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Nine Myths About Used Car Buying That You Need To Know:

Let's face it. Most of us just can't afford the high price of a new car or truck. If we could, then the used car market would be almost non-existent. It's true that purchasing a used car has many advantages over buying new; the thousands of dollars in savings is perhaps the best benefit of all.

However, there is a much greater risk of spending those thousands of dollars only to wind up with a car that has major mechanical problems, or that's been wrecked, involved with flood damage, or perhaps even stolen and then resold to an unsuspecting buyer.

Understanding these unfortunate possibilities and more importantly, how to minimize the likelihood of purchasing such a vehicle will go a long way in protecting your investment.

As with anything, there is a great deal of misinformation out there; therefore, the best way to protect your hard earned dollars is to arm yourself with knowledge and helpful information, *before* you shop.

Do you have the facts straight?

Avoid making these common mistakes when shopping for a used car by being aware of the following used car-buying myths:

- **MYTH: I'm buying a car known for its quality so I don't have to be concerned.**

FACT: Even the best make and model, if not maintained properly or abused by the owner or drivers, will certainly cause major mechanical problems sooner or later.

- **MYTH: The owner provided me with maintenance records, so I'll be safe.**

FACT: First, you must consider the fact that these records may be fraudulent. Sellers are well aware of the importance of maintenance and though it is unlikely, records can be falsified. Secondly, bear in mind that thorough record searching involves more than just reviewing maintenance records. Checking the title, registration and even the warranty history are important steps to uncovering potential problems.

- **MYTH: I'm buying an extended warranty or service agreement; I'll be covered if anything happens.**

FACT: Although an extended warranty does offer some protection, it's important to understand that these policies don't cover every single component on a vehicle. Furthermore, the vast majority of warranties won't cover pre-existing conditions or any problems that may be caused by a lack of maintenance or abuse.

- **MYTH: I'll buy a carfax or other on line report, this will tell me everything I need to know.**

FACT: If we were to rank these in order of importance (which we aren't doing because they are all more or less equally important!), we would have to list this one near the top. These reports are contingent on various factors and on numerous agencies that provide this information; and even when the data is provided, the public (that means *you*) may not have access to it until after you've purchased the automobile. In some cases, the information may never show up in an on line history search. Obtaining an on line history search is an important step; it should be considered as just that... a step in the process.

- **MYTH: I'll have my mechanic check the car over; that should eliminate potential problems.**

FACT: Obviously, an important step. However, the person checking the car may not be familiar with everything to look for. For example, he/she may not know how to find hidden paint or body repairs or to spot flood damage indicators. It's also unlikely that he or she will do a proper test drive (See Below), and they certainly won't research history records.

- **MYTH: My sales person is taking me for a test drive, I don't need to drive it any more than that.**

FACT: A "spin around the block" or a quick ride up the highway is not enough time and/or miles to determine potential problems. A proper road test can be somewhat of a lengthy process, in itself. It includes both hot and cold driving for a minimum of 25 miles over various road surfaces.

- **MYTH: I'm buying a certified pre-owned car; I don't need to do anything else.**

FACT: While you do have some advantages with a CPO vehicle, the procedures and qualifications these cars go through leave a lot of room for mistakes. Even worse, a dishonest dealer can classify a car as certified even though it didn't pass the guidelines.

Think it doesn't happen, consider this true story:

A high line luxury dealer sold numerous cars as "certified" when in fact they didn't even have their inspections performed. When the Manufacturer caught them, the dealers were forced to contact their customers and to recondition the cars to bring them up to standards. They were given a slap on the wrist and are still selling certified automobiles today.

- **MYTH: I live in area that wasn't involved with floods; I don't have to be concerned about buying a car that's been flood-damaged.**

FACT: Consumers who live in areas that haven't had any floods are, in reality, more subject to buying a flood-damaged car than one might think. Unscrupulous sellers ship these cars cross-country, hoping that unsuspecting buyers who live in places that are not prone to flooding will overlook the flood-damage inspection.

- **MYTH: I'm not very mechanically inclined and I don't know much about cars. I need to bring someone with me to help.**

FACT: The communication age has brought many advantages to anyone seeking knowledge, whether it's about gardening or buying a car. Indeed, with a desire to learn and a willingness to invest a little time, you can learn just about everything you need to know about buying a used car.

Don't Be A Victim

For this very purpose, Usedcarwise.com has developed an informative and educational tutorial that can be viewed, either via the Internet or on a CD Rom. The information contained in the tutorial is specially designed to assist those who lack technical car-knowledge and teaches them "How To Buy A Used Car, the Smart Way."

By arming yourself with used car knowledge and know-how, beginning with these myths and facts, you will greatly minimize your risk of buying a vehicle that will be more of a costly headache than a joy ride.