

What makes my appraisal different

Appraisals are broken up into four areas of the vehicle: **Engine** compartment, **Chassis**, tires and wheels, **Interior**, and **Exterior**. The initial inspection begins with a walk-around of the vehicle noting mis-matched panels, quality of the paint, worn tires, cracked glass and the overall appearance of the vehicle. VIN plate and body tag information is written down for verification later on.

Engine and Engine Compartment: The VIN number (or Body Tag) will usually identify the engine under the hood (V-8, V-6, or inline engine) with most vehicles – this is the first area to verify. Engine walls, supports and firewall are inspected for rust, collision damage or repairs. Next is the engine itself – has there been recent repairs completed? If it is a collector vehicle is the casting numbers available? Is the engine the correct paint color (restored or original vehicles) and what condition is the engine exterior? Wiring – has there any splicing been done – are the wiring looms routed in factory looms? Are other attached items correct? Intake manifold, carburetor, etc.?

Chassis: Getting underneath to inspect the chassis at times can be a chore and the line of sight is narrow - a lift (if available) makes inspection of this area much easier. I make every attempt to inspect the frame or unibody and floor pan for collision damage, excessive rust or repairs. The exhaust is inspected for correct mufflers and rusted items. If the vehicle has been stationary for a time, inspection of the floor may show oil leakage from the engine, transmission or rear axle. If the vehicle has been moved recently, I observe leakage from the oil pan, transmission case and rear axle housing. All suspension items are examined for obvious wear or collision damage. Wheels and covers are inspected for originality and condition. Tire size, model and manufacture are noted as is the condition and tread wear. If available, the age of the tires are noted as radial tires have a definite life span manufacture tire dates will be noted in the formal written appraisal.

Interior: Front and rear seats are inspected for wear, tears, water or rain damage and split seams. Sitting on the seats will show aged or worn seat foam. Door panels are checked for sun or water damage and wear. Headliner is inspected for dirt, tears, seam splitting or (if replaced) poor installation. The underside of convertible tops are checked for worn fabric, bent or rusted irons and the seller will be asked to operate convertible tops. Carpeting is inspected for wear, sun damage or, if replaced, poor installation. The dash is checked for dents, sun/water damage or cracks in the padded sections. Instruments are checked for clear lenses, pitted bezels and detail of painted areas.

Exterior: The exterior paint is examined for gloss, and quality of workmanship. Any scratches, drips, runs or poor prep areas are noted as are age checking and color mismatch. The bodypanels are examined for waviness (poor panel repairs) and rust (if allowed by the seller, a flexible magnet will be used to check for Bondo or filler.) Doors, hood and trunk lid inspected for rust, waviness, and correct consistent “gapping” between body and panels. Doors will be opened to check for any poor opening/closing with an inspection of the door bottoms for rust or repairs. All chrome is inspected for condition, peeling, pitting or poor installation. Stainless trim is inspected for dents or scratches. The glass is inspected for the correct manufacturer “bug” (embossed identification) for this particular vehicle. All windows are raised and lowered looking for stiff operation or no operation at all. Glass is also checked for cracks, scratches or windshield wiper scuffing.

The vehicle is personally inspected (no vehicles will be appraised from pictures, video or hearsay – all will be done in person) with many digital pictures taken of the vehicle. This information is used when background information of the particular vehicle is verified and a formal appraisal with a condition code and appraised value is typed into Microsoft Word format. Usually two copies are sent to the client but more are available if necessary. Also pictures (if required by the client) are available.

In addition to the “regular” inspection/appraisal a **Pre-Purchase Inspection** and Appraisal is available at extra cost. This would include all of the inspection items above with the addition of a test ride (I will ride in the vehicle - driving the vehicle is not done due to insurance considerations) that will observe the vehicle powerplant operation, handling and operation of accessories. On the test ride I will first observe (with the hood open) engine startup (easy or hard), noise, idle speed and smoothness, oil blowby or exhaust smoke. A “walk around” inspects lamp operation including brake lights, backup lamp operation, license plate and directionals. The test ride inspection itself includes smoothness of ride, drifting (wandering), brake effectiveness and pulling to one side or the other, interior squeaks, rattles or wind noise (with windows up). Also included are checking the gauges (do they all work and are instruments lit) sound system, air conditioning (depending on weather) and heater operation. Exhaust noise is noted as is the acceleration of the engine, correct (and quiet) shifting with no jerking of the transmission and any rear axle noise.

If you are purchasing a vehicle, the appraiser is your “eyes and ears” – do not hesitate to ask for additional information to allow you to make an informed decision. As a certified appraiser I will do whatever, within reason, to verify the vehicle you receive is the vehicle that was offered. If it is possible, I would appreciate being able to contact my client (you) immediately after a Pre Purchase Inspection is completed. This will give you an immediate “take” on the vehicle covering all areas of interest.

Photos: Dated digital pictures will be taken of the vehicle at inspection and I will use several in the body of the printed appraisal - all pictures taken will be available to you on Photobucket. Dated pictures are important to many insurance companies to verify the condition of the vehicle at one particular date. The photos may be used in future advertizing on my Website but your confidentiality will be honored.

VIN Tag (and body tag): Offsite, I will check the VIN tag (and body tag - if present) description versus the actual appearance of the vehicle and the installed drivetrain. I will make every effort to verify “matching numbers” if this a purchasing point of the vehicle but it is up to the seller if you wish him to remove, loosen or move any accessories or items on the vehicle (valve covers, air cleaners, etc.) to inspect for correct casting or stamped numbers. Any damage to the vehicle during this operation may be charged to the buyer (you) in this “extra effort” inspection. If you feel that any items must be disturbed, notify me when we first talk so I can clear this point up with the seller.