

Used Holden Trax inspection checklist

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



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COVERS

TJ 2013–2016

TJ facelift 2017–2020

☐ **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.

0 Before you go

- ☐ **Get the VIN and rego** before you travel. A seller who won't share them is a red flag on its own.
- ☐ **Know what you're looking at:** regular or turbo petrol; manual or auto. Turbo checks below are marked.
- ☐ **Ask how it was used:** private, ex-rental or fleet; short trips or long country runs?
- ☐ **Ask for the engine to be cold**, go in daylight, and bring a torch, paper towel and a friend.

1 Exterior

- ☐ **Panels and paint.** Uneven gaps, mismatched colour or overspray on seals and trim mean crash repair. **\$**
- ☐ **Hail and dents.** Look along the roof, bonnet and tailgate at a low angle to the light. **\$**
- ☐ **Bumpers and wheels.** Parking scrapes and kerbed alloys. A badly kerbed wheel can be bent, causing vibration. **\$**
- ☐ **Rust** on older cars: wheel arches, sills and the bottom of the tailgate. **\$**
- ☐ **Lights and glass.** All lights work, no condensation inside; windscreen free of chips in the driver's view. **\$**
- ☐ **Doors and tailgate** open, shut and lock cleanly, with the remote and the key. **\$**
- ☐ **VIN plate** (in a door frame or under the bonnet) is there, untouched, and matches the papers.

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil** between the dipstick marks, brown not black. Turbo engines don't forgive low or old oil. **\$**
- ☐ **Coolant** at the mark and brightly coloured. A low tank, a sweet smell or regular top-ups need a mechanic. **\$**

- ☐ **Brake fluid** (small tank at the back of the engine bay) is clear to light amber, not dark. **\$**
- ☐ **Belts, hoses and battery.** No cracked belts or swollen hoses; clean battery terminals and a date sticker. **\$**
- ☐ **Leaks.** Wet oil on the engine or turbo pipes is a leak. A freshly degreased engine on an older car can be hiding one. **\$**
- ☐ **Timing belt.** Ask if it has one and when it was last replaced; look for a sticker in the engine bay. An overdue belt that snaps can wreck the engine. **\$**
- ☐ **Cold start.** Starts easily and settles to a smooth idle. A rattle for the first few seconds, or smoke, needs a mechanic. **\$**

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyre tread** above the wear bars, worn evenly. Wear on one edge only means the wheels are out of line, often from hitting kerbs. **\$**
- ☐ **Tyre age.** The 4-digit code on the side is the week and year made (2319 = week 23, 2019). Over ~6 years: budget for new ones. **\$**
- ☐ **Rust and crash repairs.** Rust on the floor or around the suspension; bent metal, fresh welds or new black coating in one spot. **!**
- ☐ **Scrapes and drips.** Dents underneath; drips where it's normally parked. **\$**
- ☐ **Suspension.** Push down on each corner: it should bounce back once and settle. Oily shock absorbers leak. **\$**
- ☐ **Brakes.** Deep grooves or a raised edge on the discs mean they're due. **\$**
- ☐ **Exhaust.** Heavy rust, holes or loose heat shields that rattle. **\$**

! 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.

4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Key to "on": every dash light comes on, then goes out once running. An airbag, brake or engine light that stays on needs explaining. 
- ☐ **Water leaks.** Damp carpet, a wet boot floor or a stained headlining. Lift the boot floor. 
- ☐ **Wear matches the kilometres.** Steering wheel, gear selector, pedals and driver's seat bolster. 
- ☐ **Seatbelts** pull out fully, retract and latch, with no fraying. 
- ☐ **Air con** blows cold within a minute or two, without a musty smell; heater gets hot. 
- ☐ **Electrics.** Screen, Bluetooth/CarPlay, reversing camera, windows and mirrors. Count the keys. 

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Automatic.** Smooth changes with no slipping, flare, shudder or thump into Drive or Reverse. 
- ☐ **Manual.** In 4th at 50 km/h, floor it: if revs rise faster than speed, the clutch is slipping. 
- ☐ **Engine.** Pulls smoothly with no stutter, hesitation or smoke. Turbo: a sudden loss of power needs a mechanic. 

- ☐ **Brakes.** Firm pedal; stops straight with no pulling, pulsing or grinding. 
- ☐ **Steering and suspension.** Drives straight; no knocks over bumps or clunks through the wheel. 
- ☐ **Noises at speed.** A hum that grows with speed is often a worn wheel bearing. 
- ☐ **Afterwards,** check for new drips, a steady temperature gauge and no hot or sweet smells. 

6 Documentation

- ☐ **Seller's ID** matches the rego papers, and the VIN matches on the papers and VIN plate.
- ☐ **Service history.** Logbook stamped on time, with receipts. Ask about any timing-belt or cooling-system work. 
- ☐ **Fleet or rental records.** Ex-fleet cars are often well maintained; ask for the log. 
- ☐ **Parts and servicing.** Holden stopped selling cars in 2020. Ask where it's been serviced, and check parts prices for any repair you'd need. 
- ☐ **Rego and roadworthy.** Rego checked online; roadworthy supplied if your state requires one on sale. 

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

1+

recalls on Traxes built since 2013*

3

common faults reported on Traxes built since 2013*

1,007

owner complaints on Traxes (also sold as the Chevrolet Trax) built 2015–2020*

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