



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Ministry of Trade and Industry

MEDIA RELEASE

Trade Ministry warns of fraud when importing or buying foreign used vehicles

November 14, 2023: The Trade Licence Unit (TLU) of the Ministry of Trade and Industry has noted an upsurge in the number of reported cases of members of the public being defrauded of their monies while attempting to obtain foreign used vehicles such as cars (SUVs, sedans and station wagons), pick-up trucks, panel vans and trucks.

As the regulator of the foreign used car industry in Trinidad and Tobago and the agency responsible for the issuance of licences to facilitate the import of these vehicles, the Trade Licence Unit is advising the public to be vigilant and get familiar with **ALL** the requirements and procedures to import or purchase a foreign used vehicle.

While members of the public are allowed to import foreign used vehicles for their personal/commercial use, the MTI strongly recommends that persons utilize as far as possible, the services of a Registered Foreign Used Car Dealer, as such entities have undergone strict compliance requirements and are actively monitored by the Trade Licence Unit.

To assist in making informed decisions that can help to avoid fraud risks when purchasing foreign used vehicles from a REGISTERED FOREIGN USED CAR DEALER the following is recommended:

1. **Ensure the dealer is registered with the Ministry of Trade and Industry.** Contact the TLU at 701-1440 or 623-2931 ext. 3014, 3016, 3017 or visit the Ministry's website at <https://tradeind.gov.tt/registered-dealers-tnt/> to check the current list of active registered dealers.

The TLU requires all registered dealers to have the following documentation: a Certificate of Registration, a VAT Registration Certificate, a Board of Inland Revenue Certificate, a National Insurance Board Registration Certificate, and a Financial Intelligence Unit Certificate. Additionally all registered dealers must have an office space with a reception or waiting area, a vehicle storage area and access to garage facilities for the provision of auto services to clients. Dealers are also required to have records of vehicles in stock and those sold. In addition, dealerships must provide warranty agreements to all clients.

2. **Know the details of your warranty agreement.** Ensure you receive a warranty agreement covering at least a three-month period or 3,000 kilometres (whichever comes first) after the date of purchase.
3. **Ask questions:** Enquire about the details of automotive after-sales service such as repair or maintenance.

When importing vehicles directly from a FOREIGN SUPPLIER consumers should:

1. **Avoid using unknown third parties.** Remember you are responsible for personally ordering and making arrangements for the landing of the car the port of entry.
2. Be aware that you can only **import ONE vehicle within a four-year period.**
3. **Ensure the vehicle meets the country's permissible import age requirement:** three years from the year of manufacture for used cars outfitted with gasoline, diesel and hybrid engines and two years for electric cars. Pickup trucks and panel vans, no more than seven years from the year of manufacture. For trucks MGW 2950kgs and above, no more than 10 years from the year of manufacture. **Foreign used panel vans, pickup trucks and trucks (excluding cars) can only be imported by a registered business with the import licence being issued in that business' or company's name.**
4. Ensure the import licence you obtain is issued in your name, when importing a vehicle for personal use. The purpose on the licence should also be indicated as "personal use."
5. Be aware that you are disqualified from any protection from the Trade Licence Unit of the Ministry of Trade and Industry when choosing to personally order and land a vehicle directly from a foreign supplier.
6. Ensure that you receive, from the foreign supplier, a Certificate of Cancellation of Registration stamped by the Transport Authority in the country of origin.

Consumers may visit www.tradeind.gov.tt or the Trinidad and Tobago Trade Portal at <https://info.ttbizlink.gov.tt/> to access information on requirements and procedures to import or purchase a foreign used vehicle.

END