

OWNING A CAR



Getting a car can be life changing for newcomers, yet owning and operating a car is also a huge responsibility. Going over important documents such as driver's license, title and registration, as well as insurance policies will help them have a clear understanding of the responsibilities associated with this step towards independence. GNTs are not required to assist newcomers with purchasing a car, however if the newcomers inquire about it, you can review the points in this document with newcomers and provide assistance as needed and at your discretion.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BUYING A CAR

Are You Ready to Buy a Car?

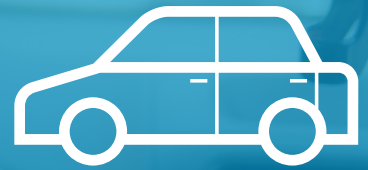
- Do you have money to purchase a car in cash? A decent used car will cost a minimum of \$4,000, plus tax. It is much better for you save up your money and buy a car with cash so you will not be in debt.
- If you do not have cash, is your credit good enough to get a loan and can you afford monthly payments? You can get a loan from a bank, credit union or even a car dealership. Generally, you must have good credit. It is a good idea to compare interest rates as some are much higher than others. Monthly payments may be spaced out over a period of time.
- Can you afford to pay for gas, insurance, taxes and maintenance on a car? These costs can be very high, especially if your car needs repairs.
- Can you easily access public transportation and get by without a car? Public transportation is cheaper than owning a car, though it may not be as convenient.
- Do you have your drivers license? Can you drive safely? You should have a valid license and learn how to drive safely before you buy your own car.

BUYING A CAR

If you are truly ready to own and operate your own car, the following tips will help you make a wise purchase.

- Purchasing a car is a big investment, so carefully plan before you make your purchase.
- Before buying, determine how much money you can afford to spend or borrow in order to make a car purchase.
- Decide what kind of car you can buy with the budget you have to work with. Consider things like make & model, year, price, reliability, and gas usage. Talk with friends and contacts to get suggestions about cars they have found to be reliable and economical
- Shop around to compare cars and beware of scams and fraudulent sales tactics!

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- Have the car inspected by a professional mechanic. Once they are done inspecting the car, they will give you a report. Give this to the person or car dealership you are buying the car from. Sometimes, the car dealership or person who is selling you the car will pay the money needed to fix these problems. A basic inspection will vary in cost so be sure to look into the price of a mechanic when considering purchasing a car.
- Test-drive the car. Look for anything irregular such as vibrations, noises, etc.
- Don't sign a contract and don't give a deposit until you are completely satisfied with the car.

BUYING CAR INSURANCE

In most states, it is against the law to drive a car that you own without liability insurance. It is recommended that you get full coverage for at least the first 6 months while you get used to driving in America. Full coverage is expensive, but it will cover damage to your vehicle even if you are at fault for the accident.

Some of the major insurance companies are Allstate Insurance, Nationwide Insurance, State Farm Insurance, and Geico Insurance. Keep a copy of your insurance card in your glove box at all times.

CAR TITLE, REGISTRATION, AND BILL OF STATE

A title is a paper that shows the previous owner's name, address, year, make, model, and VIN number. The current owner will sign the reverse side of the Title and place your name and address. They must also give you a bill of sale for the purchase of this vehicle.

Transferring car title to your name

- Take your title, bill of sale, and proof of insurance card to your local DMV (Some states also require the vehicle to pass an inspection or emissions test)
- You will be charged for your new title and will receive a new license plate to be placed on your car.
- In some states you may also have to pay sales tax on the purchase of the vehicle when registering it.