



Can I pay cash?

People who are **French residents for tax purposes are allowed to make cash purchases of up to the value of EUR 1 000. For non-residents, the limit is EUR 15 000.** Any sum of money exceeding EUR 10 000 or the equivalent in another currency must be declared to the customs authority ("Douanes") when entering or leaving France using a [specific form](#).

What about the payment of VAT?

Within an intra-EU transaction new cars should be sold without VAT. **A car is considered new if no more than 6 months have passed since the date on which it was first registered or if its mileage does not exceed 6 000 km.** In practice, some sellers may require payment of VAT as a deposit, to be refunded once the car is registered in the buyer's country. Check in advance with the seller how to claim the VAT refund, i.e. what documentation the seller needs from you. Be aware that you have no direct claim against the fiscal authorities, only against the seller so you should claim any refund quickly.

All other cars are considered second hand (more than 6 months since the date of first registration and mileage of more than 6 000 km). They are generally sold inclusive of VAT (20 %) if the supplier is a commercial seller (the supply is not liable to VAT if the supplier is a private person). You don't have to pay VAT in your country of residence.

Is the seller obliged to provide a vehicle inspection?

The seller has to provide a valid technical report which is no older than 6 months. A periodic inspection has to take place 4 years after the vehicle is first registered and then every 2 years. (average cost: EUR 67).

Is the French vehicle inspection recognised in my home country?

Some countries recognise it. Check in advance with your national authority to avoid unnecessary costs. For further information, see the [country fact sheets on registration](#).

Can I have an expert carry out a check on the car at the seller's premises?

It depends on the seller. To make sure the car is in good condition, it might be wise to negotiate an external independent [check](#) with the seller. You will usually have to pay.

What should I look out for in the contract of sale?

Read the contract carefully and only sign contracts you understand. Some traders try to exclude legal guarantee rights by claiming that the contract is a business-to-business contract or that the car is sold "without warranties" (only in business-to-consumer contracts would such a clause be considered null and void). Make sure that the name of the seller is the same as the name given in the registration document, or that the seller has power of attorney to sell the car in the registered owner's name. If you buy from a trader, make sure that the name of the company is mentioned in the contract and that there is an indication regarding VAT.

Can I cancel a signed contract?

- If the contract is signed on the seller's premises, you have no legal right to a cooling off period (unless the car is financed by a loan and the contract includes a clause allowing you to cancel if credit is declined or you use your legal right of withdrawal from the credit contract).
- If the contract is a distance sale contract and you have not yet collected the car from the seller's premises, you can withdraw from the contract before delivery. You can also withdraw up to 14 days from delivery of the car to your address. If you collect the car at the seller's premises, the contract is usually signed there and either will not foresee or will exclude the right to a cooling off period.

What documents should the seller provide?

- The contract of sale or an invoice;
- A valid vehicle inspection certificate;
- The service book is not mandatory but is usually requested;
- A "[certificat de non gage](#)" (proof the car is not pawned);
- The registration certificate ("carte grise");
- The European Certificate of Conformity (COC) which will normally be needed for registering the car in your country of residence. Check with the seller if a COC can be provided. If not, a duplicate can be requested from the manufacturer for a fee. If the manufacturer cannot provide a COC, you can ask one of the technical services in France or in your residence [country](#).

Check also if other documents are needed in the country where you intend to [register](#) the car.



Should I apply for temporary plates to drive the car home?

Temporary plates, distinguished by the letters « WW » are available for exporting new cars from France to other EU Member States (the clause “valid only in France” which used to appear on provisional registration certificates has been deleted). It is possible to obtain « WW » transit plates in advance if the consumer provides the necessary documentation (generally invoice/contract, registration certificate and the COC). Consumers can apply for them with the help of authorized traders who can use the registration service SIV («Système d’Immatriculation des Véhicules»). The list is available at the following link : <https://immatriculation.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-immatriculer-mon-vehicule>

For used cars you may use the original plates even after the seller has deregistered the car with the “prefecture”. However, some countries may not accept the registration papers if the details have been crossed out when the car is deregistered, as it is usually done in France. You may check in advance with your national authorities.

You may also be able to apply for transit plates from your home country. Check with your relevant national authority.

Export plates are not available in France

Regular national plates

If you wish to drive home with the national plates still on the car, are you obliged to return them to the competent registration offices, either in the country of previous registration or in the registration country?

There is no requirement to return the national plates to the registration authorities in France. The seller must inform within 15 days the French authorities (« Préfecture ») that the car was sold by providing a specific form (« déclaration de cession d’un véhicule »).

Do I need temporary insurance?

When driving the car home, you and your car must be covered by insurance allowing you to drive on public roads. Ask your insurer (or their representative in France) if they can provide you with short-term insurance.

If I have a complaint about a cross-border purchase, whom do I contact?

Contact your local ECC: www.europe-consommateurs.eu

What out of court dispute resolution body is available in France?

The Commission Médiation CNPA is a private out of court dispute resolution body established by the automotive sector: <http://www.cnpa.fr>. You can also contact your ECC to find out how they can help.

To whom do I report cases of fraud?

Send a recorded delivery letter to the nearest police station to where the trader is located. Report online scams to the police [cyber crime unit](#).