

# FAQs on Buying a used Car or Vehicle

RSA

## **Do the RSA have any advice on buying a used car or vehicle?** Yes.

Never, ever, buy a used car or vehicle without at least:

- a) getting an qualified mechanic to independently inspect it,
- b) carrying out a comprehensive history check through online websites and
- c) asking the trader or seller for service records.

**Where do I locate a qualified motor engineer?** You can contact the Institute of automotive engineers and assessors ([IAEA](#)) who may be able to provide you with a list of qualified motor engineers in your area.

## **Is it safe to buy a used vehicle if it has a valid roadworthiness cert?**

No. A roadworthiness cert is a basic safety check on a vehicle every year or two years depending on age and vehicle type. Cars need to be serviced roughly every six months or earlier depending on mileage. The NCT or CVRT centres do not dismantle a vehicle so only parts that can be seen and are accessible can be inspected as part of the test. Also there is no guarantee that the vehicle has not been crashed or that components have not become excessively worn since its last test. There is also the risk that an NCT or CVRT cert is fake.

**Where can I check if a roadworthiness cert is fake?** You can log onto the following websites:

- NCT certs at [www.ncts.ie](http://www.ncts.ie) and entering the vehicle registration number and
- CVRT certs for commercial vehicles at [www.cvrt.ie](http://www.cvrt.ie) and entering registration number. This is free and shows the expiry date of the vehicle's last roadworthiness cert issued.

## Is it enough to just do a history check on a used vehicle?

- While a history check may tell you if a vehicle has ever been written off, clocked or even stolen, it will not tell you whether the tyres are safe or whether certain or critical components are just about to fail.
- A qualified mechanic should be able to identify worn or dangerous parts.
- Also check the vehicle's service history for regular maintenance.

**What is a clocked vehicle?** See our [FAQ](#) on Clocked Vehicles.

**What is a written off vehicle?** See our [FAQ](#) on Written off Vehicles

## How do I find out if a used car has ever been written off or clocked?

- You can get an indication if a car has been clocked or written off by carrying out a comprehensive history check online.
- You may also view our FAQs on written off vehicles and clocked vehicles as linked above.

## If a used car is purchased from a garage or trader, do I still need to get it independently checked?

We still recommend getting a car independently checked. If possible, get a warranty for the car and ask the garage to write the current odometer reading on the receipt. If the dealer is not willing to offer this, consider walking away from the sale. *If warranty is offered check the terms and conditions to see what it says about the seller's obligations.* Always carry out some research on the garage or trader and always ask to see the vehicle registration certificate.

**Is it safe to buy an imported vehicle?** See our [FAQ](#) on Buying an Imported Vehicle.

## What are my rights when buying a used car?

- If you buy a used car from a garage or dealer you have a certain level of protection under consumer legislation if things go wrong.
- If you buy privately you have very little if any rights and therefore could end up losing all your money.

For more information on your consumer rights when buying a used car log onto competition and consumer protection commission ([CCPC](#)).

**Where can I find the safety ratings for a car?** You can find a vehicle's original NCAP rating at [www.euroncap.com](http://www.euroncap.com). Older vehicles normally do not have the same safety rating or safety features that would offer extra crash prevention or occupant protection, e.g. airbags, anti-lock braking systems, electronic stability control etc.

## What should I look out for when purchasing a used motor caravan or horse box?

We would always recommend that:

- you have a qualified mechanic check out the vehicle independently and that
- you carry out a comprehensive history check through official vehicle history check websites.

Also note that as these vehicles spend much of their lives stationary, parked or in storage for prolonged periods particularly over the winter months. They may have low odometer readings and may also suffer premature deterioration externally e.g. tyres and paintwork if not properly protected and stored which can affect their performance at testing.