

Don't let car dealers trick you into buying an unsafe, defective recalled car

1) Do NOT pay extra for a car that is “certified.” That just means you are paying too much, particularly since the Federal Trade Commission allows dealers to advertised that cars are “safe,” “repaired for safety” and qualified to be sold as “certified” cars -- without getting the killer safety defects repaired.

2) NEVER trust what a car dealer or salesperson says. Do not trust any car dealer advertising or any claims they make, whether they are in writing, or verbally, about the safety of the cars they offer for sale.

3) Avoid buying used cars from car dealers. It's too risky. Here are CARS' tips for how to get a good deal on a safe, reliable used car without having to go to a car dealership:

<http://carconsumers.org/usedcarbuyingtips.htm>

4) Check the safety recall status of any car yourself BEFORE you agree to buy. Here's how to check:

- Get the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), which should be on a plate on the dashboard and also on a sticker on the driver door jamb.
- Enter the VIN at the website for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, at:
<https://vinrcl.safercar.gov/vin/>
- If you do not have access to the internet, or wish to talk with a person, call the toll-free number for the manufacturer of the car. Here's a list of toll-free numbers for each manufacturer:
<http://autopedia.com/html/Mfg800.html>

5) If a car has an unrepaired safety recall, WALK AWAY. Your life is precious. So is the safety of your family and friends, and others who share the roads.

6) If a dealer tells you the defect is not serious, do NOT believe them. Many dealers lie about the risks posed by recalled cars. Some people have been killed by a defective car within hours of when they were handed the keys. One horrific example of what can happen: In San Diego, a Highway Patrol officer, his wife, their 13-year-old daughter, and her uncle were all killed within hours, after they were loaned a defective Lexus. The defect? The car had a problem with the floor mat that caused it to accelerate out of control, reaching speeds of over 120 mph.

7) If a dealer tells you that you can get a safety recall repaired right away, for free, do NOT believe them. For millions of recalled cars, it is impossible to get repairs because of a severe shortage of repair parts. It may take years before the car can be made safe to drive. If it was so easy to get the car repaired, the dealer should have gotten the repairs done, before offering the car for sale.