



State of Connecticut  
Attorney General William Tong

## Quick Tips

### *Buying a Used Car?*

#### *Know Your Rights*

Connecticut law requires dealers to:

- Inform you when a vehicle is sold “as is.”
- Allow you or a mechanic you chose to inspect a used car before you buy it.
- Provide you in the contract of sale, all promises by the dealer to make repairs or correct conditions on the used car you want to purchase.
- Include all legally required express warranties for the car in the contract of sale.
- Honor a warranty even if it has expired, provided that you notify the dealer of a claim within the warranty period.
- Provide you with a form that must be signed by the consumer and the dealer that [clearly identifies specific items which state law requires to be checked](#) prior to sale.

Private sales are not regulated by the state Department of Motor Vehicles. If you buy a car from a private individual and have problems with the vehicle, it becomes a civil matter either through small claims or Superior Court.

#### *Learn the Facts: Warranties*

- Dealers must give express warranties in Connecticut:
  - If the car costs between \$3,000 and \$5,000 and is less than 7 years old (The dealer must cover all repairs necessary to keep the vehicle mechanically sound and operational for at least 30 days or the first 1,500 miles, whichever comes first).
  - If the car costs more than \$5,000 and is less than 7 years old (The dealer must cover all repairs necessary to keep the vehicle mechanically sound and operational for at least 60 days or 3,000 miles, whichever comes first).
  - If the car costs less than \$3,000 and is more than 7 years old, the dealer can sell the car “As Is,” meaning no warranty, if the dealer provides a disclaimer on the front page of the contract of sale and you indicate your assent to the disclaimer.
- A dealer cannot exclude or limit an implied warranty on a car that costs more than \$3,000.00.
- The express warranty must provide that if the car breaks down during the warranty period, the dealer is responsible for all repairs necessary to keep the vehicle mechanically sound and operational.
- If the car is in the repair shop for more than a day, the warranty is extended for every day the car is in the dealer’s or his agent’s shop.
- A dealer cannot limit a warranty under the above conditions by using phrases such as “fifty-fifty,” “labor only,” or any other words that attempt to limit the dealer’s responsibility to the buyer.

#### *Used Car Buying Tips*

- Look the vehicle over very carefully and insist on a test drive. Look at the car during daylight. Any damage, defects or other problems will be easier to spot.
- Have a trusted mechanic perform a thorough inspection of the vehicle before purchase.
- Make sure that the dealer puts in writing and makes part of your contract any promises to correct any conditions or to make certain repairs upon your purchase of the vehicle.
- Be wary of odometer tampering. An unscrupulous seller may roll back the odometer to trick a consumer into paying more for a used car than it is worth. Before buying a used car, check the vehicle history using the car's vehicle identification number (VIN).
- You can check the vehicle history online. For example, the Department of Justice’s National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) at [www.nmvtis.gov](http://www.nmvtis.gov) is an online system that offers accurate information about a vehicle’s title, odometer data, and certain damage history. Expect to pay up to \$4 per report. The National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) at [www.nicb.org](http://www.nicb.org) also maintains a free database that includes flood damage and other information so consumers can investigate a car’s history by its vehicle identification number (VIN).



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#### *Buying a Car on the Internet?*

- Be wary of any seller who asks for money upfront or wants to use a wire transfer service.
- Be wary of any seller who changes the terms in the middle of negotiations. Pay close attention to any changes in the seller's story, the terms of the sale, or a request by the seller to move the transaction from one internet website to another.

For example, any offer by a seller on Craigslist to provide buyer protection from eBay Motors are invalid. Only cars bought on eBay are eligible for eBay Motors buyer protection.

- Be wary of sales where the seller and the car are not in the same place. A common scam is a claim by the seller that he/she is a military person stationed in a different location than that of the car for sale or has recently relocated and needs to sell a car in another location.

#### *Find Help*

- If you believe you have been the victim of a used car dealer, you can contact the Department of Motor Vehicles Consumer Complaint Center at (800) 842-8222 for assistance.
- If you wish to file a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General, please visit [www.ct.gov/ag](http://www.ct.gov/ag).

#### *Additional Resources*

- [The Federal Trade Commission Guide: “\*Facts for Consumers: Buying a Used Car\*”](#)