

# Flood damaged cars show signs of rust, water marks

*Dear Attorney General Kline: I'm beginning the process of buying a used vehicle, but I want to make sure I don't buy one exposed to the recent floods in the Gulf Coast states. What are some of the things I should watch for?*

Dear Kansas Consumer: First of all, our hearts certainly go out to all those affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We wish them the best and hopefully many of us are helping in whatever ways we can.

What we don't want in the wake of these devastating storms is an onslaught of vehicles formerly owned by those affected Gulf Coast residents. But that is exactly what we must be on the lookout for because we can be rather certain that cars and trucks once flooded in that area will one day end up on the



**phill kline**

• attorney general

auctioneer's block in Kansas.

Here are some telltale signs that a vehicle has been flooded:

- Water marks on door panels, radiators, wheel wells or seat cushions.
- Rust on door hinges, hood springs, under dash brackets, trunk latches or other areas not usually reached by road salt.
- Manuals, documents or papers accompanied by a musty or heavily scented odor.
- Water or moisture droplets lo-

cated inside head lamps or tail lamps.

- Sand or mud caked up under bumpers and in door jams.
- New carpet that does not match the original upholstery.

No matter how well a re-seller may attempt to hide the signs of flooding, a handkerchief passed into the depths of the trunk and between the seat cushions will likely pick up a mildew smell.

These totaled-out cars can be bought cheaply. If such savings and the full disclosure of the flooding are passed onto Kansas consumers by Kansas auto dealers, then the Kansas Consumer Protection Act is not violated in most instances.

The problem we must anticipate is flooded vehicles being sold with-

out full disclosure. Since the fact that a car or truck sat steering-wheel deep in storm water constitutes a material fact that almost every vehicle buyer in Kansas would want to know, failure to reveal that fact would be a violation of the act.

Many of these vehicles are also going through other states to be cleaned so they don't show flood markings, so Kansans need to thoroughly check for the warning signs.

Even if sold with a full disclosure of the flooding, previously flooded vehicles may still cause problems for dealers. The brakes, transmission and engine components of a formerly flooded vehicle are often adversely affected.

When the consumer has problems soon after driving off the lot, he or she is then well positioned to

press a claim under Kansas' warranty of merchant ability, and the dealer might have to buy back a formerly flooded car and be stuck with an unmarketable vehicle.

Keep in mind that part-time, unregistered dealers, often referred to as "curb stoners," may be the most likely avenue for these cars to find their way into the stream of commerce in Kansas. Consumers enjoy greater protections when buying used vehicles from licensed dealers than when buying from "curb stoners."

When you have selected a vehicle to purchase, you might also consider going on-line to **www.carfax.com** or **www.autocheck.com**, which are web sites designed to provide consumers a vehicle history.

In addition, you may wish to ask your insurance agent to run the ve-

hicle information number (VIN) through the National Insurance Crime Bureau, which would show any insurance claims made on that vehicle.

If you're thinking about buying a formerly flooded vehicle, my advice would be to reconsider.

*Attorney General Phill Kline offers this public service to help you avoid becoming a victim of consumer fraud. Although some of the details have been changed, the cases appearing in this column are based on actual complaints or questions.*

*For further information or to file a complaint, please write Attorney General Phill Kline, Consumer Protection Division, 120 SW 10th Ave., 2nd Floor, Topeka, Kan. 66612, or call the toll-free Consumer Hotline, 1-800-432-2310.*

## Making meals, helping with chores, calling makes one a caregiver

Pablo Casals, a world renowned cellist, once said, "The capacity to care is the thing that gives life its deepest significance and meaning."

Are you a caregiver? Most people who provide care for a friend or family member don't think of themselves as a caregiver. Caregivers provide support to someone who needs help.

It doesn't matter how many hours per week are spent providing support. You may not consider yourself a caregiver, but if you regularly drive a family member, friend or neighbor to doctor's appointments; make meals for someone; help someone with household chores such as cleaning, grocery shopping, lawn care, etc.; make regular phone calls to someone to "check in" on them; provide hands-on care, including bathing, help eating, using the toilet or other help; help someone make decisions about medical care; or assist someone with personal business affairs, such as bill paying, you may be a caregiver.



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Being a caregiver involves an investment in time, energy and support. Caring for others can be difficult and exhausting work, and it is not something most of us have been prepared to do.

You are tending to their physical and safety needs as well as their need for dignity and self-esteem. No type of care is exempt from duties. Caring for others can be difficult and exhausting work.

Your responsibilities may range from doing the wash and cleaning the house to buying groceries and filling out paperwork. You learn to eat and sleep when your care receiver eats and sleeps, and you hurry to accomplish everything else

for them. Like most people, you may have questions about your family member's or friend's illness or condition. If you have a job and are juggling several responsibilities or if your family member or friend requires a lot of assistance, you may need help providing care for them.

Many caregivers feel alone, helpless, confused, unprepared and unable to provide for the needs of their family member or friend. Learning about being a caregiver may help you feel supported and more comfortable with your role.

Caregivers of chronically ill older persons or those with disabilities are generous, compassionate individuals. They care for family

members or friends in the familiar surroundings of their own home or community. These caregivers are "on call" 24-hours a day, seven days a week, because they want to see their family member or friend remain in the comfort and security of their own environment.

But at some point, even the caregiver needs a break, a rest or a breather. As caregivers, we sometimes become so involved in the day-to-day efforts to keep things going we may forget to let others know we need additional assistance with providing care, or just need a break from the routine of caring for someone.

If you are a working caregiver, it is important to discuss your situation with your employer. Older chil-

dren living at home may be able to assist you and/or your older family member.

You can and should ask other family members to share in care giving. Create a list of things that need to be done, such as grocery shopping, laundry, errands, lawn care, housecleaning or spending time with the care recipient and put the list on the refrigerator or near the front door. If someone says, "let me know if there is anything I can do to help," you can point to the list.

Take a break from care giving even if it is only 15 or 20 minutes a day, and make sure you do something just for you. Exercise is a great way to take a break, and it can decrease stress and enhance your energy.

To help give you more energy, eat

healthy. Your health and nutrition is just as important as the person you are caring for. It can be helpful to have a support group. Many caregivers have times when they are lonely, anxious, guilty, angry, scared, frustrated, confused, lost or tired. If you feel like these feelings are overwhelming you, call your physician or another community resource.

*Written by Diane Paris Frickey, Hospice social worker, and Sandy Kuhlman, executive director of Hospice Services Inc., Box 116, Phillipsburg, Kan. 67661. Contact Kuhlman or Julia Schemper at 800-315-5122. Hospices serves north-west and north central Kansas and has been providing end-of-life care for more than 23 years.*

## Book features candles, European recipes

In Amber K and Azrael Aryn K's book "Candlemas" they present a new way to go at spring house cleaning. Candlemas celebrates the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

There is a section on candle making. They tell you what materials to use, wicks, colorants, scents and how to make candles. Candles can be made by dipping, sand casting and by using molds.

The book also has some traditional old European recipes in it.

### Bubble and squeak

This recipe is named for the sound it makes as it cooks. It can also be cooked without meat, just be sure to add salt.

Boil and mash.  
2 cups potatoes  
2 cups turnips  
Chop and blanch 2 cups cabbage.  
Add to potatoes and turnips.

Add  
1 large onion, coarsely chopped  
1 - 2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 cup cooked, diced ham  
4 cooked bacon slices (reserve the drippings)  
Salt, pepper, sage, tarragon and



**pat schiefen**

• postscript

thyme to taste

Heat bacon drippings (or 2 tablespoons butter) on griddle or large frying pan. Add mixture to form a large, flat cake and cook over medium heat. Serve in large wedges with beer, stout or ale. Serves 6 to 8.

### Steamed seagreen

Sea weed was a common vegetable for ancient peoples living along the sea coast.

Sea weed contains all the required minerals, lots of vitamins, especially B12 and A. It is high in protein and iodine. Sea weed was gathered in the summer and dried.

Rinse well dried dulse or other seagreen. (Buy at a health food store.)

Add milk or broth to cover well. Salt and pepper to taste.

Simmer covered for 1 to 3 hours or until tender. Serve with butter or

sour cream.  
**Cranberry fruit nut bread**

Wash, sort and cut in half 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries  
Sift together  
2 cups flour  
1 cup sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
Cut in 1/4 cup butter  
Mix together  
1 teaspoon grated orange peel  
3/4 cup orange juice  
1 egg, well beaten  
Add to the flour mixture and mix just to moisten.

Fold in  
1/2 cup chopped pecans  
1 1/2 cups cranberries  
Grease a 9 by 5 by 3 inch loaf pan (including the non-stick ones). Pour batter into the pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for at least 60 minutes until the top is golden brown and toothpick comes out clean. Cool or serve piping hot.

For muffins bake in muffin tin for 30 minutes.

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