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Buying a Vehicle On-line

Why would someone you don't know, who lives in a different city, in the United States for example, want to sell you a \$30,000 vehicle for \$20,000? Plainly and simply, they wouldn't. It's that easy. Therefore, it must be easy to avoid getting "ripped-off" on that dream car you found down in Texas, right?

Unfortunately, it's not that easy for everyone. People can make bad decisions when they think they are getting a good deal. Think of the last time you got an unexpectedly good deal on something you really, really wanted. It's a rush. And that rush of endorphins can encourage you to make bad decisions. Be honest with yourself; have you ever made a bad call when you were too much having fun?

Now that you have thought about that wrong decision that felt so right, there are some things to keep in mind when making an on-line vehicle purchase. Even if you think you are immune to getting "ripped-off" keep reading; there are some good resources presented in this article for everyone thinking about making an on-line vehicle purchase.

The internet is an invention that changed our lives, arguably as much as the invention of the wheel. The wheel changed human behaviour slowly at first, speeding up with its use in the automobile. The internet, on the other hand, has changed human behaviour in less than a generation. Before the internet, how could you have found that mint 1984 Nissan 300ZX turbo at a dealership in Ohio; or the 1957 Harley that looks just like the one your Grandpa used to ride? The list goes on and on. The internet has been a great tool for the motor vehicle enthusiast whether it's for finding your dream chariot or just talking to someone who has a great interest or knowledge about it. But it also has opened the door for thieves and fraudsters to take advantage of your raised pulse and excitement about that great find.

There are no "ten commandments" on how to purchase a vehicle online but if a proper strategy could be summarized, it would be in one word; research. The internet is perhaps the greatest research tool you will ever have and it can be used to dramatically lessen the risk you expose yourself to when buying a car "electronically." There are so many resources that allow you to make informed decisions. At the end of this article there are two links that present an abundance of information on importing a vehicle to Canada. You are spending your money and you may lose it. It is difficult enough to extradite suspected murderers from one country to another so once you become victimized by a relatively less serious internet fraud, chances are very high that nobody is going to be arrested and you won't be getting your money back.

Before you even decide to buy a vehicle on-line, ask yourself if you even need to. There are many local dealerships that are very reputable. They have access to auto auctions and can bring in the specific vehicle you want from anywhere across Canada. They have the experience to handle these matters. It's their business. Even if you buy a car locally and have problems, there are laws and policies in place to deal with them. If you buy a vehicle at a dealership or worse, from a private seller who is 3000 kilometres away, how easy will it be to get them to fix a bad transmission they hid from you? Is that dealership going to worry about getting your repeat business the way a local dealership should?

The thought of buying a vehicle south of the border in order to save thousands of dollars is not always worth it or even valid. Is it worth the trouble to spend 60 hours on the road, deal with the paperwork of importing a vehicle and have no warranty in order to save \$1000 or more? It might be, but after adding everything up, a



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local purchase may present the smarter buy. Do the research and decide; it's your money. Keep in mind that the Police and your lawyer may not be able to help you after the money is gone.

If you decide that you want that vehicle online or the one listed at an established dealership, do your research. You will dramatically *lessen* the risk. But remember that you are taking a risk and nothing will completely eliminate it.

Here are some websites you can check. There are many more sites available so don't limit yourself; the more you learn, the better you will be able to make an informed decision. Major on-line auction sites present a lot of information that helps protect the consumer. Links will also be available at the Saskatoon Police Service website at; www.police.saskatoon.sk.ca/ .

- Registrar of Imported Vehicles: www.riv.ca/
- Canada Border Services Agency: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/bsf5048-eng.html>

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