

New Car Checklist

A checklist for what to do after buying a new car.

Paperwork and documents

- ☐ Collect the bill of sale, finance agreement and all signed contracts.
- ☐ Get the manufacturer's certificate of origin or title documents.
- ☐ Confirm the VIN matches every document and the car itself.
Verify the VIN on paperwork matches the dash and door plates.
- ☐ Store the owner's manual, warranty booklet and service schedule.
- ☐ Keep all keys, fobs and the key code in a safe place.
- ☐ File copies of every document digitally as backup.

Insurance and registration

- ☐ Activate auto insurance before driving the car off the lot.
Most lenders and laws require active coverage before you drive.
- ☐ Add the new VIN to your policy and confirm coverage levels.
- ☐ Register the vehicle and pay any taxes or fees by the deadline.
- ☐ Obtain license plates and the registration document.
- ☐ Display tags or stickers as your jurisdiction requires.
- ☐ Update your driver records or address if needed.

Warranty and protection

- ☐ Register the warranty with the manufacturer if required.
- ☐ Note warranty coverage, duration and what voids it.
- ☐ Review any extended warranty or service plan terms.
- ☐ Understand roadside assistance coverage and how to use it.
- ☐ Apply any paint, rust or interior protection if purchased.
- ☐ File warranty contacts and claim instructions for reference.

Learn the features

- ☐ Read the owner's manual sections on controls and warning lights.
- ☐ Set up driver profiles, mirrors, seats and steering position.
- ☐ Pair your phone and configure the infotainment system.
- ☐ Learn the driver-assistance and safety features and their limits.
- ☐ Locate the spare, jack, tools and tire repair kit.
- ☐ Find the fuel or charging door, hood release and tow points.

Break-in period

- ☐ Follow the manual's break-in mileage and speed guidance.
Break-in guidelines vary by model; follow your owner's manual exactly.
- ☐ Vary engine speed and avoid sustained high revs early on.
- ☐ Avoid hard acceleration and heavy braking during break-in.
- ☐ Avoid towing or heavy loads until break-in is complete.
- ☐ Check fluid levels in the first weeks of ownership.
- ☐ Note the first service mileage or date and book it on schedule.

Setup and peace of mind

- ☐ Add a roadside assistance contact and emergency kit to the car.
- ☐ Save the dealer and service department contacts.
- ☐ Set a calendar reminder for the first scheduled service.
- ☐ Record the mileage and any included free services.
- ☐ Consider a dashcam, floor mats and other accessories.
- ☐ Keep a maintenance log to protect the warranty and resale value.