

Pre-Purchase Inspection & Records Checklist

Define the scope. Reconcile the evidence.



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A practical guide to the decision

Coordinate a model-appropriate independent inspection with the purchase agreement. A clean financing discussion is not an airworthiness determination or a substitute for a technical records review.

Use this guide with your transaction team

Mark each assumption as confirmed, provisional or unresolved. Assign a responsible person and a date to every material open item. Revisit the record when the aircraft, ownership entity, operating plan or financing structure changes.

Use this resource with qualified advisers for your transaction. Educational guidance does not replace tax, legal, technical or operational advice specific to the aircraft and facts.

Specify deliverables rather than a package name

Have the technical adviser identify the aircraft, model, serial numbers, operating history and questions the review must answer. Request a written proposal distinguishing physical inspection, records review, component checks, ground or flight activity where appropriate, and excluded work. Confirm access, disassembly and return-to-service responsibilities. Do not assume the cheapest package or a recently completed maintenance event gives the buyer the same information.

Coordinate the scope with the contract

The purchase agreement should be consistent with the proposed facility, timing, cost allocation and treatment of findings. Confirm who authorizes extra work, how discrepancies are classified and reported, and what happens if the inspection takes longer. Ask the lender and insurer whether they require additional evidence; their requirements may be different from the buyer's technical review.

Use an illustrative scope comparison

Provider A offers a \$15,000 records-and-visual review. Provider B quotes \$25,000 including additional agreed checks. These are fictional numbers, not market estimates. The \$10,000 difference cannot be evaluated until the buyer identifies the omitted checks, their relevance and follow-on costs. Compare deliverables and exclusions line by line rather than treat both proposals as interchangeable pre-buys.

Document the decision after findings

Require a clear findings report, supporting records, cost estimates where available and unresolved questions. Have the technical adviser explain the implications without turning every finding into a guaranteed repair price or future-value deduction. Counsel should connect the findings to acceptance, renegotiation or rejection rights. Keep the final report with the acquisition budget and first-year maintenance plan.

Working document to prepare

Ask for a scope sheet listing each system or records category, the agreed examination, access needed, exclusions, deliverable and estimate. Include who may authorize disassembly and extra work, and who returns the aircraft to the required condition afterward. Have the technical adviser identify material unexamined areas explicitly. A price comparison becomes more useful when each quoted dollar can be traced to a defined task and the buyer can see what remains unknown.

Reconcile logbooks and missing records

Ask the technical adviser to identify the required airframe, engine, component, inspection, alteration and equipment records for the actual aircraft. Index what was supplied, its date range and source. A folder of scans is not automatically complete or authoritative. Retain originals and record how copies relate to them, with secure access appropriate to the transaction.

Review the package for missing periods, serial-number inconsistencies, unexplained changes and references to documents not supplied. AOPA's checklist specifically highlights log review, installed equipment and documentation of repairs or alterations. Have a qualified adviser decide the significance; the significance of a missing record depends on the aircraft and evidence; a seller statement alone does not close that gap.

Investigate damage, repairs and corrosion

Terms such as damage history, incident, repair and cosmetic work may be used inconsistently in advertisements. Ask the seller to identify the actual event, affected areas, work performed and supporting records. Have a model-qualified adviser reconcile the description with logbooks, repair or alteration documentation and inspection findings. A clean marketing phrase is an assertion to test, not a technical conclusion.

Discuss storage, operation and maintenance history with the technical adviser, including any circumstances relevant to corrosion inspection. AOPA's pre-buy resource identifies repairs, documentation and signs that warrant investigation. Do not claim that every aircraft near the California coast has corrosion or that inland storage eliminates concern. The particular aircraft's evidence and inspection scope should control the assessment.

Confirm program coverage and transfer

Identify each program by provider, aircraft or component serial number and agreement. Obtain current enrollment, payment status, minimum charges, exclusions, transfer conditions and any inspection or buy-in required from the provider. Do not infer transferability from a marketing specification sheet. A program for one component is not automatically coverage for the airframe, other engines or every maintenance event.

Ask the technical adviser and provider to explain how the actual aircraft history affects coverage. Identify outstanding amounts, disputed claims, deferred events, calendar limits and responsibilities after transfer. Manufacturer resources can help locate coverage information, but the controlling evidence is the current agreement and provider confirmation. Avoid presenting a generic program description as a warranty for the buyer's aircraft.

Turn findings into a written remedy process

Have the inspector classify findings by the evidence required and the work needed to resolve them. Reconcile missing records, technical discrepancies and cosmetic matters separately. For each unresolved item, record the proposed remedy, responsible party, estimated cost, completion date and evidence of satisfactory completion.

Coordinate the seller's response, any repair or credit, follow-up inspection and the buyer's acceptance or rejection rights under the actual agreement. Have counsel manage required notices and amendments. Keep lender and insurer acceptance separate from the technical sign-off, and update the closing budget and schedule when a material finding changes the transaction.

Your decision worksheet

Coordinate a model-appropriate independent inspection with the purchase agreement. A clean financing discussion is not an airworthiness determination or a substitute for a technical records review.

For each line, record the known facts, the evidence or quote supporting them, who is responsible for confirmation and the next action. Date each entry so that a later reader can distinguish a current quote from an old assumption.

Planning item	Evidence to gather	Decision to record
Aircraft serial number and configuration	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Independent inspection provider and scope	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Complete logbooks and continuity	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Maintenance due and discrepancy classification	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Engine/APU program status and transfer	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Damage, repair and modification records	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Written remedy and acceptance process	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required
Budget, timeline and walk-away conditions	A dated source, quote, agreement or adviser response	Confirmed / provisional / action required

Before you commit

Resolve material unknowns with the professional responsible for that subject before taking the next irreversible step. Keep aircraft technical acceptance, lender requirements, insurance and tax advice distinct in the transaction file.

Use the related calculators to compare a base case with a less favorable case. Bring the complete inputs and assumptions into the next conversation, rather than relying only on the headline result.

Your next-step checklist

- ☐ Aircraft serial number and configuration
- ☐ Independent inspection provider and scope
- ☐ Complete logbooks and continuity
- ☐ Maintenance due and discrepancy classification
- ☐ Engine/APU program status and transfer
- ☐ Damage, repair and modification records
- ☐ Written remedy and acceptance process
- ☐ Budget, timeline and walk-away conditions

Working notes & adviser questions

Coordinate a model-appropriate independent inspection with the purchase agreement. A clean financing discussion is not an airworthiness determination or a substitute for a technical records review.

Record a decision, the supporting evidence, the responsible adviser and the next action. Keep a copy with the dated transaction file.

Before the next commitment

What would change the decision? Which condition could delay closing? What additional cash would be needed in a less favorable case?

Sources & next steps

[AOPA pre-purchase inspection guidance](#)

[AOPA records checklist](#)

[FAA AD applicability and compliance](#)

[Bombardier parts and coverage FAQ](#)

[FAA aircraft registration forms](#)

[AOPA purchase-agreement guidance](#)

The complete HTML edition uses the same structured content and is available at </buying/pre-purchase-inspection-records/>. Primary sources support the relevant facts; original planning frameworks and examples remain illustrative.

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Submit a deal or arrange a financing call

Email an initial deal summary to jason@jakenaviation.com or call 833-264-7776. Include the aircraft, purchase price or value, financing request, available equity, intended use, California connection and timing.

Use the appropriate secure channel for sensitive supporting documents. Any lender decision requires separate review, documentation and current terms.

[Request a financing call](#)

[Explore documented program information](#)