

Used Car Checklist

Courtesy of Aspire Federal Credit Union

Before You Go:

- Ask for the vehicle's VIN number and look it up on a site like CarFax.com.
- Ask if there are any maintenance records. It's okay if there are not, but you could use that fact for negotiating.
- Bring a CD, iPod or MP3 player of choice.
- If you have a child, bring the car seat.

Examining the Vehicle:

- Carefully look at the entire exterior for any cracks, ripples or anything that would indicate the vehicle was in an unreported accident.
- Make sure the paint matches everywhere.
- Bounce the corners and listen for creaking or anything abnormal.
- Check underneath the car for any fluid leaking (before and after driving).
- Make sure there's at least a 1/4" tread on all tires.
- Check hoses and belt for any wear and tear.
- Listen for noises while the engine is running.
- Smell the engine for any burning smells while it's running.
- Automatic transmission fluid should be clear with a reddish color.
- Radiator water should be light yellow or green.
- Battery terminals should be free of corrosion.
- Open and close all doors, windows and the trunk.

Driving the Vehicle:

- Check for any warning lights on the dashboard when you turn the car on.
- Make sure the heating and air conditioning work.
- Test the horn, turn signals, wipers, door locks and all lights.
- Make sure the seats will adjust. You should also make sure your child's seat will fit in and secure properly.
- While driving slowly, briefly take your hands off the wheel and note if the car drifts to one side.
- Note if the car pulls to one side while braking.
- At some point, drive up to 60 mph and ensure the car handles properly with no excessive vibration or noises.