

2018 Toyota Prado

A simple guide for buyers with no car knowledge.

Your safety comes first

Please read these five rules before you look at any car.



1. Flat ground, handbrake on

Only look at the 4WD on level ground.



2. Never open the radiator cap

Hot coolant can spray out and burn you.



3. Never go under the 4WD

Look underneath from the side only.



4. Hands away from a running engine

The fan and belts can catch fingers and clothing.



5. Test drive only with permission

Bring your licence and drive gently. Ask the seller: "Does your insurance cover me to drive it?" If it doesn't, you could have to pay for any damage yourself.

How this guide works

Two stages. No rush.



Do most of the work **from home, on the phone**. Only go and see the 4WD if you like what you hear.



Stage 1

At home and on the phone



Checkpoint

Is it worth a visit?



Stage 2

At the 4WD

Scoring is easy

Tick **Yes** or **No**. Yes is always the good answer. At the end, just **count your No's**. A red  means a stop sign: a "No" there matters most.

STAGE 1**Before you visit**

At home and on the phone.

01**Which 2018 Prado is it?**

Here is what it has.



Two reports say the petrol V6 was dropped for 2018, and only the 2.8L turbo diesel was sold. If an advert says petrol, ask to see the engine code.

Ask the seller:

"Is the engine code 1GD-FTV, and can I see it on the vehicle's plate?"

2.8L turbo diesel 1GD-FTV

Engine code 1GD-FTV • 6-speed manual or 6-speed automatic

- 4-cylinder turbo diesel with 130 kW of power
- GX and GXL: manual or auto. VX and Kakadu: auto only
- Permanent 4x4 with low range, which gives extra low gears for rough tracks

Good to know: safety rating

ANCAP's page for this body covers builds from August 2013 to December 2022. We could not confirm a star count for it. The rating ran out on 1 January 2023 under ANCAP's six-year rule. The 2025 all-new Prado has 5 stars, but that is a different vehicle. Look up this model on the ANCAP site:
<https://www.ancap.com.au/safety-ratings/toyota/prado/ddb0dd>

02

The big-money items

The parts that cost the most to fix.



You can't see inside these parts, but you can ask about them.

\$ under \$500 · \$\$ \$500 to \$2,000 · \$\$\$ over \$2,000 (rough guide)

**Diesel particulate filter (DPF)** 2.8L TURBO DIESEL

\$\$\$

WHAT IT IS

The DPF is an exhaust filter that traps soot. A court found the DPFs were not of acceptable quality. Toyota offers a fix and a 10-year warranty.

ASK

"Has the DPF been repaired or replaced, and was the Toyota DPF fix done?"

**Fuel pump recall** PRADO 2013 TO 2019, CHECK THE VIN

\$

WHAT IT IS

A recall covers fuel pumps on several Toyota models, including the Prado. Check by VIN if it applies.

ASK

"Is there proof the fuel pump recall work was done, if it applied?"

**Dust and limp mode** 2.8L TURBO DIESEL

\$

WHAT IT IS

In 2017 Toyota told dealers that fine dust could cause limp mode. Limp mode is when the vehicle cuts power to protect itself. One report says the air filter seal is not as tight as it should be.

ASK

"Has the air filter been checked, and has it ever gone into limp mode?"

03

Regular maintenance

Cheap jobs that protect the expensive parts.



Look for these on the service invoices.



Engine oil

Oil keeps the moving parts of the engine slippery.

As shown in the logbook



Fuel filter (diesel)

It catches dirt before the fuel reaches the engine.

As shown in the logbook



Brake fluid

The liquid that carries your foot push to the brakes.

Every 2 years (our guide)



Coolant

The liquid that stops the engine getting too hot.

As shown in the logbook



Gearbox, diff and transfer oils

Oil in the gearbox, the diffs and the transfer case. They send power to the wheels.

As shown in the logbook



Air filter

It cleans the air before it goes into the engine.

As shown in the logbook



Tyres

Check the age and the tread. Old tyres go hard.

Replace at 6 years old, even with good tread (our guide).
Alignment every 10,000 to 15,000 km (our guide)



Battery

It starts the engine and runs the electrics.

Most last about 3 to 5 years

04

Questions to ask on the phone



Tick Yes if you get the good answer.

Ask the seller	Good answer	Yes	No
"Is it registered in your name?" Why: Only the owner can legally sell it to you.	"Yes."		
"Why are you selling it?" Why: A clear reason helps you trust the rest of the story.	A clear reason.		
! "Can you send me the VIN?" Why ask? The VIN is the 4WD's 17-character ID number, like a fingerprint. With it you can check online if there's money owing , if it was written off after a big accident, if it's been reported stolen , and if it has any recalls (Section 06). An honest seller will send it.	They send it.		
"Has it been in an accident?" Why: Repairs can hide damage. An invoice shows it was fixed properly.	"No", or they have the repair invoice.		
"Does it have service invoices?" Why: They show the 4WD was looked after.	"Yes."		
Was the Toyota DPF fix done, and do you have the paperwork? Why: The DPF is the main known engine issue on this model.	Yes, and the paperwork is on hand. Or the seller can say clearly what was done to the filter.		
Where are the service records? Why: Records show how the vehicle was looked after.	A full logbook or invoices, with dates and kilometres.		
Was it used mostly for short city trips? Why: Short trips can stop the filter from burning off its soot.	No, it did a good mix of longer drives.		
"Are any warning lights on?" Why: A light means the 4WD has found a fault.	"No."		
"Can you leave it cold before I arrive?" Why: Some problems only show when the engine is cold.	"Sure."		

Tip

Write down what they say. See if the answers stay the same when you visit.

05

Check the invoices

Ask the seller to send you photos.



Ask the seller:

"Could you send me photos of the service book and invoices?"

Looking at the invoices	Yes	No
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Did they send them?

Does each one show the workshop name, date and kilometres?

Do the kilometres go up each time?

Do the services follow the logbook, with no gaps of more than a year?

Words you might see on an invoice

Invoice says	It means
DPF	The exhaust filter that traps soot.
Regeneration	The filter burning off its soot. If this does not happen, the DPF blocks.
ECU reprogram	A software update for the vehicle's computer.
Limp mode	The vehicle cuts power to protect itself.
Service bulletin	The maker's note to dealers about a known issue.
Common rail	The high-pressure fuel system on this diesel.

06

Quick checks at home

All you need is the VIN. Five minutes.



1. Recalls

Type the VIN into either site:

toyota.com.au/toyota-recalls

vehiclerecalls.gov.au

Safety recalls are fixed for free by the maker. Helpline 1800 987 366.

2. Money owing

Search the VIN at:

ppsr.gov.au

It shows money owing, write-offs and theft. Small fee. Check again on the day you pay.

Your result

Yes

No

 **PPSR is clear**

No open recalls, or proof they were fixed

Good to know

A class action covers Hilux, Prado and Fortuner diesels with a 1GD-FTV or 2GD-FTV engine bought or leased between October 2015 and April 2020. Ask the seller: "Has the engine had any maker repair or program work? Do you have the papers?"

Checkpoint: is it worth a visit?

Count your No's from Sections 04, 05 and 06.



My No's

Stop signs with No



Any stop sign with a No?

Don't go yet. Sort it out with the seller first.

0 to 2

Go and look

Take Stage 2 with you.

3 to 5

Ask more first

Ask the seller about each No. Go if you're happy.

6 or more

Is it worth the trip?

A lot couldn't be confirmed.

The decision is always yours.

Want to check it like a mechanic?

The 2018 Toyota Prado Buyer's Inspection Guide shows you every check, step by step, with drawings of where to look.

Get the full guide · \$29

General information only, not an inspection of any vehicle. "Our guide" means our recommendation, not a legal rule. Costs are a rough guide. Information current at October 2026: always check the VIN yourself. Perth Cars Pre-Purchase Inspection Service · ACN 612 731 996 · Licence Nos. LVS/WSS MR20570 · MS30917 · 0451 237 048 · info@autolab360.com · perthprepurchaseinspection.com

STAGE 2**At the 4WD**

Take this guide with you.

07**Dashboard warning lights**

The colour tells you how serious it is.

**Red = Stop**

Serious

**Yellow = Check**

Needs a look

**Green = OK**

Just information

The one-minute light test**1****Key on**

Lights come on. Good!

2**Start the engine**

Lights go out.

3**Watch**

Any light left on? Ask about it.

**Check engine**

Engine fault found.

**Battery**

Not charging.

**Oil pressure**

Low oil. Stop the engine.

**Engine too hot**

Overheating. Stop.

**Brake**

Handbrake on, or a brake fault.

**ABS**

Anti-skid brake fault.

**Airbag**

Airbags may not work.

**DPF**

Soot filter is full.

**1. Paint and panels****GOOD**

Same colour everywhere, even gaps.

ASK ABOUT IT

One panel a different colour.

**2. Exhaust smoke and smell****GOOD**

No heavy white smoke and no foul smell from the exhaust.

ASK ABOUT IT

"Has the exhaust filter been repaired or replaced?"

**3. Rust****GOOD**

Smooth paint, no bubbles.

ASK ABOUT IT

Bubbles, or flaky rust underneath.

**4. Tyres****GOOD**

Even wear. The 4 numbers on the side (like **2319** = 2019) show under 6 years old.

ASK ABOUT IT

Worn on one edge, cracked, or 6+ years old.

**5. Cold start****GOOD**

Starts quickly. Any smoke clears in a minute.

ASK ABOUT IT

Hard to start, rattles, or keeps smoking.

**6. Test drive****BEFORE YOU DRIVE**

Seller says yes, their insurance covers you.

GOOD

Goes straight. Smooth gears. Firm brakes.

ASK ABOUT IT

Pulls to one side, clunks, or a warning light.

4WD check

Only on gravel or grass, never on a sealed road. The green 4WD light should come on, then go off.

09

Your scorecard

Tick Yes or No, then count your No's.



At the 4WD	Yes	No
Engine was cold when I arrived		
! VIN on the 4WD matches the rego papers		
Seller's answers were the same as on the phone		
Paint even, no bubbly rust		
Sits level		
Tyres look good and are under 6 years old		
! Light test passed		
! Started easily, smoke cleared		
Windows, locks and air-con work, two keys		
Drives straight, smooth gears, firm brakes		
! No warning light on the drive		
Does the paperwork show the Toyota DPF fix was done?		
Does the engine code match the advert?		

My No's

____ / 13

Stop signs with No

What your count means



Any stop sign with a No?

Stop. Don't pay a deposit until it's sorted.

0 to 1

Looks well cared for

Many buyers still get a mechanic to check inside the engine.

2 to 3

A few questions

Ask the seller, and ask a mechanic what each No might cost.

4 to 6

Lots of unknowns

Get a mechanic to look before you pay anything.

7 or more

Many warning signs

Take your time and get advice first.

The decision is always yours.