

Car Facts And Figures

Stretching Your Money: Tips On Buying Certified Cars

(NAPSA)—If you're thinking of purchasing a used car, there's good news. Used cars don't have to be as risky a purchase as they used to be. Thanks to certification programs, it's harder to distinguish new from used and more car buyers are turning to certified cars for better value.

Certification offers a way to buy a used car with confidence and helps you pick the best from the best.

The number of certified pre-owned (CPO) vehicles sold this year could be the highest in recent memory as sales continue to rise at record pace. Besides costing less than new-car counterparts, certified vehicles also come with many of the same benefits, eliminating much of the guesswork associated with buying used.

Some say it is one of the few segments of the auto market where both sales and value to the buyer have increased. Be wary, however, because not all certification programs are created equal. To help sort out the best from the worthless, used-car experts offer the following tips:

Certified by whom?

Make sure you know who sets the standards for the certification program and who makes certain they're being enforced. Look for a manufacturer-backed program—the best people to certify a car are the ones who built it and specialize in that make. Most manufacturers will offer a limited warranty in addition to honoring the car's original warranty.



Not all certification programs are equal. If you purchase a certified used car, find out who sets the certification standards and how they're enforced.

Do your homework.

Research the models that make sense for your driving needs. Check safety and reliability reports published online and prices from your whole area.

How was the car certified?

At a minimum, a car should have a detailed mechanical inspection and a vehicle history report. Carfax Vehicle History Reports are included with more than 80 percent of all manufacturer CPO vehicles for sale today.

What does it get you?

The certified used car you're buying probably comes with an extended warranty. Make sure you know exactly what this covers and for how long. You can always add additional coverage.

Ask for more.

If you want roadside assistance, options added to the car, free oil changes or anything else, don't be afraid to ask.

For more information or to order a report, go to www.carfax.com.