



News Release

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Purchasing a Car? Do Your Homework First *Flooded Cars Could Be on a Car Lot Near You*

Pensacola, Fla. (September 19, 2017) If you are in the market for a car, do your homework and purchase from a reputable dealer in order to ensure the car you buy isn't a refurbished one from the recent storms.

Thousands of cars will be deemed a total loss when their owners submit insurance claims and then there will be many others that will not go through the claims process. These vehicles will be the ones to look out for. They can be refurbished and sold to unsuspecting consumers.

Here are some tips to help you spot flood-damaged vehicles.

1. Check the car's dealer's BBB Business Profile for their review/complaint history with customers.
2. Get a vehicle history report based on its VIN number. (www.carfax.com is one website where what has been reported on a vehicle can be reviewed)
3. Have the car inspected by a mechanic you trust.
4. Ask to see the title of a used car. Check the date and place of transfer to see if the car came from a flood-damaged area and if the title is stamped 'salvage.'
5. Check all gauges on the dashboard to make sure they are accurate, and look for signs of water.
6. Test the equipment including lights, windshield wipers, turn signals, sound system, heater and air conditioner several times to make sure they work.
7. Flex some wires under the dash to see if they bend or crack, since wet wires become brittle upon drying and can crack or fail at any time.
8. Check the interior of the trunk and glove compartment, and beneath the seats and dashboard for signs of mud, rust or water damage.
9. Look for discolored, faded or stained upholstery and carpeting. Carpeting that has been replaced may fit too loosely or may not match the interior color.
10. Check for a well-defined line, or 'watermark,' and for musty odors resulting from mildew.
11. Ask the dealer directly if the car has been damaged by floodwater.

For more information on your BBB, please contact Tammy Ward, Communications Director, 850.429.0002 or by e-mail tammy@nwfl.bbb.org. For additional information, start with www.bbb.org.

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