

Honda S-MX Buyers Guide

By smx-owners.com

S-MX Models & Variations

RH1 Lowdown and Standard Models

RH2 4WD

First Generation 1996-2000

Available in three different trims:

Base trim with front-wheel-drive

4WD, which featured four-wheel-drive, a 15 mm higher ride height and added gear selections for the transmission (D1)

Lowdown, which featured a 15 mm lower ride height compared to the base model, a front chin spoiler, a rear spoiler, side skirts and unique 3 spoke 15 inch wheels (LOWDOWN is printed on the blue chassis plate)

All models are automatic and use the B20B Honda engine (128bhp)

Colours available: White, Black, Orange, Silver, Blue

Optional Extras:

- Sunroof
- Rear Spoiler (Lowdown only)
- ABS Braking system
- Orange Interior Seats, Speaker Grills, Air-Vents, Door Handles (Lowdown only)
- Clear Indicators
- Wind Deflectors
- Floor Mats
- Rear Headrests
- Chrome Door Mirror Covers
- Remote Central Locking
- Mud flaps
- Parking Assistance Pole
- Front Fog Lights
- Electric Folding Mirrors
- Rear Tinted Windows
- Wood Effect Dashboard

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Second Generation (Facelift) 1996-2000

The S-MX was slightly restyled in 2000. Improvements were made to the styling with re-modelled headlights and front bumper. Also 5 seat models were introduced.

In addition to the previous model variations, two special editions were introduced:

Aero Style - This included: More aggressive front lip, rear lip, spoiler and side skirts. Larger alloy wheels, Silver Dashboard trim and leather interior.

Casual Style - This included: Wooden effect dashboard, black seats, different alloy wheels

Colours available: White, Black, Silver, Blue, Purple, Red, Green, Grey

The following changes were made from the first generation:

- Body coloured bumpers
- Overdrive Gearbox
- Improved B20 Engine (140ps/133 hp)
- Black plastic interior panels
- Orange Lowdown upgrades now replaced with red.
- 4 and 5 seat option on Lowdown and 4WD models
- Optional Extras
 - Blue seat coverings (Base/4WD)
 - Grey with red dots, Grey Hatched Seat coverings (Lowdown)
- Satellite Navigation
- Electric Folding Mirrors
- Remote Central Locking
- Rear Tinted Windows
- Sunroof
- Roof Spoiler
- Climate Control
- Fog Lights
- Armrest (5 Seater Only)
- 3 Spoke Steering Wheel
- Red Carpet (Lowdown)
- Wood Effect Dashboard
- Exhaust Trim

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Honda S-MX Inspection Check List

Engine

- Cam cover gasket leaks (Look around the front of the engine block near exhaust manifold)
- Cam seal leaks (located each end of the cam cover)
- Engine Oil (If its black it needs changing. If its milky there could be head gasket issues)
- Coolant fluid level (Check via radiator cap, there is also an expansion bottle)
- Air filter
- Gearbox oil level. Located left side of engine bay, directly below the brake fluid. There is a yellow dipstick for the gearbox, oil should be red in colour, and at the top of the hatched area.
- Radiator. Check for signs of corrosion.

Gearbox

- Gearbox oil level and colour (Dipstick is located rear left of engine bay, oil should be on the max line and be cherry red)
- Gear changes should be smooth
- Check kick down works under acceleration
- Check operation of all gears using the selector. (Only 4x4 models have D1)

Chassis/Running Gear

- Check for knocks at the front end, the S-MX has a unique steering rack that can be expensive to repair/replace. The Tie Rods, Track Rod Ends, ball joints and anti-roll bar drop links/bushes.
- Visual check front lower ball joints (Can be very expensive to replace)
- If the car is lowered, check for damage to spare wheel (under the passenger side). Check exhaust for damage. Check rear tyres as the camber is usually out.
- Check front CV boots for splits/wear
- Check brakes! The front discs are unique and can be expensive to replace.
- Check handbrake works
- Check for wheel bearing drone on test drive (rear wheel bearings are expensive)
- Standard wheel size is 15 inch; if anything else is fitted please check for clearance front and rear. Check for damage to front wheel arch shield
- Check condition of fuel filler neck for corrosion
- 4x4 ONLY - Check rear diff for leaks
- 4x4 ONLY - Check inner and outer rear CV boots for splits/wear
- 4x4 ONLY - Check ABS light comes on and goes out (Unique ABS pump is expensive!)

Exterior/Bodywork

- Check paintwork on the roof
- Check for rust on the rear wheel arches
- Check tops of the door shuts for rust
- Check front arches have the splash guards, if not check for rust

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- Check Windscreen damage, these are hard to find replacements for
- Check key works in all doors and ignition
- Window stamps information: AS2 non tinted. AS3 factory tinted.
- Check front wings for corrosion
- Check Headlights, they suffer from lacquer peel, these can be polished back.

Electrical

- Check A/C works if fitted; you should hear the compressor start. Also Radiator fans will run regardless of engine/water temperature.
- Check rear fog light (was never a factory option, but required by UK law)
- Check electric folding mirrors (If fitted)
- Check Speed conversion
- Check all central locking motors work, if it has a remote check that works too.
- Check engine management light comes on and goes out once started
- Check ABS light comes on with ignition and goes out once started (only abs models)
- Check SRS (Airbag light) comes on with ignition and goes out once started
- Check operation of all gauges

Interior

- Check operation of all seats, try the bed position and fully folded.
- Check for under front seat light (lowdown models only)
- Check toolkit is complete (Located in Jack storage next to front passenger seat)
- Check Jack storage clips are both there and work
- Check interior light works
- Check for water leaks (Front foot wells, tailgate)

SPECIAL NOTES

The Honda S-MX does share a lot of parts with other Honda's however there are a **LOT** of unique parts. The S-MX is **NOT** C-RV based contrary to popular belief, only some of the 4x4 part and engine are! A few parts are the same as Accord (CL), Civic (EP), S2000 (AP1) and Stepwagon (RF).

Unique parts include (but not limited to):

- Brake discs (smx-servicing.com provide and alternative)
- Rear wheel bearings
- Steering Rack
- Inner Tie-Rods
- Exhaust
- Front Wishbones
- Front anti roll bar drop-links
- 4x4 ABS Pump