

Buying a used car



Buying a used car is serious. What if there's a problem? Most of the time, you can't just let the car go back to the dealer or creditor. You may still have to pay for it. If you are not careful, you can end up in debt, without a car.

Most used cars have problems and no guarantee

The car's problems may show up right away. Or they may show up after you have driven it awhile. After all, it is a used car. Also, some dealers hide a car's problems or lie about them.

Most dealers sell used cars "**As Is.**" This means there is **NO** guarantee that the car is any good. If the car needs work, **YOU** are the one who must pay for it.

The dealer may say "this is a good running car." The dealer may say "we will stand behind it." But the dealer's promises may mean nothing if your **contract** says "**As Is.**"



Most of the time even if the car is no good, you must pay for it.

Most people buy used cars with time payments. Time payment contracts usually say you will pay **even if the car is no good.**

Even if you return the car, most of the time you must pay for it.

What if you don't like the car? What if you can't pay? What if the car won't run? You can't just let the car go back to the dealer. If you do, you could wind up with no car. But you would still be paying for it.

But there may be something you can do IF:

- The car has serious problems that you were not told about **OR**
- The dealer doesn't have good title and you can't put the car in your name **AND**
- You find these things out soon after buying the car

If these are true for you, send a written letter to the dealer **right away.** Say that you want out of the deal and to return the car. Say what the problem is with the car. Don't wait. If too much time goes by, you will be stuck with paying for the car. **Send the letter and call a lawyer right away.**

What if you miss a payment?

What if the payment is even one day late? Then the dealer or creditor can take your car. He can do this **without telling you ahead of time.**



You have to pay off the whole car note to get the car back. Just catching up your payments will usually **NOT** get your car back.

Even worse, the dealer or creditor must then sell the car. Most of the time it sells for less than you owe. You will **owe the rest of the car payment**. This means you have no car but you **still owe money to the dealer or creditor**. Most of the time the dealer or creditor will sue you. Most of the time they can also collect an added attorney fee for their lawyers.



4. Don't be fooled by looks

Don't be taken in by how great the car looks. What counts is how the car runs.

5. Expect to have to get the car fixed

Face the fact that your used car may have problems. Plan to pay for fixing the car.

6. Remember that you can't just "let the car go back" to the dealer

That doesn't get you off the hook. You may still owe the dealer or creditor money.



Used Car Shopping Tips

1. Test drive the car

Drive it at different speeds for several miles. Some dealers won't let you do



this. They may say they can't because of "insurance regulations." Our advice is not to buy from a dealer like that.

2. See a mechanic

Have a mechanic you trust look at the car and test drive it. If the dealer will not let you do this, go somewhere else.

3. Check out the car's history.

Ask to see the title. Does the title say that the car has been re-built or was in a flood? Write down the 17-number Vehicle Identification Number or VIN. You can use the VIN to check the car's history. Go to **www.carfax.com** on the internet. Type in the VIN. It will tell you the car's history.



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NOTE: This information cannot take the place of legal advice. Each case is different and needs individual attention. 4/14