

HOW TO BUY A PRE-REG

What Car? definition

A pre-registered, or pre-reg, car is one that comes with delivery mileage only. It should have less than 200 miles on the clock and be less than six months old.

How to spot a pre-reg

The only tell-tale signs are the V5C, which will probably carry the dealer's name as the owner, and the price, which should be much less than a new model.

What to watch out for

Pre-registering allows dealers to bump up sales and then sell the cars to private buyers at hugely discounts. Private buyers benefit from this, but there are pitfalls.

- Buyers of pre-reg cars need to be flexible about the range of options on offer, but must also be wary of dealers driving up prices with unwanted options.
- Insist you are given your part of the V5C registration document when you leave the dealer. If you don't get it, walk away – it's against the law if it isn't handed over. Unscrupulous dealers may tell you it will be sent through the post in a few weeks – ignore this and insist on getting the V5C there and then. You can argue the case of why you should be given the V5C immediately on these grounds:
 - The police may request it. If you don't have it, expect countless calls to the DVLA, dealership and your local police station.
 - Your insurer may need it, both to validate your insurance and – in the event of an accident – to process your claim. If you don't have the form, a claim will be delayed and may be invalidated.
 - Some local authorities won't give you a parking permit without one.
- Make sure you also leave with a sales invoice and receipt, because it's these, and not the V5C, that are proof of ownership. The V5C merely proves you are the registered keeper.
- Dealers may sometimes try to sell a pre-registered car without revealing its true nature, so:
 - Get all quotes in writing and check carefully for the term 'pre-reg'.
 - Ask if you're buying a pre-reg car. By law, the dealer must answer honestly.
 - Some pre-reg vehicles are older models or pre-face-lift cars, so check what you're buying.
- Make sure you're getting the best deal by opting for a pre-reg over a new car using whatcar.com's Target Price check – a good deal on a new car may save you more money, and our Target Price gives you a value to beat.