



Before you buy a vehicle

Information for all buyers



Check out the vehicle carefully before you buy:

- do your homework on the market – check out the vehicle market by looking at adverts in the paper and visiting traders' yards. Talk to friends and family about their recent vehicle purchases
- get an independent mechanical check of the vehicle before you agree to buy it – some traders may have already arranged a check of the vehicles they have for sale. If there are any mechanical problems with the car you could negotiate on the price to take account of the problems, or ask the seller to fix the problems before you buy the vehicle. If the seller agrees to fix the problems, ask for this in writing.

You have different levels of legal protection depending on whether you buy your vehicle from:

- [a car-yard trader – a registered motor vehicle trader who usually operates from a car-yard](#)
- [an auctioneer](#)
- [a car market operator – also known as a car fair or “display for sale” operator](#)
- [a private seller.](#)

You should also check that:

- [the warrant of fitness is up to date](#)
- [the dealer is registered](#)

The New Zealand Transport Agency has information on their website on buying a used car and what to look for when checking the quality of a used vehicle.

[Visit the New Zealand Transport Agency website.](#)

Checking the vehicle's Warrant of Fitness

All sellers of motor vehicles must ensure that the vehicle has a Warrant of Fitness (WoF) issued no more than one month before the date the vehicle is delivered to the buyer.

If you buy a vehicle with a recently issued Warrant of Fitness but the vehicle does not appear to be in a warrantable condition, contact the New Zealand Transport Agency. They can investigate testing stations or garages that incorrectly issue Warrants.

"As is, where is"

If the vehicle does not have a current WoF it must be sold “as is, where is”.

In this case, you should give the seller a written undertaking that the vehicle will not be driven on the road except for the purpose of getting a new WoF – this is a protection for the seller.

Trader registration

All motor vehicle traders are required to be registered under the Motor Vehicle Sales Act (MVSA).

Registered motor vehicle traders will have a certificate with their trader number on it and the date their registration expires. You can ask to see this registration certificate.

You can check whether a trader is registered by visiting the Motor Vehicle Traders Register online or phone 0508 MOTOR TRADERS (0508 668 678). This service is free.

[Visit the Motor Vehicle Traders Register.](#)

You can also check the Motor Vehicle Traders Register for a list of people who have been banned from operating as a registered motor vehicle trader.

If a trader is not registered, you can report this to the Motor Vehicle Traders Registrar. Motor vehicle traders who are not registered can be fined up to \$200,000.

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