

Buying and selling a motorbike

If you are buying a bike there are certain things that should always be checked:

- Vehicle Registration Document (V5) – ownership document. Check it against the seller's driving license and the bike – number plates, VIN and engine number
- HPI check
- service history
- MOT certificate – make sure it has been properly stamped by a reputable garage with a VoSA number and look for any problems under the advisory section
- inspect the bike and ask questions – look out for rust and damaged tyres, check for any welding on the frame or patchiness in the paintwork. Also check the frame and engine numbers
- take along a friend or mechanic to check the bike
- test ride it – make sure you're insured to do this, and be careful what security you give

Most people have heard of The Sale of Goods Act, and this is the basis for other acts and regulations. What is important is that they apply to everyone, from a huge dealership to a private sale of a bike on eBay. Whether buying or selling protect yourself by taking the following steps:

- always inspect or allow a motorcycle to be inspected, before its taken away
- ensure the item is of satisfactory quality
- make sure it matches any description given
- check that it is fit for its purpose

Finally, before you buy anything, shop around, read consumer reviews, get on the internet if you can and try to research as much as possible about the product. If you're buying kit, try it on, and ensure that you are completely happy with the product before you buy.

FAQ's (and answers)

I've just bought a bike and found out that it's stolen. The police said they're going to take it away. Can they do that?

The general rule is that stolen goods remain the property of the original owner and the police can take the motorcycle from you to return it to the original owner or the insurance company if the owner has been paid by them.

I had an HPI check on a motorbike before I bought it and have since discovered that the information was wrong. What can I do?

If you can prove that you relied on their information when purchasing the motorbike and have suffered some sort of financial loss as a result of this you may have a claim against the HPI company.

I bought the wrong type of kit and when I tried to get my money back the shop offered me a credit note. Do I have to accept this?

As long as you were given a reasonable opportunity to inspect the item then it is your responsibility to buy the right one. There is no obligation on the seller to refund or exchange. Many places may offer you a credit note instead and given that they are not legally obliged to do anything this is purely a gesture of goodwill.