

Car Buying Scams



Here are some of the top car buying scams to watch out for:

Title Washing: This scam involves altering a car's title to conceal its true history, such as removing information about previous accidents, flood damage, or salvage status. Sellers may present the vehicle as clean and in good condition, misleading buyers about its true value and potential problems.

Odometer Fraud: Scammers tamper with or roll back the mileage on a car's odometer to make it appear less used and more valuable. This deception can lead buyers to pay a higher price for a vehicle that has actually experienced more wear and tear.

Online Vehicle Scams: Fraudsters create fake online listings for vehicles at attractive prices to lure unsuspecting buyers. They may request upfront payment or a deposit without providing any vehicle or may claim to be located in a different country, making it difficult for buyers to inspect or receive the car.

Escrow Scams: Scammers pose as intermediaries or recommend using an escrow service to handle the transaction. They instruct buyers to wire money to the escrow account but disappear once the payment is made, leaving the buyer without the car or the funds.

VIN Cloning: In this scam, thieves use a legitimate vehicle's identification number (VIN) and transfer it to a stolen car of a similar make and model. This makes the stolen vehicle appear legitimate, and unsuspecting buyers may unknowingly purchase a stolen car.

Spot Delivery Scam: Some dealerships employ unethical tactics during the car buying process. They allow buyers to take the vehicle home before financing is approved and later inform them that the financing fell through. The buyer is then pressured into accepting unfavorable terms or paying a higher interest rate.

How to protect yourself from these scams:



- ✓ Research the vehicle's history using services like Carfax to identify any potential issues or discrepancies.
- ✓ Physically inspect the car or hire a trusted mechanic to perform a pre-purchase inspection, paying attention to the condition, mileage, and signs of damage or repairs.
- ✓ Be cautious when buying cars online and insist on seeing the vehicle in person before making any payments.
- ✓ Verify the seller's identity and contact information and be wary of dealing with sellers who refuse to meet in person or provide insufficient details.
- ✓ Never wire money or provide payment in advance without thoroughly inspecting the vehicle and ensuring all paperwork is in order.
- ✓ Check the VIN on the car's title, registration, and dashboard to ensure they match.

By staying informed, conducting due diligence, and exercising caution, you can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to car buying scams.