

FREE BUYER'S GUIDE

The 27 Red Flags Checklist

The exact warning signs Rio looks for in every listing. Print this. Bring it to every viewing. Walk away from any deal that hits more than three of these flags — or get a SmartBuyers report at smartbuyersdeals.com before you sign.

Listing & Pricing

- 01. Price is more than 15% below comparable listings in the area.
- 02. Year, make, or model in the title doesn't match the description.
- 03. VIN, hull ID, or serial number is missing or blurred in photos.
- 04. Mileage / engine hours seem implausibly low for the model year.
- 05. Listing copy is recycled boilerplate (vague, generic, "great condition").
- 06. No service history, maintenance records, or receipts mentioned.

Photos & Visual Cues

- 07. Only 1–3 photos, or photos pulled from a stock image search.
- 08. Photos show different locations or backgrounds across shots.
- 09. No interior photos, no engine bay, no underside, no tires.
- 10. Damage, rust, fluid leaks, or wear visible but never mentioned.
- 11. Photos taken at night, in rain, or at angles that hide condition.

Seller Behavior

- 12. Refuses video call or live walkaround of the vehicle.
- 13. Won't share full VIN before you commit to a deposit.
- 14. Pressures urgency: "must sell today," "cash only," "other buyer coming."
- 15. Story keeps changing — reason for selling, location, or ownership.
- 16. Communicates only by text or email, never by phone.
- 17. Asks you to deal through a third party, friend, or shipping company.

Payment & Transaction

- 18. Requests wire transfer, gift cards, crypto, or Zelle to a stranger.
- 19. Wants full payment before you see the vehicle in person.

- 20. Offers to ship the vehicle from out of state at their cost.
- 21. Refuses to meet at the title office, bank, or DMV to complete sale.

Title & Ownership

- 22. Title is not in the seller's name (“selling for a friend / family”).
- 23. Title is salvage, rebuilt, or branded — not disclosed up front.
- 24. No bill of sale offered, or seller wants cash with no paperwork.
- 25. VIN on title, dash, and door jamb don't all match.

Inspection & Test

- 26. Refuses an independent pre-purchase inspection at your expense.
- 27. Won't allow a test drive, sea trial, or full power-on test.

Hit 3 or more flags?

Don't guess. Get a full SmartBuyers Deal Report — pricing analysis, Seller Trust Analysis, negotiation strategy — in about 2 minutes.

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