



As-Is Cars:



Know the Warning Signs

When buying an "as-is" vehicle, consumers usually don't receive a warranty to protect their purchase, so they may be on the hook for costly repairs if the vehicle breaks down. To protect yourself, be sure to take these precautions so you don't get taken for a ride by a dishonest dealer:



Look for the Buyers Guide. This guide, which you can find on the window of the vehicle, will indicate who—you or the dealer—is responsible for repairing your car. If the dealer is selling the vehicle "as is," the guide will indicate the car is "As Is – No Warranty." So, before buying an "as-is" vehicle, you should decide whether you're able and willing to take on the risk of the costs of likely repairs.



Get it in writing. If the dealer promises to repair your vehicle or cancel the sale if you experience problems, make sure to get those promises in writing on the Buyers Guide. These promises will act as a warranty, even on an "as-is" vehicle, but they must be in writing on the Buyers Guide. Always ask for your vehicle's Buyers Guide (or a copy), and hold on to it to protect yourself in the future.



Know your dealer. Ask your friends, relatives, and neighbors for references. Research the Internet and contact the Better Business Bureau and the Attorney General's office to ask if they have received any complaints about the dealer.



Test drive the vehicle. Drive the car under various road conditions, including on the highway and in stop-and-go traffic.



Hire an independent mechanic for an inspection. To determine the overall reliability and condition of the vehicle, get a mechanical inspection (not just a safety inspection) performed by a mechanic who is not associated with the dealer.



Request a complete title history. Title history reports may help you determine if a vehicle has been salvaged or returned as a lemon. Title history reports should verify odometer readings, reveal accidents and disclose whether the vehicle was stolen or used as a rental. Most dealers provide title history reports, but you can also ask for the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and get the report on your own from a source such as National Motor Vehicle Title Information Systems (www.vehiclehistory.gov), Carfax (www.carfax.com), or AutoCheck (www.autocheck.com).



Ask about a return policy. If your dealer has a return policy, get it in writing.



Decide on a fair price. Before you make your purchase, determine the vehicle's likely value with sources like Kelly Blue Book (www.kbb.com), Edmunds (www.edmunds.com), and NADA (www.nadaguides.com).



For more information on vehicle purchasing and financing, please visit the Attorney General's Web site at www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov.