Dead Jag Checklist, Dead to Driven - Save a Jag from the Junkyard! (Copywrite 2025 Randy Pickett)

Whether it is your own car, or you are looking for a project, the below information can help you make the best decision and complete the critical maintenance needed to get a Jag back on the road.

Finding a car: In the U.S., there are always Jaguar projects available for sale on Craigslist or FB Marketplace. You want to find a car you like that is not too far gone, super rusty or the engine is seized:

1. The car is basically intact, no parts missing
2. No major rust
3. Engine cranks over with a fresh battery or will rotate by hand.
4. Low miles and available service documentation are bonuses.
5. Cars that do not sit outside uncovered are usually in a lot better cosmetic condition. Choosing a car with reasonably good paint and interior is a huge bonus.

Expect to pay more for a car in nicer condition or is rare or a special edition, but generally you can pick up a non-running Jaguar project for $500 to $1000. The range would include 70's through 90's coupes and sedans and some even earlier sedans from the 50's and 60's. E types and XK120's etc. usually require a significant investment up front to even acquire a vehicle in marginal condition.

The Checklist:

1. **Fuel**
    a. Any fuel in the fuel tank is likely bad and must be drained
    b. Most fuel tanks will have rust or even holes
    c. Replace the fuel filter. Some fuel lines will likely need replacing.
    d. Replace the fuel pump as needed. Water/debris in the fuel will destroy a fuel pump over time.
    e. If fuel tank(s) are very rusty or have holes, consider installing a temporary tank in the trunk to get the car running. You can purchase an aluminum tank for relatively cheap. New Jag replacement tanks can be quite expensive.
    f. Fuel tanks can be cleaned and resealed using POR15 or similar but take some time to do properly.
    g. Under hood fuel lines: Red Alert: If they are old, they must be replaced, all fuel lines under the hood. If one bursts, you will have an engine fire. This is a must do above anything else

2. Engine

a. **<u>You need fuel, spark and compression</u>** in order for an engine to fire. The first things to ensure is good clean fuel supply and you have spark, assume compression for now. After that move down the list!

b. Check engine oil and coolant prior to starting. If engine oil is sludgy and or does not look reasonably clean, change the oil. Pre lube engine, instructions below. Top off coolant as needed. After getting the engine running, change the oil if you don't have documentation of mileage or it is over one year old.

c. Hopefully the engine is not seized. If it is, do the following:
   i. Seized or not, put a couple of ounces of WD 40, Seafoam or similar product down each cylinder and let soak prior to starting.
   ii. Remove spark plugs and spray Seafoam, PBR blaster or similar product into cylinders and let soak overnight
   iii. If engine is stuck, after soaking the pistons for a period of time, gently attempt to rock engine over with breaker bar on the crankshaft pulley
   iv. Read Kirby Palm's "Experience In a Book" for all of the little things the XJS needs, such as the Lucas distributor etc.

d. It is always a good idea to pressurize the oil gallery before attempting to start.
   i. Lube tanks are available for a reasonable price, fill with oil and pressurize once you figure out how to tap into the oil gallery. V12's are pretty easy.
   ii. Belts. If no record of when belts were last replaced, replace the belts.
   iii. Air filter(s), recommend checking entire intake system for rodent nests and clean accordingly. Replace air filters if more than a few years old. K&N reusable filters are recommended.

e. Check under car for leaks. Serious leaks should be repaired.

f. Sometimes leak stopping products will improve smaller leaks.

g. If you didn't already get the message: Under hood fuel lines: Red Alert: If they are old, they must be replaced, all fuel lines under the hood. If one bursts, you will have an engine fire. This is a must do above anything else

3. The Rest of the Drive Train:

a. There are a lot of grease fittings in the rear sub assembly. Make sure you grease everything, but don't over grease as you can blow out seals

b. On the rear outer hubs, there is a small access port on the hubs that you can pop out with a screwdriver. Once open add grease as needed to the bearings in the hub, especially if things are looking dry.

c. Check/replace differential fluid. In many cases you need to add limited slip additive when replacing the fluid.
d. The U joints can be hard to get to, especially the drive lines. I wouldn't tear the car apart trying to get to those. Newer cars also tend to have non greasable u joints anyways.
e. Transmission, the turbo 400 trans is bulletproof.
f. A fluid and filter change are usually all that is needed. If you got the pan off, it is not too hard to throw a shift kit in if you want firmer shifting.
g. A note on high mileage automatics: You can literally dynamite an automatic if you change the fluid on a high mileage trans. The debris in the fluid is keeping the trans working. New fluid will cause the trans to start slipping. I don't change fluid on a trans with much over 100k miles.

4. Cooling System:

a. Once you get the engine started, it is important to flush the cooling system and replace fluid with fresh coolant. Flush with a quality cooling system cleaner and follow instructions.
b. The external radiator core is likely plugged with debris, utilize a pressure washer to clear it out.
c. Cooling system hoses and thermostats may need to be replaced and should be replaced at some point if you don't have records they were replaced in the last 5 years.
d. Water pumps are usually okay unless they start leaking. If leaking, replace. Sometimes they will start leaking soon after getting the car running due to corrosion.
e. Fan clutch and fan may need replaced. Replace any fan that is colored yellow. They tend to crack and break which will destroy the radiator.

5. Electrical.

a. You will usually need to replace the battery immediately. Check the date code, if it is 4 years or older, replace.
b. Old starters and alternators are prone to failure. Be prepared to have one or both fail by having spares on the shelf. Also keep a spare starter relay as they fail as well and are susceptible to corrosion.
c. A test light is your best friend and will tell you if something has power or not.
d. You will likely find a number of systems do not function, windows, wipers, door locks, etc. Generally, you can get things moving again by simply cleaning the contacts in the fuse boxes and checking/replacing all the fuses.
e. Grounds: There are grounds to the body in several places, on the firewall, under the dash and in the trunk. Cleaning the grounds that are bolted to the body will fix a lot of electrical issues.

f. Small motors, windows etc. In many cases if you still cannot get things moving, disassembling a motor and lubing the bearings will almost always fix problems.
g. Lube, lube, lube. Utilize spray silicon on door channels, WD40 or PBR Blaster on door mechanisms and anything that moves. It will lessen the burden on electrical motors and improve function immensely.

6. Tires, brakes and Suspension

a. Expect to replace the shocks if they are ten years or older
b. Rear springs are almost always sagging. Expect to replace the four rear springs when you replace the shocks.
c. Brakes are usually seized and in poor condition especially if the car was outside for any length of time. Expect to replace, rotors, calipers and brake pads and repack bearings.
d. The steering rack may be leaking and may need replaced or rebuilt. You can buy a rebuild kit with all the seals, but it is tricky to get them right. If there is a leak and it is not too bad, utilize power steering pump leak sealer in the system as you have nothing to lose. Remanufactured steering racks are getting harder to find and will set you back in the thousand dollar range.
e. Tie rod ends, ball joints etc. should be checked and possibly replaced, especially if the rubber gators protecting the joint have cracked and rotted off.
f. Tires that are over 5 years old should be replaced.
g. Once any major suspension work is completed, it is recommended to have the front end aligned.

7. Interior

a. The windows are likely leaking, and the interior is musty. If the windows are leaking, you can sometimes get away with using silicone to seal them back up. You also may need to simply replace the seals which is not has hard as it sounds
b. Ensure interior is dry and or dry out if needed, check the floorboards for rust and treat as needed.
c. Utilize mold cleaner if mold is found. Utilize an ozone generator or other permanent odor eliminating chemical to get smell out
d. There are leather products on the market that will bring back even the worst looking seats. There is filler and colorant available that will blow your mind
e. Headliners are almost always sagging. It is relatively easy to recover the headliner. You can buy neutral tan headliner material on Amazon cheap and simply strip the bad material from the liner and glue new material on with 3M headliner spray glue. Do not oversaturate or it will bleed through the new liner.

8. Exterior

a. Wash vehicle, utilize pressure washer and degreaser under the hood.
b. Assess paint, buff car out utilizing appropriate stage of buffing compound based on paint condition

c. Small dents can be pulled with a cheap dent puller kit that uses hot glue
d. Exact color match paint can be purchased to touch up any chips and dings. Spray cans with color match paint are also available for purchase to fix larger areas.

Jaguar Parts:

Where to buy?

1. Online discount parts houses, Parks Geek etc.: Check these sites first and always check wholesale closeout. I find consumables like brake pads and light bulbs for pennies on the dollar
2. Amazon: You would be surprised at how many Jag parts pop up here at reasonable prices.
3. Ebay: You can find new and used Jag parts on eBay for reasonable prices. But be careful, there may be multiple listings of the same part at different prices. Also, check shipping, sometimes they will post shipping costs as high or higher than the part and you may not notice until you hit the pay button.
4. Moss Motors & SNG Barret. Thes sites have a very good parts selection but can be pricey for some things. If you can't find it anywhere else, you can usually purchase here.

Dead Jag Shopping List:

1. **Engine:**
    a. Don't use small filters on the V12, make sure you buy full size filters. I have noted a ten to twenty pound drop in pressure between the small filters and the larger ones.
    b. I tend to run 20w 50 on older engines as it improves idle oil pressure when hot. Zinc replacement additives are supposed to help quiet down the valve train. Classic car motor oil with Zinc is available on Amazon. Be careful as additives can destroy catalytic converters.
    c. Before changing the oil, consider running engine cleaner in the engine. As the V12 crankcase ventilation system is poor at best, there is usually a lot of sludge built up inside older engines.
    d. Purchase spare starter, alternator and starter relay if no record of last replacement.
2. **Cooling System:**
    a. Purchase replacement hoses and thermostats if it is not known when they were last changed.
    b. Stock radiators were always marginal in Jags with stories of new cars over heating in hotter climates. A higher capacity radiator makes sense.
    c. Aftermarket aluminum radiators are available, cheap and expensive. The cheap radiators for purchase on E bay, tend to not fit, or the fittings do not work with what is in the car. The biggest problem is the alignment pins on the top and

bottom of the radiators are set back about 2 inches which makes it impossible to properly mount the radiator. Be prepared to relocate pins, or purchase higher quality U.S. made radiator for about triple the price.

3. **Fuel system:**
    a. Purchase the appropriate Jaguar size fuel line by the roll which is available on Amazon. It is much cheaper than buying a kit or purchasing pre made fuel lines. You can remake the fuel lines and reuse the fuel line fittings.
    b. Purchase quality replacement fuel filters.
    c. Purchase and utilize fuel system/injector cleaner after cleaning tank and filling with fresh fuel.
4. **Suspension:**
    a. If no recent maintenance records on brakes are available, or brakes are seized and rusty, purchase brake calipers, pads, rotors, bearings, seals. Expect to pay around $300 for these parts for the front end. Add the same amount for rear brakes. Front brakes are relatively easy to replace. Rear brakes are easier to replace by dropping the entire rear subframe if the brakes are inboard.
    b. Brake parts are usually available for purchase at the online parts houses at reasonable prices.
    c. Springs and shocks. Shocks and springs will run around $300 each end if you shop around.
    d. Tires: 15-inch tires are harder to find. For U.S. based folks, you can purchase a set of 4 tires on Amazon for $300 and have them shipped to you versus going to the tire store and spending double that.
5. **Electrical:**
    a. A car that has been sitting for some time, especially in a damp climate is likely going to have a number of electrical systems not functional.
        i. Buy replacement fuses
        ii. Ensure you have a quality test light or multimeter
        iii. Purchase an automotive electrical wiring kit and spare quality automotive wire in different gauges. Purchase an electrical connector crimper
        iv. Purchase quality electrical tape.
        v. Wiring harness wrap is available on Amazon that looks very good when rewrapping wiring harnesses in which the cloth covering has rotted off.
6. **Cosmetics, Interior & Exterior:**
        i. Purchase leather seat recoloring and reconditioner products. They work very well and can bring marginal seats back.
        ii. Purchase quality paint buffing products, Griot's Garage as an example. Assess paint and utilize buffer and appropriate buffing compounds in stages to bring marginal paint back. Don't over buff! You will break through the topcoat!

iii. Purchase rust treatment products, primer and paint, usually semi gloss black for under the hood etc. clean up and treat any rusty body or under hood components.
iv. Purchase tubes of high quality silicone, both clear and black. Utilize to seal windows etc. also high quality engine gasket maker for fixing leaks.

7. **Spares:** You should always carry spare parts and tools in your trunk. The most common spare parts to carry are as follows:
    a. Fuel filter
    b. Spare fuel pump
    c. Oil
    d. Brake fluid
    e. Transmission fluid
    f. Ignition amplifier
    g. Spare coil
    h. Spare rotor and cap, especially Marelli ignition
    i. A gallon of premixed coolant
    j. Electrical tape, spare wire, electrical fittings and crimper. Electrical test light
    k. Lithium-Ion jumper battery (They are compact and easy to store)
    l. Fire extinguisher
    m. Make sure your spare tire is not as old as humanity and has proper pressure
    n. Make sure you have a good working jack and tire iron. Check to make sure tire iron fits the current lugs on the car.