

# An Garda Síochána

## Crime Prevention Information Sheet



# Vehicle Security

## Buying a Used Car



### Introduction

For most people the second most expensive item that they will buy is their car. How much you pay is a matter of personal choice, however as with the purchase of any item or product, it is important when buying a car that you protect yourself and your investment against any criminal activity. A bad decision may cost you thousands of Euro, but a little research and homework can help take the risk out of buying your car and give you years of safe and happy motoring. A maxim that very suitably applies to buying a second-hand car is "If you don't ask the right questions – you won't get the right information".



### Buying from an Established Dealership or buying privately.

The biggest difference between buying from a dealership and a private seller will be the guarantee factor or warranty. This gives you peace of mind should your car prove to be faulty or improper. You will also have a better legal footing should an admissible dispute arise after the sales transaction.

Most reputable dealers will offer you differing periods on a warranty but it will usually be not less than 6 months.

Take care to ensure that you know what are the terms and conditions of the warranty and what exactly is covered.

Buying privately is more often than not a "gentleman's agreement" and it is generally much more difficult to pursue someone legally, when trouble arises, if there are not written terms and conditions of sale agreed between the parties.

### Buy Specialist Advice

Although most people tend to ignore this recommendation, particularly where garage dealerships are concerned, the small investment made in securing a professional engineering report can make the difference between care-free motoring and incessant trouble.

They will know where to look for faults, disguised repairs, and other tell-tale signs of potential problems. Most established motoring organisations, such as the A.A., will offer the services of trained engineers, even if you are not a member.

### Where will you buy?

Buying cars abroad can be risky unless you are dealing with established reputable dealerships. Savings made in the short term can eventually prove to be very costly, in time and travel terms, if problems and repairs become necessary.

Private purchases are potential 'minefields'. Many criminals are expert in duping and conning customers into believing they are genuine vendors selling a "real bargain". They are exceptionally adept in attracting customers with catchy advertisements and glossy photographs. In some cases the car you see may not be the car you get after the snag list is "put right".

Most reputable dealerships in the Irish Republic are affiliated to the Society of the Irish Motor Industry or SIMI. If you are in doubt about the credibility of a dealership you should contact them for advice.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
your local GARDA CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER  
or  
visit the Garda website at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)**

**You have decided to buy – did you ask yourself or the vendor the right questions?**

- Am I buying from a recognised / established dealership, or if buying privately, do I know the party selling the vehicle and can I verify his/her bona fides?
- Can I establish the previous mechanical service history of the vehicle?
- Are the service records available?
- Has the car ever been crashed?
- Were any repairs carried out to the vehicle and do I know what caused them and who repaired them?
- Are there any obvious tell-tale signs of renovation and/or repair, and if so, why? (e.g. replaced carpets, pedal pads, re-sprayed bodywork, new engine parts etc.)
- Did you or your engineer carry out a diagnostic test drive?
- Did I consult with the previous owner(s) as to the reasons for the sale of the vehicle?
- Are the legal documents for the vehicle in order and do the details, such as engine, chassis, V.I.N. numbers etc. correspond with those on the vehicle. Are there any signs of interference with them?

- What comeback or guarantee or warranty do I have if I am unsatisfied with the vehicle in the future?



A more comprehensive guide to buying a used vehicle is available from the National Consumer Agency - a copy of which can be downloaded from their website.

*The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute.*

*Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.*



- Are the legal documents readily available and if not why?
- Am I satisfied that there are no outstanding finance claims owing against the vehicle to credit agencies?
- Has the car been imported and, if so, have all taxes and duties (e.g. VAT, VRT) been paid?
- Has the vehicle been taxed to date, and if not why?
- Have I viewed the vehicle in good lighting conditions at the vendor's premises with an independent engineer?
- Am I satisfied that the asking price of the vehicle is a reflection of its true value? If not why?
- How was the vehicle advertised? Are contact details verifiable/traceable where a private sale is offered?
- Have I confirmed and verified all the information and facts offered to me about the vehicles history by the selling party?

**Useful Contacts and Links**

**The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit,**  
 Garda H.Q., Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.  
 Tel: (01) 6663362, Fax: (01) 6663314  
 Email: [crime\\_prevention@garda.ie](mailto:crime_prevention@garda.ie)

**The Garda Stolen Motor Vehicle Investigation Unit,**  
 NBCI, Garda H.Q., Harcourt Square, Dublin 2.  
 Tel: (01) 6663320/5, Fax: (01) 6663347  
 Email: [nbc\\_i\\_stolen\\_vehicle@garda.ie](mailto:nbc_i_stolen_vehicle@garda.ie)

**An Garda Síochána**  
[www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

**National Consumer Agency,**  
 4 Harcourt Road, Dublin 2  
 Tel: 1890 432 432 or (01) 4025555  
[www.consumerconnect.ie](http://www.consumerconnect.ie)

**The Society of the Irish Motor Industry,**  
 5 Upper Pembroke Street, Dublin 2  
 Tel: (01) 6761690 Email: [info@simi.ie](mailto:info@simi.ie)  
[www.simi.ie](http://www.simi.ie)

**AA Ireland**  
 56 Drury Street, Dublin 2  
 Tel: (01) 6179999 Email: [aa@aaireland.ie](mailto:aa@aaireland.ie)  
[www.aaireland.ie](http://www.aaireland.ie)