

MAX BID CALCULATOR
California Dealer Academy

Excel-Style Worksheet to Lock In Your All-In Cost Before Bidding

THE FORMULA

Max Bid = Target Retail Price – (Transport + Recon + Fees + Profit Margin)

STEP 1: DETERMINE TARGET RETAIL PRICE

Research comparable vehicles using:

- ☐ NADA Guides
- ☐ KBB (Kelley Blue Book)
- ☐ Manheim Value Guide
- ☐ Local market comps
- ☐ Your own sales history

Target Retail Price: \$ _____

STEP 2: ESTIMATE TRANSPORT COST

Distance (miles): _____

Rate per mile: \$ _____ (typical \$0.60-\$1.50)

TRANSPORT SUBTOTAL: \$ _____

OR flat rate quoted: \$ _____

TRANSPORT TOTAL: \$ _____

STEP 3: ESTIMATE RECON COST

Mechanical recon: \$ _____

Cosmetic/detailing: \$ _____

Safety/compliance: \$ _____

Unexpected repairs (10% buffer): \$ _____

RECON TOTAL: \$ _____

STEP 4: CALCULATE AUCTION FEES

Buyer's premium (typical 5-10%): \$ _____

Auction documentation fees: \$ _____

Processing fees: \$ _____

Pre-sale inspection (if used): \$ _____

FEES TOTAL: \$ _____

STEP 5: DETERMINE PROFIT MARGIN

Desired profit per vehicle: \$ _____

OR desired profit margin %: _____ %

(Calculate: Target Retail Price × _____ % = \$ _____)
PROFIT MARGIN TARGET: \$ _____

STEP 6: CALCULATE MAX BID

Target Retail Price:	\$ _____
Minus: Transport	-\$ _____
Minus: Recon	-\$ _____
Minus: Fees	-\$ _____
Minus: Profit Margin	-\$ _____

YOUR MAXIMUM BID: \$ _____

EXAMPLE CALCULATION

Target Retail Price: \$15,000

Transport: -\$1,200

Recon: -\$600

Fees: -\$250

Profit Margin: -\$2,000

Maximum Bid: \$10,950

BIDDING DISCIPLINE

Maximum bid calculated: \$ _____

NEVER EXCEED THIS AMOUNT

Reason for max bid: _____

AUCTION DETAILS

Platform: _____

Vehicle: _____

Lot number: _____

Auction date: _____

BIDDING ACTIVITY LOG

Opening bid: \$ _____

Your first bid: \$ _____

Current high bid: \$ _____

Bidding activity: ☐ Light ☐ Moderate ☐ Heavy

Price approaching max: ☐ Yes ☐ No

FINAL DECISION

☐ Bid within maximum

☐ Walk away (price exceeded max)

☐ Place final bid at: \$ _____

RESULTS

Did you win: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Winning bid: \$ _____

Buyer's premium: \$ _____

Total paid: \$ _____

Under/over budget: \$ _____ (over/under)

ACTUAL ALL-IN COST

Hammer price: \$ _____

Buyer's premium: \$ _____

Auction fees: \$ _____

Transport actual: \$ _____

Recon actual: \$ _____

TOTAL ACTUAL COST: \$ _____

PROFITABILITY ANALYSIS

Target retail price: \$ _____

Actual all-in cost: \$ _____

Actual profit margin: \$ _____

Margin %: _____%

☐ Met margin target

☐ Below margin target

☐ Above margin target

LESSONS LEARNED

What worked: _____

What to improve: _____

Next bid strategy: _____

DISCLAIMER: This is an online guide and educational reference only. Market conditions, recon costs, and transport rates vary significantly. Always verify actual costs before bidding. This calculator is not a substitute for professional financial planning or market analysis.

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