charge, such as:

- How to Buy a Car for Less
- Planning Your Purchases: When to Buy on Credit—and When *Not* To
- Inspection Form for Used Cars
- What Are Costs of Buying a Car?
- Better Credit Qualifications = Lower Loan Rates

© 1979 & 2010 California Feminist Federal Credit UniUnion & Women’s Southwest Federal Credit Unin

B\Frms\Visual Inspctn Lst 6 10

