

## SPINDYS CAR CHECKLIST

A classic car will have it faults and you have to weight the pros and cons of any repairs against price. It is okay to buy a classic with faults as long as you know what you are getting and that the price compensates for any faults as it will require your time and effort to make repairs and/or have repairs made. To help with the inspection process, below is a checklist we developed that will help guide you through the process. Just print it and use it for any inspections you are planning.

Do note that this checklist is not meant to be a catch all, just simply a guide on the key things to check. A lot of this should be common sense, but there are many components and things can get overwhelming when looking at a car and you can realize you forgot to check something later when it is too late. For instance, you do not want to find out later the A/C doesn't work and that your forgot to check it, that could be expensive. That is why we created this checklist. It is more detailed than most and if you follow it, will help guide you through the inspection process. Use what is applicable. Many of the items noted may or may not be applicable to the vehicle you are inspecting.

**C**hecklist: Assessment of condition using our checklist (4 part checklist)

**A**nalyze Drivability: Test drive the vehicle and assess the vehicle's drivability

**R**ust: How and where to look for Rust

### PART 1 - EXTERIOR CHECKLIST & ASSESSMENT

When looking at a vehicle, the first thing you see is the cars exterior. This section of the checklist is designed to guide you through the items to inspect on the cars exterior. Be sure to circle the car many times and try everything. Open and close doors, check glass for cracks, inspect paint, etc. Always be sure to inspect a vehicle in good light during the day (not at night). If you see mis-matched paint, good indication the vehicle may have been in an accident. Have a magnet with you and place it on any paint mismatch areas to check for body filler. If the magnet does not stick, this indicates the body has been repaired.

DESCRIPTION	HOW DOES IT CHECK	NOTES/COMMENTS
Alarm - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Badges/Emblems - Inspect to make sure all are correct and present	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Check for Body Filler (use a magnet)	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Door Sills & Door Jams	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Fenders/Hood/Trunk Lid for Alignment	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Front Grill/Nose	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Left Fender	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Left Quarter Panel	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Left Side Door(s)	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Pillars (A, B & C Pillars)	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Right Fender	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Right Quarter Panel	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Right Side Door(s)	PASS / FAIL	

Body & Paint - Inspect Rocker Panels	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Roof	PASS / FAIL	
Body & Paint - Inspect Trunk Lid	PASS / FAIL	
Bumper - Inspect Condition of Front Bumper	PASS / FAIL	
Bumper - Inspect Condition of Rear Bumper	PASS / FAIL	
Chrome - Inspect all Exterior Trim/Molding/Windows	PASS / FAIL	
Chrome - Inspect Chrome Condition of Bumpers	PASS / FAIL	
Chrome - Inspect Condition of Badges/Emblems	PASS / FAIL	
Door Handles - Test Outside Door Handle Operations	PASS / FAIL	
Gas Cap - Inspect Condition and Seal	PASS / FAIL	
Glass - Inspect all Clear Glass (side windows, Windshield, etc)	PASS / FAIL	
Glass - Inspect all tinted Glass (T-Tops/Targa Tops/Sunroof)	PASS / FAIL	
Glass - Inspect any Aftermarket Tinting (bubbles, general condition)	PASS / FAIL	
Keyless Remote Entry - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Keys - Test Trunk Key	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Fog lights	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Hazzards	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Headlights	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test License Plate Light	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Low & High Beam on Headlights	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Parking lights	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Reverse Lights	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Trunk Light	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Turn Signal (Left Front)	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Turn Signal (Left Rear)	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Turn Signal (Right Front)	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Turn Signal (Right Rear)	PASS / FAIL	
Radio - Check to make sure Antenna is Present	PASS / FAIL	
Radio - Test Power Antenna Test	PASS / FAIL	
Rubber - Check Weather Stripping	PASS / FAIL	
Side Mirrors - Inspect	PASS / FAIL	
Suspension - Do a Bounce Test	PASS / FAIL	
Tires - Check for Wear	PASS / FAIL	
Tires - Check Remaining Tread	PASS / FAIL	
Tires - Inspect for Rot	PASS / FAIL	
Trucks - Check/Inspect Tailgate	PASS / FAIL	
Trucks - Inspect Bed Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Vinyl Top - Inspect Vinyl Top/Roof	PASS / FAIL	

## PART 2 - INTERIOR CHECKLIST & ASSESSMENT

Next you want to go through the interior. Test every function you can to make sure it is operating as it should. Remember that replacement parts, especially original parts, can be expensive and hard to come by depending on the type of vehicle. You want the majority if not all of the components in working order, or at least the components you want in working order. On a lot of these older cars, the clocks are usually not working which doesn't matter - at least to us. Make sure the A/C works and the other switches. Check under the floor mats and check the carpet for any moisture. If the carpet has been wet for long time, you can bet there will be rust under there, plus there could be mildew.

DESCRIPTION	HOW DOES IT CHECK	NOTES/COMMENTS
Arm Rest - Inspect on Doors and/or Seats	PASS / FAIL	
Ashtray - Check for Smoker Residue Ashtray(s)	PASS / FAIL	
Brakes - Test Parking Brake	PASS / FAIL	
Carpet - Check Carpet for Moisture under the Floor Mats	PASS / FAIL	
Carpet - Check for any Odors/Smells (Mildew)	PASS / FAIL	
Carpet - Check for Tears and/or Burns	PASS / FAIL	
Chrome - Inspect Interior Trim	PASS / FAIL	
Cigarette Lighter - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Climate Control - Inspect/Test Air Vents	PASS / FAIL	
Climate Control - Test Blower (Lo/Med/Hi)	PASS / FAIL	
Climate Control - Test Fresh/Recirculate	PASS / FAIL	
Climate Control - Test Heater	PASS / FAIL	
Climate Control - Test/Inspect Air Conditioning	PASS / FAIL	
Console - Inspect for Cracks	PASS / FAIL	
Cruise Control - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Fuel Gauge	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Odometer	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Oil Gauge	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Speedometer	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Tachometer	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Volt Meter	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Check Water Temperature	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Inspect Front Dash Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Inspect Rear Deck Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Clock	PASS / FAIL	
Door Handles - Test Inside Door Handle Operations	PASS / FAIL	
Door Panels - Inspect Both Sides	PASS / FAIL	
Floor Mats - Inspect Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Gearshift Handle - Inspect Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Glove Box - Inspect	PASS / FAIL	
Headliner - Inspect Headliner	PASS / FAIL	

Headliner - Inspect Visors	PASS / FAIL	
Horn - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Keys - Test Door Keys	PASS / FAIL	
Keys - Test Glove Box Key	PASS / FAIL	
Keys - Test Ignition Key	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Interior/Dome Light	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Turn Signal Lights on Instrument Panel	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Visor/Vanity Mirror	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test Check Engine Light	PASS / FAIL	
Lights - Test that all Instrument Lights work	PASS / FAIL	
Power Convertible Top - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Power Locks - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Power Mirrors - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Power Seats - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Power Sun Roof - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Power Windows - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Radio - Make Sure Speakers all Work	PASS / FAIL	
Radio - Test all Radio Controls	PASS / FAIL	
Radio - Test AM/FM/8-Track/Cassette/CD	PASS / FAIL	
Rear Defroster - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Seatbelts - Check that Seatbelts Adjust Properly	PASS / FAIL	
Seatbelts - Extend Properly	PASS / FAIL	
Seatbelts - Inspect for any Wear	PASS / FAIL	
Seats - Check for Tears and/or Burns	PASS / FAIL	
Seats - Check Headrests	PASS / FAIL	
Seats - Check Seatback Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Steering Wheel - Check Telescoping Wheel	PASS / FAIL	
Steering Wheel - Check Tilt Steering	PASS / FAIL	
Tire & Jack - Check for water in this area	PASS / FAIL	
Tire & Jack - Make both are Present	PASS / FAIL	
Trunk Release - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Window Handles - Test for Up/Down	PASS / FAIL	
Windshield Washers - Test that Washers Work	PASS / FAIL	
Windshield Wipers - Test Front Wipers	PASS / FAIL	
Windshield Wipers - Test Rear Wiper	PASS / FAIL	

### PART 3 - ENGINE/UNDERCARRIAGE CHECKLIST & ASSESSMENT

Now it is time to check the engine compartment and undercarriage. Inspect all hoses and belts for any wear or cracks. Is the engine clean and appear to be well maintained? Do parts appear to be missing? Do you see any replacement parts? Any evidence of leaks anywhere? Check the suspension by pushing on the corners of the car. It should only move up/down a time or two without any noise. Check the coolant (on a cold engine only, never open the cap when hot) - it should be green or yellow depending on the brand. Check the oil - the oil should be full and a yellowish/honey color. Check the transmission fluid if it is an automatic - the fluid should be a reddish color. Bottom line, check for anything unusual.

DESCRIPTION	HOW DOES IT CHECK	NOTES/COMMENTS
Battery - Check for Corrosion	PASS / FAIL	
Battery - Check to make sure it is Secure	PASS / FAIL	
Battery - Inspect Cables	PASS / FAIL	
Brakes - Check Brake Fluid Level	PASS / FAIL	
Brakes - Check for Brake Fluid Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Brakes - Inspect Brake Lines	PASS / FAIL	
Climate Control - Check for Evidence of A/C Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Cooling System - Check Coolant Levels	PASS / FAIL	
Cooling System - Check for Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Cooling System - Inspect Radiator	PASS / FAIL	
Cooling System - Inspect Radiator Fan/Blades	PASS / FAIL	
Cooling System - Inspect Radiator Hoses	PASS / FAIL	
Drive Axles - Check CV Joint/Boot Condition	PASS / FAIL	
Drive Axles - Check for Axle Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Drive Axles - Check for Differential Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Check Engine Oil	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Check for Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Inspect all Belts	PASS / FAIL	
Exhaust - Check for Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Hood - Inspect Underhood Insulation	PASS / FAIL	
Hood - Test Hood Release	PASS / FAIL	
Hood - Test Hood Shocks	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Check for Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Check Power Steering Fluid	PASS / FAIL	
Suspension - Inspect Shocks	PASS / FAIL	
Transmission - Check Fluid	PASS / FAIL	
Transmission - Check for Leaks	PASS / FAIL	
Undercarriage - Inspect	PASS / FAIL	

**PART 4 - DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST**

The final part of the assessment portion of checklist is to review what documentation is with the vehicle. Determine what original documentation is available with the vehicle and how extensive the service records are. If the seller advertises as a restoration that they did, they should have receipts. If they did the work themselves, they should still have receipts for parts and paint. If someone else did the restoration, they still will hopefully have receipts to show the work that was done. Make sure the title is clear and not a salvage or rebuild. There are lots of cars from the south with flood damage that are salvage vehicles. Just beware and be smart. Check the VIN at all locations on the vehicle (located on the dash on drivers side at the corner of the windshield at the A-pillar, and many times on the door jam and possibly in the glove box). They should all match and they should match the VIN on the title. If they do not, you could have problems with the vehicle inspection and registration at DMV (which may vary depending on state laws). It may also indicated a stolen vehicle.

Of course this section and any of the previous sections can be done in any order you wish to do so and do not have to be in this sequence.

DESCRIPTION	HOW DOES IT CHECK	NOTES/COMMENTS
Owners Manual Present	PASS / FAIL	
Paperwork - Review Restoration Records	PASS / FAIL	
Paperwork - Review Service Records	PASS / FAIL	
Paperwork - Vehicle Documents Available (i.e., Build Sheet, etc.)	PASS / FAIL	
Plates - Check for Current Plates	PASS / FAIL	
Registration - Check for Current Registration	PASS / FAIL	
Run a Carfax/Autocheck (only good for 1981 and newer vehicles)	PASS / FAIL	
Title - Verify Title is Clear (No Lien, Not a Salvage or Rebuild)	PASS / FAIL	
VIN - Check for VIN on Door Jam/Windshield	PASS / FAIL	

## SECTION 2 - ANALYZE DRIVABILITY: TEST DRIVE

Now that you have done all the visual and functional checks of the vehicle, it is time to road test. Perform cold and hot engine starts. Fire up the engine when it is cold. Did it start okay? Check the exhaust, any smoke present (black, blue/gray or white smoke)? If so, consult with your mechanic. If consistent, especially with black smoke, this could mean the vehicle is burning excessive amounts of oil. Go through all gears including reverse. Does everything shift smoothly? How does it shift if an automatic? How does the clutch feel? As you begin driving, increase your speed and make sure the gears shift when they should if an automatic. Did it shift to second when it should have? If a manual, move up in gears, any issues? While at a slow speed, test the brakes. Any vibration or non-normal noises? Did the car pull to one side when braking (should be straight)? After driving for a spell, are there any unusual noises present? Do you smell the scent of any burning oil or other fluids? Check all the temperature gauges and make sure temperatures are where they should be - are they in the normal range? Test the air conditioning - does it blow cold? Be sure to test the vehicle at all speeds and recheck gauges as appropriate. Make sure the speedometer and the odometer. Once you are done and parked, recheck all the fluids (oil and transmission) to make sure there is not a burning smell present and recheck for leaks. DO NOT pull the radiator cap following the test drive as severe burns will result.

DESCRIPTION	HOW DOES IT CHECK	NOTES/COMMENTS
Acceleration - Test	PASS / FAIL	
Air Conditioning - Check for Operating Noise	PASS / FAIL	
Air Conditioning - Test Cooling	PASS / FAIL	
Air Conditioning - Test Temperature Control	PASS / FAIL	
Brakes - Inspect for Brake Pulsation	PASS / FAIL	
Brakes - Test Braking Performance	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Fuel Gauge	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Odometer	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Oil Gauge	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Speedometer	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Tachometer	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Volt Meter	PASS / FAIL	
Dash - Test Water Temperature	PASS / FAIL	
Drive Axles - Check for Noise During Acceleration	PASS / FAIL	
Drive Axles - Check for Noise when Cornering/Turns	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Check for Normal Idle	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Check for Smooth Idle	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Test Cold Starts	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Test Hot Starts	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Test Operating Temperature	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Test Performance	PASS / FAIL	
Engine - Test Starter Functionality	PASS / FAIL	
Noise - Check for any Rattles/Squeaks (Inside & Outside)	PASS / FAIL	



Noise - Check for Excessive Wind Noise	PASS / FAIL	
Noise - Check for Tire Noise	PASS / FAIL	
Noise - Listen for an Non-normal Sounds	PASS / FAIL	
Smoke - Any Smoke Present	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Any Steering Noise	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Check for Centered Wheel	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Check Steering Wheel Play (Wheel	PASS / FAIL	
Balanced/Any Shaking)	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Does Vehicle Track Straight (No Extensive Pull)	PASS / FAIL	
Steering - Test Performance	PASS / FAIL	
Suspension - Check for Noise	PASS / FAIL	
Suspension - Test Handling	PASS / FAIL	
Suspension - Test Performance	PASS / FAIL	
Transmission/Gears - Make sure Clutch Engages	PASS / FAIL	
Smoothly	PASS / FAIL	
Transmission/Gears - Make sure Gears Shift Smoothly	PASS / FAIL	
Vibrations - Check for any Vibrations	PASS / FAIL	

### SECTION 3 - **RUST**: HOW AND WHERE TO LOOK FOR RUST

And finally, it is time to check for rust. Look for rust or corrosion in all the typical places. Rust is a cancer which is very damaging to a vehicle, especially to older cars in wet or humid climates (i.e., midwest). Do a complete walkaround of the vehicle a few times. Get inside the engine bay, under the car and in the trunk and wheel wells. Basic premise is that any area that has a seal or gap that can trap water, these are the most likely places that rust will form. Where metal meets plastic or even other metal, water can get trapped and the moisture over time will turn the metal to rust. Rockers and floorboards are infamous for rust in those regions with snow and the roads are salted down. Check for blistering in the paint which could be a sign of painted over rust. Some rust repairs are easier than others and some more livable than others. Your call on what you can live with and/or want to tackle.

DESCRIPTION	HOW DOES IT CHECK	NOTES/COMMENTS
Inspect Lower Radiator Support	Y / N	
Inspect Below the Battery in the Engine Compartment	Y / N	
Inspect Around the Headlights/Parking Lights	Y / N	
Inspect Below the Front Bumper	Y / N	
Inspect the Hood and Inside Lip of the Hood	Y / N	
Inspect Frame Rails	Y / N	
Inspect the Front Fenders (inside edge over the tire & at the rocker)	Y / N	



Inspect the Front Fender Where it Meets the Rocker Panel	Y / N	
Inspect the Floorboards (inside and out)	Y / N	
Inspect Under the Hood Around the Edges of the Windshield	Y / N	
Inspect Around the Front Windshield	Y / N	
Inspect Around any roof Glass (T-Tops, Sunroof)	Y / N	
Inspect Areas Around the Side Windows	Y / N	
Inspect the Rocker Panels	Y / N	
Inspect the Bottom Edges of the Doors	Y / N	
Inspect the Rear Quarter Panels	Y / N	
Inspect Around the Antenna	Y / N	
Inspect Around any Sealed Areas	Y / N	
Inspect the Area Around the Tail Lights	Y / N	
Inspect the Floorboards from the Underside Front to Rear	Y / N	
Inspect Under the Spare Tire and Jack	Y / N	
Inspect Rear Quarter Panels from Inner Sides of the Trunk	Y / N	
Inspect Below the Rear Bumper	Y / N	

