

McLAREN 720S · SPIDER

PRE-PURCHASE PROTOCOL · BUYER CHECKS · SPECIALIST PPI · RED FLAGS

Compiled from public sources, the McLaren 720S, its Model File and specialist review · Personal use only · v2.1

WHAT THIS CHECKLIST IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This checklist is written for enthusiasts who want a base of knowledge: enough context to follow what a PPI specialist tells them, to read an inspection report a dealer hands over, and to understand what is being discussed in videos and forums. It does not replace the diagnosis or judgement of a qualified specialist or workshop, and it is not a tool for saving the cost of one. If you are not deeply familiar with these cars technically and are unsure about a vehicle's condition, our standing recommendation is simple: commission and pay a qualified PPI specialist of your choice, whether an official dealership, a marque specialist, or an experienced supercar specialist who knows the brand. The checklist gives you context; the specialist gives you the verdict.

A · BUYER CHECK · PROVENANCE & PAPERWORK

- ☐ Variant truth first: Coupé or Spider, build year against the update and accumulator eras — chassis data, never badges.
- ☐ Recall trio closed by VIN: 20V231 (fuel-tank pad), 21V561 (banjo bolt), 25V216 (brake-line routing — fresh, check even on late cars).
- ☐ Software audit on record: all ECUs against McLaren's current state — the early years lived on campaigns.
- ☐ Accumulator status AND generation: revised units fitted, or conversion invoiced, or priced as due.
- ☐ ECU factory state verified: many cars were power-increased — tuning identified before anything else.
- ☐ Battery regime documented: tender use, standing-time story told honestly.
- ☐ Usage pattern: regularly driven beats low-mileage stander — per long-term owners, not just doctrine.
- ☐ Gorilla-roof cars: glass history, any crack repairs disclosed.
- ☐ Track file where applicable: track days, brakes, tyres, revisions.
- ☐ Carbon structure: accident file read before paint is discussed.

B · BUYER CHECK · AT THE CAR

- ☐ Cold start filmed: clean idle, no smoke — the M840T is the robust part, so anomalies count double.
- ☐ Hydraulic pump listened for at standstill; ride quality felt for the harsh-accumulator signature.
- ☐ Airbrake cycled: full sequence, calibration, no fault entries.
- ☐ Front lift cycled several times, cold and warm.
- ☐ Boost behaviour warm: even delivery, no hiss — inlet condition matters double on tuned cars.
- ☐ Glass roof read in raking light: stress cracks, chips, edge delamination.
- ☐ Fuel smell check after standing; underbody sighted at the tank area (20V231 story).
- ☐ Brake feel: no pulling, no one-corner behaviour (21V561/25V216 stories).
- ☐ SSG: cold manoeuvring, kickdown, launch behaviour warm.
- ☐ Infotainment exercised: display, Bluetooth, navigation, camera.
- ☐ Spider: full roof cycles, seals, microswitch behaviour.
- ☐ Battery voltage read; error memory before and after the drive.

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C · SPECIALIST PPI SCOPE (MINIMUM)

- ☐ Full scan before and after the drive: DME, SSG, PCC II, BCM, display, TPMS — fault history read, not cleared.
- ☐ Software audit: every module against McLaren's current state — the update biography assembled.
- ☐ Hydraulic pressure test, pump runtime, accumulator health AND generation identified.
- ☐ ECU read for tuning traces; turbo inlets inspected — mandatory on any power-increased car.
- ☐ Boost log both banks; wastegate function; charge-air leak check.
- ☐ Recall completion verified physically where visible: tank-pad removal, brake-line routing.
- ☐ Monocage and underbody inspected by carbon-competent eyes.
- ☐ Battery and charging test; parasitic-drain measurement on doubt.
- ☐ PCCB measured (thickness/weight) where fitted.
- ☐ Glass roof professionally assessed on any doubt.
- ☐ Cooling system pressure-checked; quick-connectors inspected.
- ☐ Typical full specialist PPI cost, rounded orientation by market (2026): ≈€650–1,300 / ≈£550–1,150 / ≈\$700–1,400. Indications, not conversions; obtain current local quotes.

D · PRICE & INVESTIGATION ITEMS

The drivetrain is the quiet certainty: the price sits in the accumulators, the software, the recall file and the tuning truth.

- ☐ Accumulators due or first-generation: ≈€4,000–6,000 — the standing 720S line item.
- ☐ Open recalls: free at the dealer, but closed before delivery — 25V216 checked even on late cars.
- ☐ Software backlog: dealer time, closed before delivery.
- ☐ Undocumented ECU tuning: returned to stock or priced as risk — with the inlets inspected.
- ☐ Gorilla-roof findings: high four to five figures — priced, not observed.
- ☐ PCCB wear: measured and priced (>€10,000 exposure).
- ☐ Front-lift faults: €2,500–5,000 — cycled and verified.
- ☐ Stander cars: the reconditioning round quoted honestly.
- ☐ Negotiate from the documented file: never from the odometer alone.

E · RED FLAGS · WALK-AWAY OR ESCALATION

- Open fuel or brake recall on a car presented as sorted.
- First-generation accumulators with symptoms, sold as "just firm".
- Tuning without paperwork, or an ECU that does not match the story.
- Roof cracks dismissed as stone chips.
- Update history unknown, or campaigns unverifiable by VIN.
- Long-standing car sold as "low mileage, like new".
- Fault memory cleared before viewing, or scan refused.
- Accident history without carbon-structure documentation.
- A car whose findings cannot be named, quantified and priced.

F · FIRST WEEK OF OWNERSHIP

- ☐ Baseline stored: full scan, software levels, hydraulic pressures, accumulator generation, PCCB measurements.
- ☐ Recall and update backlog closed at the dealer; ECU state documented.
- ☐ Battery tender installed, driving cadence planned; purchase file and PPI report archived.

"The 720S is the M840T generation at its purest: buy the accumulator generation, the software state and the recall file — the engine has never been the story."

Deep dive: Supercar Models Paper 55 · Model File 55 · Owner's Intelligence series.