

Used Toyota HiAce inspection checklist

What to check on a used HiAce van or Commuter, what a problem looks like, and when to walk away.



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COVERS

H200 2005–2019

H300 2019 on

- ☐ **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:** diesel or petrol; manual or auto; van, Commuter bus or camper conversion. Diesel and camper checks below are marked.
- ☐ **Ask how it was used:** trade, courier, airport shuttle, tour bus or camper? Commercial use means very high kilometres and heavy loads.
- ☐ **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 mean crash repair. The flat front takes the hit in a crash; check behind the bumper.
- ☐ **Sliding door.** Opens and closes smoothly, latches first time, and doesn't drop or rattle.
- ☐ **Rear doors or tailgate** open, shut and lock cleanly; struts hold a tailgate up.
- ☐ **Work wear.** Dents from loading, roof-rack and ladder marks, holes from removed signage or racks.
- ☐ **Rust:** wheel arches, sills, door bottoms, the roof gutter and around holes drilled for racks.
- ☐ **Lights and glass.** All lights work; windscreen free of chips in the driver's view.
- ☐ **VIN plate** (in a door frame or under the bonnet) is there, untouched, and matches the papers.

2 Under the bonnet

- ☐ **Finding the engine.** On older vans it sits under the front seats, behind a cover; ask the seller to open it.
- ☐ **Engine oil** between the dipstick marks, not black and thick. Diesel: a rising level can mean diesel getting into the oil.
- ☐ **Coolant** at the mark and brightly coloured. Rusty or oily coolant, or regular top-ups, needs a mechanic.
- ☐ **Brake fluid** is clear to light amber, not dark.
- ☐ **Leaks.** Wet oil on the engine or turbo pipes is a leak.
- ☐ **Extra wiring** for a second battery, fridge, lights or inverter is neat and fused. Messy wiring causes faults and fires.
- ☐ **Cold start.** Starts easily and settles to a smooth idle. Heavy knocking, rough running or smoke that won't clear needs a mechanic.

3 Underbody and wheels

- ☐ **Tyres** are the right load rating, wear evenly and are under ~6 years old. Check the spare too.
- ☐ **Rust and crash repairs.** Rust in the floor, chassis rails or around the suspension; bent metal or fresh welds.
- ☐ **Rear springs.** A sagging rear, cracked or flattened leaf springs, or extra leaves added. These point to overloading.
- ☐ **Oil leaks** from the engine, gearbox and rear diff; drips where it's normally parked.
- ☐ **Shock absorbers.** Oily or dented; push down on each corner and it should settle quickly.
- ☐ **Brakes.** Deep grooves or a raised edge on the discs mean they're due. A loaded van wears brakes fast.
- ☐ **Exhaust and towbar.** Heavy rust or loose heat shields; a worn tow ball means lots of towing.

- 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.
- ☐ **Every seatbelt** pulls out fully, retracts and latches, with no fraying. On a Commuter, check every row.
- ☐ **Cargo area.** Floor, lining and tie-downs intact; no water stains. Lift any floor covering to look for rust and leaks.
- ☐ **Camper: fit-out.** Water, gas and 240V fittings are secure, with compliance plates; nothing loose behind the seats.
- ☐ **Wear matches the kilometres.** Seats, steering wheel, pedals and driver's door step.
- ☐ **Air con** blows cold front and rear; heater gets hot. Count the keys and test the remotes.

5 Test drive

- ☐ **Manual.** Take off uphill: if revs rise faster than speed, the clutch is slipping. Gears go in without crunching.
- ☐ **Automatic.** Smooth changes with no slipping or thump into Drive or Reverse.
- ☐ **Power and smoke.** Pulls cleanly with no flat spots, sudden power loss or black smoke. Diesel: ask how often the exhaust filter light has come on.

- ☐ **Brakes.** Firm pedal; stops straight with no pulling, pulsing or grinding.
- ☐ **Steering and suspension.** Drives straight; no knocks over bumps. A hum that grows with speed is often a wheel bearing.
- ☐ **Afterwards,** check for new drips, a steady temperature gauge and no hot 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. Commercial vans rack up kilometres fast; look for regular oil and filter changes.
- ☐ **Commercial records.** Ask directly whether it was used for courier, trade or paid transport, and ask for the log.
- ☐ **Conversions in writing.** Camper or seat changes need engineering sign-off, and the rego must match the seats fitted.
- ☐ **Warranty.** A newer HiAce may still be under Toyota's new-car warranty. Check the start date and that servicing kept it valid.
- ☐ **Rego and roadworthy.** Rego checked online; roadworthy supplied if your state requires one on sale.

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

8+

recalls on HiAces built since 2005*

13

common faults reported on HiAces built since 2005*

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