



Walt the Curber Makes His Debut

You've probably seen him in your local paper over the last couple of weeks. Some may even recognize his face. Who's Walt*? He's a fictional character created to warn consumers of the dangers of buying from curbers.

Coordinated by the VSA, with partners CarProof Vehicle History Reports and ICBC, *Watch out for Walt!* is a province-wide campaign to increase awareness of curbers. Walt's weekly confessions reveal the poor, and often illegal, selling practices of curbers and the multiple risks involved. The benefits and protections of buying from licensed dealers and salespeople are always shared as the alternative.

It's difficult to estimate how much curbers cost consumers, but we do know that the private used vehicle sales market totals \$900 million (or 155,000 sales) a year in BC. If only a quarter of these sales are done through curbers, consumers put nearly \$225 million at risk every year.

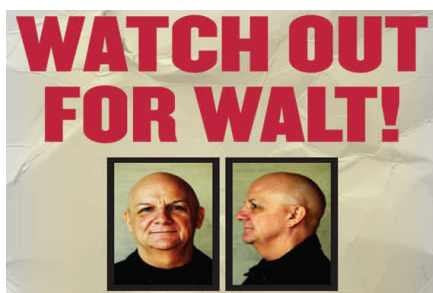
Since the VSA has limited tools to deal with curbers, the campaign will educate consumers to request vehicle history reports, select safe vehicles and buy from licensed dealers. However, it's also up to dealers to stop sellers like Walt. By refusing to sell to known curbers and to wholesalers who sell to curbers, the supply of vehicles curbers can resell will be reduced. The VSA has over 800 licensed dealers that sell only used vehicles, ready to serve the public. They deserve the inventory.

Walt made a public appearance at the Mainland Better Business Bureau's Top Ten Scams press conference in February, where curbers were named the Top Sales Scam of the year. Walt will also be showing some of his tricks at the Vancouver International Auto Show.

Walt's weekly confessions are being published in the 78 Black Press community newspapers around the province. The papers have 1 million readers and their combined online websites get another 1 million views each month. The VSA's share of the campaign costs come from the VSA Consumer Awareness Fund. All administrative penalties assessed by the Registrar are placed in this fund.

Watchoutforwalt.com has more information on the joint campaign.

**Ray Medway, long time VSA certification course facilitator*



www.vehiclesalesauthority.com

Online Continuing Education Program

Last fall, we announced the introduction of a new Continuing Education (CE) program for all salespeople. The revised professional development requirement comes into effect April 1, 2014. The first group with the new requirement will be those who completed the Level I Salesperson Certification Course in early 2008 and 2009. Notification of the CE requirement will be mailed with licence renewal letters.

The program was developed to meet two important concerns that could not be addressed in a classroom format: the cost and time spent away from the dealership. The program will be entirely self-study. Each module is intended to be completed in 90 minutes and will cost \$85 per module. A total of three modules need to be completed to fulfill the Continuing Education requirement established by the Registrar. Module registration will open June 1.

Building on recent court cases, Registrar's decisions and consumer complaints, the program content will include:

- Advertising from the salesperson's point of view, including web-based selling
- Protecting the privacy of your buyers
- Business office, financing and leasing compliance
- Dealership best practices