



AMVIC News Release

Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC)

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AMVIC's thoughts on Imported Vehicles

Edmonton... With the strength of the Canadian dollar, many individuals are starting to think of purchasing a vehicle in the United States or elsewhere in the world. Here are a few things to think about to decide whether to import a vehicle.

New Vehicles

As a consumer, what do you have to be aware of in purchasing a new vehicle from the U.S?

1. Check the Registrar of Imported Vehicles (RIV) website (www.riv.ca) or call them at 1-888-848-8240 to make sure that the vehicle you are interested in is admissible in Canada.
2. Transportation of the vehicle – don't forget to include the costs you will incur in going and getting the vehicle or getting it shipped. Shipping will likely cost you at least \$1,500.
3. There are several steps and costs that you will incur prior to being able to register the vehicle:
 - a. The U.S. Customs requires the title of the vehicle and Bill of Sale 72 hours prior to the vehicle arriving at the border so don't think that you can arrive at the border, spend an hour or so and keep on driving with everything done. There is a \$500 fine if this is not done properly.
 - b. The Canadian Registrar of Imported Vehicle (RIV) requires that you complete a Form 1 which will cost you \$195 plus GST
 - c. GST on the vehicle – will be collected at the border
 - d. Canadian Federal Inspection – refer to the RIV website for locations – cost included in RIV fee
 - e. Provincial Out of Province inspection – variable cost (Brand new vehicles may be exempted)
 - f. Provincial Registration – you are required to provide the original U.S. title, RIV Form 1 and the Out of Province inspection
4. Warranty – you need to research this thoroughly if you want a warranty. Some manufacturers cancel the new vehicle warranty as soon as they find out that the vehicle is out of the country. Go to the dealer where you would go for any warranty work and tell them what you are planning on doing. They will inform you of any warranty issues that you will encounter. Several manufacturers cancel the warranty on vehicles brought in from the U.S. so you would have no warranty in Canada.
5. Canadian manufacturers have created CAMVAP – the Canadian Motor Vehicle Arbitration Plan which helps out consumers if there is a problem with a new vehicle. This program would be unavailable with a vehicle purchased in the U.S.
6. AMVIC is there to help you if you have a problem with a vehicle purchased in Alberta – AMVIC cannot help with vehicles purchased out of country.
7. Service – check with the dealer where you would plan to have the vehicle serviced and see if there will be any issues with having the vehicle serviced.

8. Vehicle modification – not all vehicles from the U.S. are identical in Canada. Some features such as day time running lights are mandated in Canada and the vehicle will have to be changed to comply.
9. Financing – no manufacturer financing is available to Canadian citizens purchasing in the U.S. You either pay cash or get financing from your own financial institution.
9. Instrument cluster – Canadian vehicles are required to register speed in km/hour. If the vehicle that you are importing does not register speed in both km/hr and miles/hr, then you will have to get the instrument cluster changed.

Used Vehicles

You are also likely to find that used vehicles are priced cheaper in the United States. Just as you have to be cautious with new vehicles, you need to be doubly careful with used vehicles.

1. The same requirements are in place at the border for used vehicles as for new. Be especially careful to check with the RIV to assure that the vehicle is admissible in Canada.
2. If you purchase a used vehicle from a dealer in Alberta and you have a subsequent problem, you can go to the dealer for help. AMVIC is also there to help if you can't get a resolution from the dealer. When you purchase from an individual in the U.S. and you have a problem you are going to be on your own. Sellers are going to be very careful to tell you that you are buying the vehicle "As is" and that no warranty will be available.
3. Ask to see the most recent registration and insurance for the vehicle, and to see receipts for any service done on the vehicle. This will be a good indication if the seller has actually used the vehicle. If they cannot provide them, ask where the vehicle came from. The U.S. has a titling system so every vehicle in the U.S. will have a title. If the vehicle has been financed the financial company will be listed on the title. If the seller cannot provide a title, be very careful. Don't buy a vehicle in the U.S. without a clear title. The RCMP runs a web site where you can check to see if a vehicle is stolen - www.cpic-cipc.ca
4. AMVIC investigated and is laying charges on an organized group that was purchasing salvage vehicles from the U.S. – most had been in large accidents but some had come from flood areas. The vehicles had been imported into Ontario, repaired and then sold as if the vehicle had never had a problem. Be very careful to find out where the vehicle is from.
5. You can check the vehicles history by getting a vehicle history report. CarFax and CarProof are two popular reports that will give you important information from a third party. You can get these at Registry Agents or via internet web sites. These reports will not tell you everything about the history of the vehicle but will give you a sense as to where the vehicle has been and will usually report significant problems.
6. Don't rush into buying a vehicle. There are over 200 million vehicles in North America so don't think that there won't be another one!
7. If you do want the vehicle, try to get it inspected by an independent mechanic near where the vehicle is located. You probably found the vehicle using the internet so you can also find a mechanic that will give you a third party opinion.
8. If you are uncomfortable at all, stop the purchase. This is an instance where "Buyer Beware" has real meaning.

Business and consumers with questions can contact AMVIC at 1-877-279-8200 or at www.amvic.org. The Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) is the authority delegated by the provincial government to protect Alberta consumers from wrongful behavior in relation to the purchase or repair of motor vehicles.