

RMI GUIDE TO BUYING A NEW CAR:

According to Sue Robinson, director of the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMI), summer 2012 offers a prime opportunity to purchase a new car:

LOOKING FOR A CAR

Robinson believes that prospective buyers will get a good deal when they go carhunting:

'The quality of modern cars, the purchasing deals like free insurance, zero per cent finance available from some manufacturers and very attractive prices all add up to a package to satisfy buyers across the spectrum of customer needs. It is extremely important to use a reputable dealer for buying a car.'

When looking for a car, there are a number of things to look out for:

- most newly-registered cars are sold with a full three year warranty. But do read the small print. Also, RMI dealers are obliged to provide a minimum level of warranty as a condition of their membership
- When comparing deals use the on-the-road price which manufacturers now advertise. This is made up of the basic ex-works price, value added tax, number plate, delivery charges, road tax, and first registration fee

Motorists should also consider the following check-list before and after purchase to make sure you have not overlooked the obvious. Since March 2001 the rate of vehicle excise duty has varied depending on the level of exhaust emissions produced by the car, so it is worth bearing this in mind.

BEFORE BUYING

You need to decide what sort of car do you want:

- will you carry goods or people or both?
- diesel, petrol, or alternative fuel?
- do you make long or short journeys?
- do you have children?
- automatic or manual?
- small engine for economy or larger engine for power?
- two, three, four or five door?
- saloon, coupé, sports, estate, roadster, SUV (sports utility vehicle) or MPV (multi-purpose vehicle)?
- are you worried about depreciation values?

The choices can be baffling, but car magazines and reputable web sites should be able to answer any questions you have before you take the first step to a dealer to look at and test drive a car. But remember, it is not just about the car, it is about a car you can live with:

- is your garage big enough?
- confirm insurance class and area cost
- understand fully the deposit terms, conditions of sale, any finance agreement including interest charge, and the trade-in price on your existing car and how long that price can be maintained
- warranty terms– will there be restrictions?

TEST DRIVE

According to Robinson, potential buyers should take every available opportunity to test out the car they are interested in: 'When exploring the market for your new car, remember the financial outlay is high, so make sure you ask for a test drive - many people don't. If you're not a car expert, take a knowledgeable friend along with you. Some manufacturers now let you test drive a car over 48 hours, or sometimes even longer.'

When you test drive, check:

- is the seating position comfortable? Is there enough head room?
- can you adjust the seat or steering wheel?
- check vision, especially the A-pillar, and mirrors
- road-handling, brakes, and steering
- seat belts working and comfortable?

If the car you have now tested and the advice you have had from the dealer fulfils your requirements you should feel more confident about buying the vehicle.

BUYING THE CAR

Before buying you should decide how to pay:

- if you are able to pay up front, you can pay by either cash, cheque, bankers draft, or on your credit card
- finance deals let you pay by instalments, spreading the cost over a number of years after which you can trade or keep the car
- If you do not want to buy the vehicle outright you can lease it via Personal Contract Purchase (PCP). Once the term is completed you either hand the car back to the finance company or you can pay the final settlement payment and keep the car, or use it as part exchange to buy a new car

AT DELIVERY

- ensure you are given full familiarisation of the vehicle controls
- get a copy of the pre-delivery inspection form
- check driver's instruction book
- check spare wheel and tools
- check for any scratches or small dents
- check lights, windscreen wipers, door locks, electric windows, security alarm, in-car sound system etc, are all in good working order

Check tax and insurance documents

- check invoice is completed correctly
- insurance cover note if required

AFTER BUYING

Of course, just buying the car is just the beginning of the journey. Robinson explains: 'Do remember that your new car will eventually need a service and it is vital, when having a service or any form of work carried out on your car, to use a reputable garage. If the supplying garage is too far away for such jobs, a local RMI member would be happy to support you with service.'

'A member should be able to advise you on the type of service you need, and point out potential problem areas before they arise, or become serious. In fact, whether you want to buy or sell a car or motorcycle, service or repair your existing vehicle, find an auction house, or a cherished number plate dealer, the RMI will be able to help you.'

'If you have a complaint against a member garage, the RMI National Conciliation Service should be able to help you get redress, if the problem cannot be solved in direct consultation with that member.'

To find a garage that is a member of the RMI, visit www.rmif.co.uk and use the 'Find a Service' function. You will also find details of RMI members that sell new and used cars or motorcycles, provide vehicle servicing and repair, and sell petrol.

According to Robinson, now is the time: 'Shop around and you will be sure to find an outstanding deal on a new car for 2011. Don't miss out.'

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

Keely Scanlan, Press Officer

Tel: 020 7307 3424

Mob: 07825 097697

Press Office direct line: 020 7307 3424

Press Office fax: 020 7307 3592

Web: www.rmif.co.uk Email: keely.scanlan@rmif.co.uk

The Retail Motor Industry Federation represents the interests of operators in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man providing sales and services to motorists and businesses. The RMI has a formal association with the independent Scottish Motor Trade Association which represents the retail motor industry in Scotland.