

Flood Damaged Vehicles – Buyer Beware

As Florida and Texas recover from devastating hurricanes, the flood damaged vehicles can end up for sale far from where they were damaged. As we saw after Hurricane Katrina, scammers will try to sell these vehicles as damage free in states that were nowhere near the flooding. If a car has previous water damage, the title should say “salvage” or “flood damage”. Watch out for scammers that can easily remove these warnings from the title.

According to Russ Heaps of Autotrader, if you do not have a trusted mechanic, there are several things you can look for that will help to protect you:

- Check under the vehicle's carpets or floor covering for mud or rust, and don't forget the trunk.
- Give the underside of the carpets a sniff test. Do they smell like mildew?
- Mud and debris collect in hard-to-clean spaces, such as under the hood and in the trunk.
- Rust on the heads of any exposed screws under the hood, around the doors or in the trunk indicates exposure to excess moisture.
- Mud and debris on the underside of panels and brackets is another good sign the car has been under water.

Water damage may not be immediately present, taking months or even years to reveal itself. Remember, if the deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

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