



the detea

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FREE STATE PROVINCE

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CONSUMER PROTECTION OFFICE

TIPS ON WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN DOING A TEST DRIVE ON A USED / 2nd HAND VEHICLE

There are 2 (two) ways that may be used by consumers to check a second hand vehicle. These are as follows;

1. Ask reputable organizations such as the Automobile Association (AA) The AA usually does this for a minimal charge and they give a fully comprehensive report on the vehicle including a check-list of all faults in the car.
2. Consumers can do the test drive themselves, and do satisfy yourself as to the following tips: -
 - a) Before driving off, consumers are advised that first and foremost; to ensure if gears move easily with ease, from reverse to first as well as the other gears. When the vehicle is in motion, it is advisable to check the gears. Strange noises and gears that rub / scrape / rasp are surely signs of a substantial problem.
 - b) Consumers are further advised to drive up to about 60km/h slowly and smoothly, pressing down on the brake pedal. Should the brake pedal go down altogether without the vehicle slowing down incredibly, then the brakes are wanting and therefore defected.
 - c) It is usually the case that the car would pull to one side if the brakes are applied; this in itself would mean that the brakes themselves are defected.
 - d) To check the steering wheel, satisfy yourself by parking in a bay driving slowly and moving the steering wheel to all sides. Should the steering wheel not turn instantly, then it might be adversely defected and worn out.
 - e) It is again advisable to drive on a dirt / gravel and bumpy road to examine whether the vehicle does move from side to side and have bounces, this would be an indication that the shock absorbers are definitely faulty.
 - f) Do check if the exhaust puffs smoke whilst the vehicle is idling, and if it does; then there might be something wrong with the engine.
 - g) Wheel alignment problems are a headache, and to investigate this; do drive at about 40 km/h and leave the steering wheel to allow itself to steer on its own. If the vehicle goes off to one side, then you should know there is definitely a wheel alignment problem.
 - h) It is usually the case that consumers would buy vehicle during the day and not during the night. Consumers are therefore advised to make sure that all the lights including park lights, reverse lights, indicator lights, and brake lights, dim & bright lights are working properly. Consumers have in the past been overshadowed by this point as excitement would have crept in.
 - i) Lastly, the vehicle should be driven at about 120 km/h for at least 15 minutes and thereafter, it should be stopped for about 15 minutes. After a while, the vehicle should be driven a bit forward to see if there are any drips of oil, brake fluids, water and *etc.*