

Are You Shopping for a Car? Read the Ads Closely!

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation reviewed automobile advertising in anticipation of President's Day auto sales. We found that consumers need to read ads closely and ask questions about unfamiliar terms. Read the small print at the bottom of an ad as it contains details that are very important to know when comparing offers.

For example:

- Special pricing may depend on taking dealer financing. Several ads offered bonuses or reduced prices, but only if you go with dealer financing, or have a high credit score.
- Some offers include a loyalty bonus, meaning that you have to already own or trade in a specific make or model.
- Some offers include rebates that are limited in scope—recent college grad, for instance.
- Some financing offers have residency restrictions. Find out what those are!
- Some offers require you to take same day delivery—are you ready, or able to take delivery immediately?
- Some offers discount the price with a trade assist of a specified amount. Do you know the value of your current car? What will the price be if you don't trade in another car?



Additional Auto Shopping Tips:

1. **Shop for autos at the end of the month** when dealers are trying to sell more cars and you are more likely to get a good deal.
2. **Check buyers' guides for dealers' cost information.** Try sites like Edmunds.com for sale price comparisons, and regional pricing information. You could save a few thousand dollars.
3. **Negotiate prices without a trade first,** then ask about trade-ins, dealer loyalty, so you can get a full picture of the price, and truly compare offers.
4. **Watch for added items.** Dealers will try to sell high profit products or services such as undercoating, paint sealants, upholstery treatments, key replacement plans and extended warranties. Be wary as they may not be a good deal.
5. **Be willing to walk away from the deal.** Dealers are trying to maximize their profits just as you are trying to find a deal. If high pressure tactics leave you feeling confused, walk away. The dealer may call and ask you to come back in, or you may consider buying a car elsewhere. This will give you some control in the negotiating process.
6. **Buy the car that's right for you.** Purchase price is only one component of the cost of owning a car. Remember that insurance, taxes and high repair costs could be an unexpected financial burden so it pays to research these costs before you buy.
7. **Get all promises in writing.** This will avoid misunderstandings. Purchase agreements should contain options, accessories, delivery times and other promises given verbally. Under Massachusetts law there is no 3-day right to cancel. Once the purchase agreement is signed the deal is final so be sure you know what you are signing.