Used Holden Trailblazer / Colorado 7 inspection checklist

What to check on a used Trailblazer or Colorado 7, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.

COVERS **Colorado 7 (RG)** 2012–2016 **Trailblazer (RG)** 2016–2020

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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

- ☐ **Bullbar.** Check any fitted bullbar is bolted solidly with no rust or cracks at the mounts and doesn't sit over sensors. A loose bullbar can affect crash sensors and front-end alignment. $
- ☐ **Towbar.** Check the towbar is bolted on securely with no rust or cracking around the mounting points. A sagging towbar or cracked welds suggest heavy or careless towing. $
- ☐ **Panel gaps.** Walk around the body checking panel gaps and paint colour match on every panel. Uneven gaps or slightly different paint usually mean a crash repair. $
- ☐ **Tray or tub.** If fitted with a tray or tub, check for dents, cracked coating and rust in the corners from loads shifting. Heavy scoring or dents show hard work use that can hide frame damage. $

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Timing belt.** Ask for evidence the timing belt has been replaced on schedule, as it isn't a chain on this engine. A belt that's overdue risks sudden engine damage if it fails. $
- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick and check the oil sits between the marks, isn't above the top mark and doesn't smell of diesel. A rising, diesel-smelling oil level points to fuel getting into the oil. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant in the overflow bottle sits at the mark and looks a clean colour, not rusty or oily. Oily or rusty coolant points to a cooling system or head gasket problem. $
- ☐ **Turbo pipes.** Look inside the big rubber air intake pipes for oil residue and listen for a loud whistle on startup. Oily pipes or a screaming whistle point to a tired turbo. $
- ☐ **Cold start smoke.** Start the engine from cold and check it fires within a couple of seconds with no heavy knocking or lingering smoke. Rough starting or smoke that doesn't clear quickly needs a diesel mechanic's opinion. $

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Chassis rails.** Crouch down and run your eye along the chassis rails, especially near the towbar and rear suspension, looking for kinks, cracks or fresh welds. Fresh welds or a kink usually mean a serious impact or overloading. !
- ☐ **Exhaust filter.** Check the exhaust filter (DPF) is still fitted and ask whether the car struggles to regenerate on short trips or has thrown a warning light. A car used mostly for short trips may have a clogged filter needing costly cleaning. $
- ☐ **Tow ball.** Check the tow ball for wear or scoring from regular heavy towing. A badly worn tow ball suggests a lot of heavy trailer work. $
- ☐ **Tyre age.** Check all four tyres, including the spare, match the door-sticker size, wear evenly and aren't more than about six years old by their sidewall date code. A tyre can look fine but be unsafe once it's hardened with age. $
- ☐ **Underbody rust.** Look at the underbody and suspension mounts for rust; light surface rust is normal but flaking metal or holes are not. Vehicles used near the coast or beach corrode from the inside out. !

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key to "on" without starting and check the engine, ABS, airbag and 4WD lights all come on, then go out once the engine is running. A light that stays on, especially the exhaust filter light, needs an explanation before you buy. !
- ☐ **Third-row seats.** Fold and unfold the third-row seats and check the belts latch properly. Stiff folding or badly worn trim suggests heavy family use. $
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, checking it latches firmly with no fraying in the webbing. A belt that won't retract smoothly or is frayed is a safety risk in a crash. !

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Automatic gearbox.** Automatic: drive off from a stop and through gear changes, feeling for a shudder or vibration as the car takes up drive, particularly around 60-80km/h. Judder at low speed is a warning sign of a worn torque converter. $

! **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

- [ ] **4WD engagement.** On gravel or grass, select 4WD high and low range, checking for clunks and that the 4WD light stops flashing once engaged. A light that keeps flashing means the system hasn't properly engaged. $
- [ ] **Steering.** At highway speed, check the car tracks straight without wandering or needing constant correction. Wandering at speed can mean worn steering or suspension parts. !
- [ ] **Braking.** Brake firmly from speed and feel for shaking through the pedal or the car pulling to one side. Shaking under braking often means warped rotors, common on towing 4x4s. !
- [ ] **Acceleration response.** Accelerate firmly from low revs and feel for hesitation or a flat spot before power comes in. Poor throttle response can point to worn fuel injectors. $

6 Documentation

- [ ] **Modification paperwork.** Ask for certificates for any GVM upgrade, suspension lift or bigger tyres, and check your state and insurer were told.
- [ ] **Service history.** Check the logbook or invoices show oil and fuel-filter changes on time, with extra gearbox and diff servicing if the car has towed heavily. Gaps in servicing are a strong bargaining point. $

What this guide can't tell you about the Trailblazer or Colorado 7 you're looking at

3+

recalls on Trailblazers built since 2012*

6

common faults reported on Trailblazers built since 2012*

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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