Used Ford Transit Custom inspection checklist

What to check on a used Transit Custom, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.

COVERS **V362** 2013–2023 **V710** 2024 on

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☐ **Tick it** if it's fine. **Cross it** if it isn't, and note what you found so you can price it into your offer.

! **Safety critical:** affects how safely it drives or protects you in a crash. Best to have a mechanic check it before you buy.

$ **Negotiate:** costs money to fix, from wear to major repairs. Get a quote and take it off the price.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Sliding door.** Slide each side door open and shut by hand and check it runs smoothly on its track and latches first time without sagging or dragging. A door that needs a shove to latch has worn rollers or a bent track. $
- ☐ **Rear door locking.** Lock and unlock the van with the key fob and check both rear doors lock and unlock together with the rest of the van. One door failing to respond while the rest of the van locks points to a wiring or actuator fault. $
- ☐ **Body rust.** Look closely at the wheel arches, sills, door bottoms and roof gutter for bubbling paint or rust, including around any holes drilled for racks or ladders. Bubbles near drilled holes often mean water has been getting in for years. $
- ☐ **Panel gaps.** Walk around the van checking the gaps between panels are even and the paint colour matches, especially around the front bumper and bonnet. Mismatched paint colour or overspray usually means a past repair. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks and looks honey to light brown, not black, gritty or milky. A rising oil level between changes can mean fuel or coolant leaking into the engine. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant reservoir is at the mark and the coolant is brightly coloured, not rusty, oily or milky. Oily or discoloured coolant points to a leak worth having checked before you buy. $
- ☐ **Timing belt history.** Ask for evidence the timing belt has been changed at the scheduled interval, as this engine runs the belt inside the oil. Ask for receipts, as a worn or snapped belt here can wreck the whole engine. $
- ☐ **Cold start.** Ask to start the van from cold; it should fire up easily and settle into a smooth idle within a few seconds. Heavy knocking, rough idle or smoke that won't clear within a minute needs a mechanic's look. $
- ☐ **Extra wiring.** If a second battery, fridge, inverter or camper electrics have been fitted, check the extra wiring is neatly run and properly fused rather than loose and spliced. Messy wiring can cause electrical faults in a work van or conversion. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Chassis rust.** Crouch down and look along the floor and chassis rails for rust, bent metal or fresh welds that suggest a past repair. Fresh underseal or paint in one area alone can be hiding damage. !
- ☐ **Suspension bushes.** Push down hard on each corner of the van and let go; it should settle after one or two bounces, with no clunk or looseness. A clunk when pushing down means worn bushes or joints that will need replacing. $
- ☐ **Brake discs.** Look through the wheel spokes at the brake discs for deep grooves or a raised outer edge, which means they're close to needing replacement. A loaded van wears brakes faster than a car, so check this even on lower kilometres. $
- ☐ **Tow ball.** If a towbar is fitted, check the tow ball for heavy shine or wear and the wiring plug for corrosion. A badly worn ball means the van has done plenty of towing, which adds strain to the drivetrain. $

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key to "on" without starting; every dash warning light should come on, then go out once the engine is running. An airbag, brake or engine light that stays lit needs an explanation before you buy. !
- ☐ **Every seatbelt.** Pull every seatbelt out fully and let it retract, checking it latches properly and the webbing isn't frayed. A belt that sticks or won't retract smoothly may not hold you properly in a crash. !
- ☐ **Cargo floor.** Lift any floor covering in the cargo area and check the floor, lining and tie-down points for rust or water staining. Stains under a mat often hide a leak or rust that's been covered up for a sale. $
- ☐ **Camper fit-out.** If fitted out as a camper, check the water, gas and 240V connections are secure and carry compliance plates. Loose gas fittings are a safety risk and can be costly to have re-certified.

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Clutch feel.** Manual: drive off from a stop and change through the gears, feeling for the clutch biting high, slipping under load or juddering as it engages. A shudder pulling away or a high biting point points to a worn clutch. $

! **Stay safe.** Never go under a car held up only by a jack, and never open the radiator or coolant cap on a hot engine. Keep hands, hair and loose clothing clear of fans and belts when the engine is running, and do checks under the bonnet with it switched off where you can. On the test drive, hold a current licence, confirm the car is registered and insured, obey road rules, and only brake hard when the road behind is clear. Meet in a safe, public-facing place, take someone with you, and don't carry large amounts of cash to a viewing.

5 Test drive continued

- [ ] **Automatic gearbox.** Auto: drive through all gears including Reverse and Drive; changes should be smooth with no hard thump, hesitation or flare in revs. A delay or thump when shifting into gear points to an internal fault that's expensive to fix. $
- [ ] **Power delivery.** Drive the van under load and check it pulls cleanly with no flat spots, hesitation or black smoke from the exhaust. Judder or a lack of power when accelerating hard is a warning sign worth having checked. $
- [ ] **Brake feel.** Brake firmly from speed on a quiet road; the pedal should feel firm and the van should stop straight with no pulling, pulsing or grinding. Pulling to one side or grinding means the brakes need attention before the van is safe to drive daily. !

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Service history.** Check the logbook is stamped on time and look for receipts showing regular oil, filter and timing belt changes. Commercial vans rack up kilometres fast, so gaps in servicing matter more than on a private car. $
- [ ] **Commercial use.** Ask the seller directly whether the van was used for courier, trade or paid transport work, and ask to see any business log. A van used daily for paid work has usually lived a harder life than a private one. $
- [ ] **Registration status.** Check the registration is current and not written-off online, and ask for a roadworthy certificate if your state requires one for sale. $

What this guide can't tell you about the Transit Custom you're looking at

9+

recalls on Transit Customs built since 2013*

11

common faults reported on Transit Customs built since 2013*

Money owing, stolen or a write-off?

A tidy car can hide all three.

What's each fault worth?

Shufti's negotiation coach turns it into leverage.

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* Shufti analysis, November 2026, of official recall notices, complaints lodged by vehicle owners with vehicle safety regulators, and independent reviews and owner forums. Faults are counted when two or more independent sources report them.

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