

HOW TO TEST DRIVE A CAR



In general you want to create a safe environment before your test drive. You should take the time to adjust your seat and mirrors before setting off. It will also be important to have a plan for highway and city driving as well as a large parking lot to do the turning maneuvers.



BEFORE DRIVING: _____

- Engine starts quickly and idles properly
- Check headlights, fog lights, blinkers and back up lights for proper function
- All dash warning lights illuminate and operate properly (ABS, Check engine, oil, temperature, maintenance)
- Emergency parking brake is tight and not loose
- Run A/C and heater controls for proper function
- Open hood and listen for normal sounding engine (No knocking, ticking, wheezing, screeching or hissing)



DURING TEST DRIVE: _____

- Engine accelerates and cruises smoothly with no hesitation
- Road noise in cabin should be normal when driving. Listen for rattles, squeaks and groans
- Check for abnormal wind noise coming from the windows (sign of an accident)
- Automatic transmission shift **quality** normal, both cold and hot. Shifting should be tight with no delays
- Automatic transmission shift **noise** normal, both cold and hot. Shifting should be quiet without clunking
- Automatic transmission responds immediately to acceleration and there is no slippage
- Manual transmission (if applicable) clutch should engage at about the halfway point and not slip at all
- Manual transmission (if applicable) clutch should engage properly. No shuddering especially when cold
- Steering wheel is exactly centered on dashboard (if off center, it's a sign of alignment or accident issues)
- Steering remains straight when **driving** on even roadway with no pull (pulling is a sign of alignment or accident issues)
- Steering remains straight when **braking** on even roadway with no pull (pulling is a sign of alignment or accident issues)
- Swerve left and right while driving at a moderate speed. Front end should not increase in noise (sign of worn bearings)
- Slow left and right parking lot u-turns. Listen for clicking noises from front. (sign of CV joint problems)



BRAKING TEST – Request permission from seller before doing this maneuver!

- Sudden braking to test cars equipped with Automatic Braking System (ABS). No skidding is expected
- Sudden braking results in tires skidding evenly (this should happen only on cars without ABS)