



# INFORMATION ABOUT ODOMETER FRAUD



U.S. Department of Transportation  
National Highway Traffic Safety  
Administration



## WHAT IS ODOMETER FRAUD?

Odometer fraud is the disconnection, resetting or alteration of a motor vehicle's odometer with the intent to change the number of miles indicated.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Odometer tampering continues to be a serious crime and consumer fraud issue. In 2002, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), a government office that is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, determined this crime allows more than 450,000 vehicles to be sold each year with false odometer readings, milking American car buyers out of more than \$1 billion annually.

## DETECTING ODOMETER FRAUD

It can be difficult, but not impossible, to detect when a vehicle's odometer has been altered. The following is a list of tips to help used car buyers detect odometer fraud:

-  **ASK** to see the title and compare the mileage on it with the vehicle's odometer. Be sure to examine the title closely if the mileage notation seems obscured or is not easy to read.
-  **COMPARE** the mileage on the odometer with the mileage indicated on the vehicle's maintenance or inspection records. Also, search for oil change and maintenance stickers on windows or door frames, in the glove box or under the hood.
-  **CHECK** that the numbers on the odometer gauge are aligned correctly. If they're crooked, contain gaps or jiggle when you bang on the dash with your hand, walk away from the purchase.
-  **EXAMINE** the tires. If the odometer on your car shows 20,000 or less, it should have the original tires.
-  **LOOK** at the wear and tear on the vehicle — especially the gas, brake and clutch pedals — to be sure it seems consistent with and appropriate for the number of miles displayed on the odometer.
-  **REQUEST** a CARFAX Vehicle History Report to check for odometer discrepancies in the vehicle's history. If the seller does not have a vehicle history report, use the car's VIN to order a CARFAX vehicle history report online.
-  **VISIT** [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) to learn more information about odometer fraud.

## ODOMETER FRAUD LAW

Committing odometer fraud is a crime. The federal government passed a law that requires a written disclosure of the mileage registered on an odometer be provided by the seller to the purchaser on the title to the vehicle when the ownership of a vehicle is transferred. If the odometer mileage is incorrect, the law requires a statement to that effect to be furnished on the title to the buyer. However, vehicles ten years and older are exempt from the written disclosure requirements.



## DIGITAL ODOMETERS

Digital odometers that have been tampered with are even harder to detect than traditional mechanical odometers (since they have no visible moving parts). A vehicle's condition and a detailed history report are the best clues a buyer has for determining whether clocking has occurred.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about odometer fraud:

Contact CARFAX at [www.carfax.com](http://www.carfax.com)

Contact NHTSA by visiting [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov), calling 202-366-0444 or emailing [odometerfraud@dot.gov](mailto:odometerfraud@dot.gov)



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