Car Inspection Checklist

A checklist for inspecting your own car's condition and safety.

Inspected by _____ Date _____

Unit / ID _____ Location _____

Exterior and body	OK	DEFECT	N/A
Walk around the car checking for dents, rust, cracks or fresh damage.	☐	☐	☐
Confirm the license plates are present, secure and readable.	☐	☐	☐
Check that doors, hood and trunk open, close and latch securely.	☐	☐	☐
Inspect the windshield and windows for chips or cracks in the line of sight.	☐	☐	☐
Check that mirrors are intact, secure and adjust properly.	☐	☐	☐
Look under the car for fresh fluid leaks or hanging components.	☐	☐	☐

Lights and signals	OK	DEFECT	N/A
Test both low and high beam headlights for output and aim.	☐	☐	☐
Check brake lights and the center high-mount stop lamp. Use a wall reflection or a helper to confirm brake lights at the rear.	☐	☐	☐
Verify front and rear turn signals and hazard lights flash correctly.	☐	☐	☐
Test reverse lights and the rear license plate light.	☐	☐	☐
Check parking, fog and daytime running lights where fitted.	☐	☐	☐
Confirm no warning lights stay lit on the dashboard after start-up.	☐	☐	☐

Tires and wheels	OK	DEFECT	N/A
Check tire pressure on all tires against the door-jamb sticker.	☐	☐	☐
Measure tread depth and confirm it is above the legal minimum.	☐	☐	☐
Look for uneven wear, cuts, bulges or embedded objects.	☐	☐	☐
Confirm all lug nuts are present and wheel covers are secure.	☐	☐	☐
Inspect the spare tire's pressure and condition.	☐	☐	☐
Verify the TPMS light is off or address the warning.	☐	☐	☐

Brakes and steering	OK	DEFECT	N/A
Test the brake pedal for firm, consistent feel without sinking.	☐	☐	☐
Listen for grinding or squealing when braking. Grinding usually means worn pads; have the brakes inspected immediately.	☐	☐	☐
Confirm the parking brake holds the car on an incline.	☐	☐	☐
Check the steering for excessive play, pulling or vibration.	☐	☐	☐
Verify the ABS and brake warning lights are off.	☐	☐	☐
Listen for clunks over bumps that suggest worn suspension.	☐	☐	☐

Fluids and under the hood	OK	DEFECT	N/A
Check engine oil level and condition on the dipstick.	☐	☐	☐
Verify coolant level in the reservoir when the engine is cold.	☐	☐	☐
Check brake fluid and power steering fluid levels.	☐	☐	☐
Top up windshield washer fluid.	☐	☐	☐
Inspect belts and hoses for cracks, fraying or leaks.	☐	☐	☐
Check the battery terminals are clean, tight and corrosion-free.	☐	☐	☐

Interior and safety equipment	OK	DEFECT	N/A
Test the horn for a clear, loud sound.	☐	☐	☐
Check that wipers clear the glass and washers spray properly.	☐	☐	☐
Confirm all seatbelts latch, retract and are undamaged.	☐	☐	☐
Verify the defroster, heater and ventilation work.	☐	☐	☐
Check that warning, oil and fuel gauges read correctly.	☐	☐	☐
Confirm a warning triangle, first-aid kit and required items are aboard.	☐	☐	☐

Notes / defects found