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## CONSUMER ALERT: FLOODED VEHICLES ON THE USED CAR MARKET

Nashville- The Division of Consumer Affairs in the Tennessee Attorney General's Office is warning consumers about flood damaged vehicles that may appear in used car markets following Hurricane Ida.

In the past, vehicles from hurricane impacted areas have been sold to unsuspecting consumers without proper disclosure. By law, these vehicles' titles should indicate that they were "flooded," "salvaged," or "totaled."

However, some sellers may not disclose the damage on the title. A shortage of used cars for sale has created a demand for inventory -- and even flood damaged vehicles may be acquired for resale.

### **To avoid purchasing a flood-damaged vehicle, consumers should follow these best practices:**

- Check the car's history by going to the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System ([www.vehiclehistory.gov](http://www.vehiclehistory.gov)) and entering the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
- A vehicle history should tell you if the car has been in a flood region or was issued a flooded or salvaged title. However, title check companies are only as good as the information collected from other sources- and that information may be delayed.
- A vehicle's flood history may take up to 30 days or longer to post on traditional consumer reporting sites. The Tennessee Motor Vehicle Commission recommends that individuals purchase vehicles from a licensed dealer, which can be verified at <https://verify.tn.gov/>.
- Review the title before signing anything or paying money for the car. The title may indicate the car was damaged in a flood. Look for the words: "flood", "junk", "salvaged", "rebuilt", or "reconstructed."
- Examine the car for signs of flood damage which can include musty odor, water marks, rusting inside the car, or faded fabrics. New carpet/upholstery or a heavy aroma of cleaners and disinfectants in an older vehicle may be a red flag.
- Get the car inspected by a competent and independent mechanic. Only after an independent mechanic gives it a clean bill of health should you sign a contract or pay any money for the vehicle.

To file a complaint with the Division of Consumer Affairs, click here: [www.tn.gov/consumer](http://www.tn.gov/consumer)

