



Vehicle History Reports: How to Choose?

The recent addition of ICBC vehicle history data to CARFAX Canada has prompted a number of questions from the industry and consumers. The VSA has always considered the use of one or more vehicle history reports to be a business decision of the dealership. As all vehicle history reports have potential limitations and errors, dealers should consider the following in selecting reports:

- Use a report that will uncover *material facts* from all jurisdictions in which the vehicle was registered. *Material facts* include, but are not limited to, title status, prior use and repaired damages
- Be aware that not everything gets recorded and reported
- Consider all the disclosures that are legally required to be made to consumers
- Disclose the limitations and potential for error of any report that is shared with a buyer
- Avoid overstating the completeness of a vehicle history report, as this could be a deceptive act
- If specific information is requested by a consumer, consider which report, if any, will provide it

Remember, a dealer remains responsible to consumers for any misrepresentations made, no matter which reports are used. As a result, vehicle history reports should be just one of many tools used to meet the legal duties of a dealer to consumers. Other examples may include:

- Physical inspection of the vehicle for safety concerns and prior damage
- Mechanical inspection
- Repair and maintenance history, when available
- A paint depth check for prior body damage
- British Columbia and Canada-wide lien checks
- Other sources of information available to the dealer or required by the circumstances

Note: The VSA has partnered with both ICBC and CARPROOF in joint consumer awareness campaigns and acknowledges this support for the cooperative campaigns. However, this does not indicate an endorsement of the vehicle history reports offered by ICBC or CARPROOF.

Dealer Number Required in All Online Advertising

Recent checks reveal that some dealers and salespeople are not including their dealer number in online advertising. This includes Craigslist, Kijiji, Castanet and AutoTrader. Many of the ads clearly show the name of the dealer and appear in the dealer or business sections of the websites. This is helpful, but the *Motor Dealer Act* requires that the dealer number also be listed. Just as with a stock number, the dealer number allows consumers to accurately identify a dealership when names are similar.

Salespeople must include the dealer number when advertising a dealer vehicle for sale. Offering a dealer vehicle for sale without indicating the connection to the dealership is a deceptive act. This would include listing the vehicle for sale as a private seller, and not in the dealer or business section of a website.

Remember, the lowest advertised price prevails and will be considered the *total price* for the vehicle if additional fees are not shown.