



Autoneer DIY inspection checklist

Documents

- Can the seller show you the V5C registration document? You won't be able to tax the car without it.
- Is the seller the registered keeper shown on the V5C? If not, why are they selling it for someone else?
- Does the registration document have a watermark?
- Any spelling mistakes on the registration document?
- Do the VIN (vehicle identification number), engine number and colour match the V5C?
- Does the number plate match the V5C?
- Has the VIN plate been tampered with?
- Do VIN numbers etched on glass or lights match the VIN plate and V5C?
- Any sign of scratches on glass to remove etched-in marks?
- Does the fuel filler look as if it has been forced or replaced?
- Does the seller have a current MOT certificate (if the car's more than three years old)?

Mileage

- Does the mileage, age and appearance of the car look consistent?
- Any sign like worn screws that the instruments might have been tampered with? (Digital odometers can be tampered with electronically so clues like this won't exist)
- Check recorded mileage on service records, MOT certificates and other documents.
- Does it look consistent with current mileage/condition and increase steadily year on year?
- Check MOT status and history online (with vehicle registration and document reference on V5C) or by phone on VOSA's MOT status line, 0300 790 6802.

Accident Damage

- Any signs of inconsistent gaps between panels or mismatched colours that could be a sign of extensive repairs?
- Is the paint finish even across the car?
- Any traces of paint spray on handles, window seals or plastic mouldings?
- Could the car's colour have been changed? (Look under carpets and in other hidden areas in particular.)
- Any unusual looking welding under the bonnet or in the boot?

Safety

- Are the tyres in good condition and all of the specification and dimensions? Tyres with less than 3mm of tread will have to be replaced soon.
- Is the spare wheel or tyre inflator/sealant kit in serviceable condition?
- Are the jack and other tools present?
- Do all the seatbelts operate correctly? Check there are no cuts or fraying that could affect the way they work.
- If airbags are fitted, Check that warning lights operate as described in the handbook – normally they will come on with the ignition and then go out?
- Do all lights and windscreen wipers/washers work correctly?

Test Drive

- Do all warning lights operate normally? Lights will generally come on to test and then go out – unless there's a fault.
- Are the brakes effective or does it take a long time or a lot of effort to stop?
- Is braking even or does the car pull to one side?
- Any unusual noises when you brake?
- Is the handbrake effective?
- Any steering vibration or pull to one side?
- If ABS is fitted, does the warning light go out after the engine is started?

Engine

- Any abnormal noises when the engine is started from cold?
- Does the oil warning light go out as soon as the engine starts?
- Any signs of excessive visible exhaust emissions?
 - White water vapour from the exhaust is normal while the engine is cold
 - Blue smoke isn't normal – that's oil burning
 - Faint blue smoke from diesels is OK but black smoke is serious
- Does the clutch operate normally? A noise when you press the pedal or a high biting point could mean that repairs will be required soon.
- Is the catalytic converter in good condition? Look for a recent emissions test, either alone or as part of an MOT. This will confirm that emissions are within the stringent limits applied to modern cars.
- Is there sludge on the underside of the oil filler cap? This could indicate poor servicing or predominantly short journey use.
- Is the oil level right? Too low shows neglect; too high could be a clue that the engine is using oil but it could just have been over filled in error.
- Has the cam belt been replaced according to the service schedule?

Locks, windows and general controls

- Do all the locks, including central locking and remote control, work properly?
- Do all windows, including any sunroof, open/close normally?
- Any signs of forced entry, damaged or different locks, suggesting they've been replaced?
- Have you got all the right keys? Check the handbook to see which keys were provided when the car was new. Modern keys are expensive to replace, particularly the coloured 'master' key provided by some manufacturers to programme new spare keys to the car.
- Are locking wheel nuts fitted? Check that the special adapter required is included with the tool kit. Make sure it fits too.
- Do all the minor controls operate correctly – heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, radio/CD, navigation etc?