# Used Mercedes-Benz C-Class inspection checklist

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

COVERS **W204** 2007–2014 | **W205** 2014–2021 | **W206** 2021 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

- ☐ **Panel gaps.** Check panel gaps, paint colour and trim seals around the doors and boot for mismatches or overspray. Uneven gaps or colour mismatch points to past crash repair. $
- ☐ **Sunroof drains.** If fitted with a sunroof, open it and check the drain channels at each corner aren't blocked with leaves or dirt. A blocked drain lets water pool and leak into the cabin. $
- ☐ **Alloy wheels.** Look at all four wheels for kerbing, cracks or heavy repainting. A cracked rim near the bead can mean a costly replacement. $

## 2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Engine oil.** Pull the dipstick or check the electronic level reading and confirm the oil looks brown and sits at the correct level. Black, gritty oil suggests servicing has been skipped. $
- ☐ **Oil filter housing.** Look at the base of the engine near the oil filter housing for fresh oil seepage or a wet, dusty residue. A slow leak here is easy to miss until it stains the driveway. $
- ☐ **Coolant.** Check the coolant reservoir is filled to its mark and the coolant looks clean, not rusty or milky. Milky coolant can point to a head gasket issue. $
- ☐ **AdBlue system.** Diesel: check the AdBlue tank filler, usually next to the fuel filler, and ask when it was last topped up. A dashboard message about AdBlue or reduced engine power can point to a system fault. $
- ☐ **Cold start rattle.** Ask to start the engine from cold and listen for the first 10-20 seconds for a rattling noise that fades as revs rise. A persistent rattle points to timing chain wear and is costly to fix. $

## 3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Rear subframe.** Look underneath around the rear subframe and mounting points for rust, flaking metal or fresh underseal. Rust here can weaken the structure and is expensive to repair. !
- ☐ **Air suspension.** If fitted with air suspension, check the car sits level on all four corners and doesn't sag overnight. A sagging corner or compressor whirring constantly points to a leak. $
- ☐ **Brakes.** Look through the wheel spokes at the brake discs for deep grooves, a lipped edge or uneven pad wear. A lip you can feel with a fingernail means the discs are due for replacement. $
- ☐ **Tyres.** Check tread depth and wear pattern on all four tyres, including any size difference between front and rear. Uneven wear on one edge usually means the wheels are out of alignment. $
- ☐ **Driveshaft boots.** 4MATIC: look at the driveshaft boots near each front wheel for splits or grease flung onto the inner guard. A split boot lets dirt in and wears the joint quickly. $

## 4 Interior and electrics

- ☐ **Warning lights.** Turn the key or press start without the engine running and check every dash light comes on, then goes out once running. An airbag, ABS or engine light staying on needs an explanation. !
- ☐ **Seat upholstery.** Check the seat leather or MB-Tex surface for colour bleeding, staining or discolouration, especially on lighter interiors. Dye transfer from clothing onto the seat surface is hard to clean off fully. $
- ☐ **Infotainment screen.** Turn on the COMAND or MBUX screen and work through menus, Bluetooth and the reversing camera, checking for freezing or black screens. A screen that freezes or restarts on its own points to a software fault. $
- ☐ **Seatbelts.** Pull each seatbelt out fully and let it retract, checking webbing for fraying and the buckle for a solid latch. A belt that doesn't retract smoothly may not hold properly in a crash. !
- ☐ **Dashboard trim.** Look over the dashboard top and door trims for creaking when pressed, cracking or lifting surfaces. A creaky dash points to ageing trim rather than a safety issue. $

! **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

- [ ] **Automatic gearbox.** Drive normally through several gear changes, including pulling away from a stop, and feel for any jerk, flare or clunk. A harsh or hesitant shift points to a worn automatic. $
- [ ] **Manual clutch.** Manual: pull away from a stop and feel for shuddering or slipping as the clutch engages. Judder at low speed is a warning sign of a worn dual-mass flywheel or clutch. $
- [ ] **Suspension noise.** Drive over a speed bump or rough patch at low speed and listen for a knock or clunk from the rear. A clunk over bumps points to worn rear subframe bushes. $
- [ ] **Brakes.** Brake firmly from speed on a quiet road and check the car stops straight without pulling, pulsing or grinding. Squealing under light braking can mean the pads are worn thin. !

## 6 Documentation

- [ ] **Seller's ID.** Check the seller's photo ID matches the name on the rego papers, and that the VIN on those papers matches the VIN plate on the car.
- [ ] **Service history.** Ask for the logbook or digital service records showing regular oil and filter changes, and any transmission service. Gaps in servicing raise the risk of hidden wear catching up later. $

## What this guide can't tell you about the C-Class you're looking at

**23+**
**recalls on C-Classes built since 2007***

**22**
**common faults reported on C-Classes built since 2007***

**6,285**
**owner complaints on C-Classes built since 2008***

**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.

**A Shufti inspection covers all of that, plus:**

- Guided checks for the exact car you're inspecting
- PPSR and government recall checks included
- Crosschecks 3M+ recalls and owner complaints
- Spots issues from your photos and audio
- Test drive routes with turn-by-turn navigation
- Negotiation coach with repair cost estimates

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