

One in five second-hand cars imported from Britain are clocked

Irish Examiner

Wednesday, 12th November

ALMOST one in five cars imported from Britain was clocked and dodgy dealers are using this country as a dumping ground for mileage altered and written-off vehicles, according to an AA survey.

The investigation focused on 3,000 imported secondhand vehicles of which 18.5% were found to have had their odometer readings altered.

And modern vehicles have been found to be easier to tamper with than their forerunners.

Vehicles are being clocked locally as well. "If the UK figures for clocking were transposed to the Irish fleet then the number of vehicles on false mileage could be as high as 200,000. To combat this, the AA is one of the main driving forces behind establishing the Irish National Mileage Register. This is critical to protect the consumer," said AA public affairs manager Conor Faughnan, who has found the clocking problem has worsened in recent years.

"UK imports have seen something of a boom with 49,000 vehicles being brought in last year, although that will be less in 2008 with the slowdown. It now emerges that almost one in five of those cars has a false mileage," he said.

In 2002, 6,009 secondhand vehicles were imported from Britain and 647 from the north. These figures had rocketed to 39,545 and 10,280 respectively in 2007.

The AA can verify the mileage on British imports with access to the British National Mileage Register (NMR) which contains 125 million odometer readings.

"When a consumer inputs the current mileage of the vehicle onto AA Car Data Check it is compared and cross-referenced with those records. The NMR was established in 1997 and is used as a tool to protect both public and trade in the UK," said Mr Faughnan.

"There is now clear evidence that unscrupulous dealers and middlemen are using Ireland as a dumping ground. This is likely to be simply because up to now they were sure they could get away with it."

Clocking a car is not an offence in itself under Irish law. "You may not mislead a customer about any aspect of a car, and you cannot sell a car that is not road worthy, but no law says that you cannot change the odometer dial," said Mr Faughnan.

The AA wants to change this and introduce the offence. The AA also wants to introduce the equivalent of a car 'death certificate' whereby a car that is written off is correctly disposed of and its registration number is retired.

"Car write-offs also find their way back onto the road, often in the hands of an innocent and duped owner," he said.

Existing laws are weak and the AA has called for tougher legislation to target bad and dangerous practices in the motor trade.

"Clocking is a major safety concern as a vehicle with more mileage than indicated may not have had the correct servicing at manufacturers recommended intervals," he said.

10,000 used car imports have mileage tampered with

Irish Independent

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NEARLY one in five secondhand cars imported from the UK have false mileage, new figures reveal.

That means 20pc, or around 10,000 so far this year, of such imports have had their mileage put back -- significantly in some cases.

There are two major implications for buyers.

The first is they have paid too much for the car and stand to lose thousands on additional repairs and trade-in values. The second is the vehicle could be dangerous, since areas such as brakes, steering and suspension may be badly worn or run down given that they have travelled much further than their mileage indicates.

The new figures were compiled by the AA after analysis of 3,000 registration numbers and vehicle records for imports this year. The association claims the level of "clocking", as it is called, has become much worse in recent years.

There were 49,000 secondhand cars imported from the UK this year, and while that number is expected to fall next year, the proportion of "clocked" cars is unlikely to follow suit.

The figures emerged because the AA can check mileages on UK imports as it can access the British National Mileage Register (NMR).

The NMR was set up in 1997 and is designed to avert fraudulent car trading.

When a potential buyer puts the current mileage of the vehicle onto the AA car data check it is compared and cross-referenced with those records.

And that is when discrepancies emerge. The AA said last night there is clear evidence of unscrupulous dealers and middlemen using Ireland as a dumping ground.

And Society of Irish Motor Industry chief (SIMI) Alan Nolan told the Irish Independent the figures highlighted the dangers of buying a car you know nothing about from someone you don't really know.

"Our own research shows that written-off cars, vehicles with finance outstanding and even stolen cars are turning up quite regularly here."

Safety

He urged buyers to be careful not just because they could lose a lot of money on trade-ins at a later stage, they could also be endangering their safety. The AA used the figures to specifically highlight two issues. The first is their car data check service.

And the second is the extraordinary situation whereby it is not an offence under Irish law to clock a car.

The AA's Conor Faughnan pointed out: "You may not mislead a customer about any aspect of a car, and you cannot sell a car that is unroadworthy but no law says that you cannot change the odometer dial."

The AA want this changed and are looking for the introduction of a car "death certificate" whereby a written-off vehicle is correctly disposed of and its registration number is retired.

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20% of used import cars 'clocked'

Irish Times

Wednesday, 12th November 2008

ALMOST ONE in five cars imported from Britain and Northern Ireland have had their mileage changed, according to a study by AA Ireland and car-checking company Cartell.ie.

A random examination of 3,067 imported cars this year found the mileage on registration in the State was different for 18.5 per cent of the vehicles when compared to data held by the National Mileage Register (NMR) in Britain. According to the SIMI 49,253 cars have been imported from Britain and Northern Ireland so far this year, only marginally fewer than the 49,830 imported last year.

Changing the mileage, known in the motor industry as "clocking" usually involves reducing the mileage on a used car to increase its price. Occasionally the mileage may be increased to reduce the potential import taxes on a car.

Jeff Aherne of Cartell.ie said ex-fleet cars were among those most likely to be clocked with Audi, VW and Ford among the makes emerging as most frequently having their mileage changed. Conor Faughnan, AA Ireland spokesman said: "There is now clear evidence that unscrupulous dealers and middlemen are using Ireland as a dumping ground. This is likely to be simply because up to now they were sure they could get away with it."

He called on the Department of Transport to make clocking a criminal offence to curb the practice: "You may not mislead a customer about any aspect of a car, and you cannot sell a car that is unroadworthy but no law says that you cannot change the odometer dial."

The report estimates up to 9 per cent of UK-registered cars have been clocked, despite the existence of the NMR, and AA Ireland and Cartell.ie are in the process of establishing an Irish equivalent. While clocking fraudulently increases the selling price it also creates a safety risk because it means breakdowns and faults to critical items such as brakes and steering become more likely, Mr Faughnan added.

If the number of clocked imported cars in the Republic's fleet was proportionally similar to that in the UK there could be 200,000 cars with doctored odometer readings here, he said.

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Shock AA report shows 18.5 per cent of used U K car imports have false mileages

Cork Independent

Thursday, 20th November 2009

The AA has released shocking findings that show that 18.5 per cent of second hand cars imported into Ireland from the UK have had their mileage doctored. AA believes that the practice, called clocking, has got much worse in recent years. The analysis is based on a survey of 3,000 registration numbers and vehicle records for cars imported from the UK in 2008.

UK and Northern Ireland used car imports have seen something of a boom with almost 60,000 being brought in last year. While that figure is expected to be lower in 2008, the most recent Central Statistics Office (CSO) figures to the end of September show that over 47,000 secondhand private cars have been imported this year.

From the AA analysis it now emerges that almost 1 in 5 of those cars has a false mileage. There are clocked cars with an Irish registration – whether it used to be British or not. Hopefully, this will slam the door on bad cars being brought in here."

cars locally as well of course. If the UK figures for clocking were transposed to the Irish fleet then the number of vehicles on false mileages could be as high as 200,000. To combat this, the AA is one of the main driving forces behind establishing the Irish National Mileage Register. This is critical to protect the consumer.

The AA can check mileages on UK imports because only it can access the British National Mileage Register (NMR) which contains 125 million odometer readings. When a consumer inputs the current mileage of the vehicle onto AA Car Data Check it is compared and cross-referenced with those records. The NMR was established in 1997 and is used as a tool to protect both public and trade in the UK.

"There is now clear evidence that unscrupulous dealers and middlemen are using Ireland as a dumping ground," according to Conor Faughnan of the AA. "This is likely to be simply because up to now they were sure they could get away with it."

Until now AA Ireland's Car Data Check service (www.aaireland.ie/car-data-check) will show information on any car with an Irish registration – whether it used to be British or not. Hopefully, this will slam the door on bad cars being brought in here."

Ironically, modern cars are easier to 'clock' than in the past. It is now becoming a scourge. Overall estimates in the UK show that as many as 9 per cent of all cars may be clocked. It is clearly a serious concern that the clocking rates for imports into Ireland are twice that found in the UK itself.

The message from the AA analysis is one of caution for used car buyers in the UK. There are many stories of value and high specification, but these pale into insignificance when you consider the high level of 'clocking' of

used cars imported into Ireland. Knowing the source of your used car is not just a value issue, it's a safety issue, your safety and that of your passengers.