WHATCAR? CHECKLIST

COLLECTING A NEW CAR

You've done the test drive, haggled over the price, and now it's time to collect your new car. Before you leave the showroom, though, you need to do some important checks to make sure your new car is unblemished – these can take up to an hour.

- ❑ Always collect the car in daylight hours. If it is dark or wet, you won't spot bodywork problems. If you must, take delivery of the car, but mark on the sales invoice that you have not been able to adequately examine the vehicle.
- ❑ Walk around the car and check all body panels and windows. Check the car's corners in particular.
- ❑ Ask if the vehicle has been repaired at any time. Even new cars can be involved in accidents (for example, bumps and scrapes on the car transporter). A dealer only has to disclose this information if asked.
- ❑ Check the interior of the car. Check the fabrics and dash fit together properly. Look for water ingress in the footwells and boot by feeling the carpets. Damp carpets could indicate improperly fitted seals.
- ❑ Check that the car is as specified and that all the options and accessories you expected are present. If you requested a full tank of fuel, check that this has been done, too.
- ❑ Check the pre-delivery inspection (PDI) has been carried out, and the service book is stamped to reflect this.
- ❑ Make sure you are given both sets of keys.
- ❑ Check all paperwork carefully to ensure no additional items or costs have been added since you agreed the deal.
- ❑ When you complete the sale, ensure that the new owner's section of the V5C is filled out correctly, and that you take the relevant sections with you.
- ❑ Get an invoice and sales contract showing that you have completed the deal and that the balance has been paid.
- ❑ If you're opting for a finance package from a dealer, check the paperwork thoroughly before you sign.
- ❑ Ensure the salesman explain how to operate the car and accessories. At the very least, get him to show you the operation of key functions such as the car alarm, hazard warning switch, the spare wheel and jack location, the mirror adjusters and the fuel, boot and bonnet releases.

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- ❑ Take the salesman's name and direct contact number. Also get a name and number for the service department.

- ❑ Make sure you have switched your insurance so you are covered for the new vehicle.

If there is a problem...

- ❑ If you find a problem before you have taken delivery of the car, inform the salesman immediately and request the problems are rectified. If they are substantial, do not sign any paperwork or take the car.

- ❑ If the salesman suggests you take the car, only do so if it is clearly stated on the sales invoice what the problems are, when they will be fixed and what costs will be involved. Get a manager to sign the paper.

- ❑ If you still intend to buy the car, request you are given a loan car while the work is carried out.

- ❑ Keep all records and paperwork, in case you need to refer to it later on.

- ❑ If you intend to reject the car, you need to do so formally in writing as soon as possible. If you do this within two weeks, you stand a far higher chance of success and a full refund, especially if the case goes to court.

- ❑ If you do want to reject the car, make sure you send a letter to your dealer informing them of your intention.

- ❑ If buying from a garage, they may try to negotiate a settlement with you. This may take the form of an additional discount or extra incentives. Look at these carefully and decide if they are fair compensation.

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