



## **Engine**

A dirty engine is a sign the car has not been well maintained and may indicate a mechanical problem.

## **Engine oil**

Grey or milky oil indicates a serious problem. Don't be fooled by lovely clean oil at the first dip; check the oil colour again after the engine has been running. A thick oil build up is a sign the car is lacking in maintenance.

## **Engine at idle**

Ensure the engine starts easily without hard revving. Lift the bonnet and listen to the engine idle. The sound should be even with no unusual noises (knocking, rattling, etc). Check the exhaust smoke; blue smoke can signify serious problems.

## **Radiator**

Check for damage or corrosion. Even worse, check for signs of leakage.

## **Radiator Coolant**

The coolant should be clean and brightly coloured.

## **Battery**

The battery should be held securely in place and the battery terminals should be secure and clean. Check for acid corrosion.

### **When you look under the car, check:**

## **Exhaust systems**

Excessive noise or fumes may indicate holes or rust in the muffler or pipes.

## **Tyres**

Check all tyres for tread, cracks and uneven wear, which can indicate problems with the steering or suspension. Include the spare tyre in your inspection.

## **Oil leaks**

Check the engine, transmission, differential, brakes, power steering and the shock absorbers for any signs of a leakage.

### **When you sit inside the car, check:**

## **Upholstery, trim and carpets**

Check throughout for wear and tear. Remember to look under mats and seat covers.

## **Seat belts**

Check the seat belts are in good condition, not frayed or faded, and that they are well anchored.

## **Lights**

Ensure all lights illuminate when they should, both on the dashboard and outside the car.

## **Accessories and electrical devices**

Try them out. Make sure the radio, air-conditioner/heater, windscreen wipers, horn, electric windows, etc all work as they should. This is still important to check even if you are buying from a licensed motor vehicle dealer as they may have excluded some of these items from the warranty so if there is a problem the cost will be yours.

## **Jack and tool kit**

Make sure they are included and are in a workable condition

### **When you take the car for a drive, check:**

## **Brakes**

Make sure the pedal feels firm on application. When braking, the steering wheel should not vibrate and the car should stop smoothly in a straight line and not pull to one side.

## **Steering**

Relax your grip on the steering wheel and see if the car pulls to one side as this can indicate either worn suspension or misaligned steering.

## **Engine**

Listen for any rattling or knocking noises when you accelerate, decelerate or are cruising. Unusual noises may indicate excessive wear.

## **Exhaust**

Blue smoke can signify serious problems.

## **Suspension**

Listen for any unusual noises particularly when you drive over bumps.

## **Transmission**

Check the gears change easily (both in manual and automatics) without any abnormal 'whining' or 'howling' noises.

**For more information on buying a used vehicle, call RAA Technical Advisory Service on 8202 4689**

**To book or to find out more about RAA Vehicle Inspections, call 8202 4688**