Do your homework when selling your car, to maximise its value

Published: November 13, 2024

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/do-your-homework-when-selling-your-car-to-maximise-its-value/



Of course condition and cleanliness add value when selling your car but don’t ignore taking care of the paperwork too… (Photograph by, and copyright, Kim Henson).

Taking care when preparing your car for sale can increase its value by between 10 and 20 per cent…

Pamela Murdoch, vehicle specialist at used car supermarket Available Car (https://www.availablecar.com/) shares her advice.

(All words from Available Car).

“When preparing to sell your car, there are several important steps to consider. One of the key factors is ensuring you have a complete set of servicing documents and a well-maintained service history. This reassures potential buyers that the car they’re buying is legitimate and has been carefully looked after during your ownership.

In addition to the owner’s manual, service records, receipts for parts, MOT certificates, and warranty and insurance documents, the V5C logbook, also known as your car’s logbook, is the most crucial document when selling your car.

Although you can sell your car without a V5C, it can make the process much more difficult and it can significantly reduce your car’s value by around 10-20%, though the exact impact depends on the car’s make, model, age, and market demand.

Buyers generally see a missing V5C as a red flag, suggesting potential issues with the vehicle’s history, ownership, or legality, which can make it harder to sell and prompt buyers to negotiate for a lower price. Therefore, we strongly recommend ordering a replacement from the DVLA.

You can apply for a replacement V5C online or by phone if the details on the original are the same. If you need to change any details, you’ll need to apply by post. A replacement V5C costs £25 and should arrive in a few days.”

What is a V5C?

“A V5C is a paper document issued by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to the registered keeper of a vehicle and contains specific details about your car.

It’s important to make sure your V5C has your correct address. The address on the logbook will be used for the following:

Tax reminders and other correspondence from the DVLA Penalties for speeding or other offences from the police Parking tickets from councils or private parking firms

An incorrect address could mean notices regarding speeding offences and parking fines are sent to the wrong address. This could result in you paying higher penalties than necessary; if these go unpaid, you could end up in court.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you don’t tell the DVLA when your address changes.

If you’re looking to buy a second hand car, one of the first things you should check is the vehicle documentation. It’s usually a bad idea to buy a car without a V5C. This is because the car could be:

Written off
Stolen
Used as security for a “logbook loan” Subject to a finance agreement

The DVLA recommends that potential buyers request to see the V5C logbook when viewing a vehicle. Look for a “DVL” watermark on the document, and check that the serial number is not within the ranges BG8229501 to BG9999030 or BI2305501 to BI2800000, as these may indicate a stolen V5C. If you encounter a document with a serial number in these ranges, contact the police as soon as it’s safe.

Additionally, buyers should ensure that the details in the logbook, such as the registration

number and VIN, match the information provided about the car.”