

Volkswagen Golf 1.6 TDI Mk7

2012-2020 · 1.6 TDI EA288 (90-115 hp) 4-cylinder turbodiesel

carchecker.pro

Est. annual maintenance cost: €750-1,400

Date _____ Mileage _____ Price _____ Seller _____

What matters most: Manual or DSG? The DQ200 dry-clutch automatic is the biggest risk on this car. Manual models are significantly more reliable overall.

BEFORE THE VIEWING

- Recall status (timing belt)**
Pre-October 2016 cars had a timing belt tensioner recall for sand ingress. Contact a Volkswagen dealer with the VIN to confirm this and the Takata airbag recall are done.
- Service records and oil spec**
Ask for full service history. Oil must be VW 507.00 low-ash spec, changed at least yearly. If it has the DSG automatic, ask whether the gearbox fluid was changed every 40,000-60,000 km.
- MOT and mileage history**
Check the MOT history online for mileage consistency and any emissions failures. Repeated DPF or emissions advisories can point to short-trip driving, which is hard on this engine.

AT THE CAR

- Tyres and exterior condition**
Standard sizes are 195/65 R15 or 205/55 R16. Check tread depth across the full width of each tyre. Uneven inner-edge wear on the fronts can point to worn suspension bushes or alignment neglect.
- Engine oil level and smell**
Pull the dipstick (yellow handle, front of engine bay). Oil above the max mark suggests diesel fuel has leaked in from failed DPF regeneration cycles. Sniff the dipstick. It should not smell of fuel.
- Coolant level check**
The coolant expansion tank is on the right side of the engine bay. Level should be between min and max when cold. Unexplained coolant loss without visible leaks can point to an internal EGR cooler leak.
- Cold start and idle quality**
Start the engine fully cold. It should fire within 2-3 seconds. Listen for metallic rattling from the lower engine area at idle. On manual cars, this can point to dual mass flywheel wear.

DURING THE DRIVE

- Turbo response under load**
At around 50 km/h in third gear, accelerate firmly from 1,500 rpm. The turbo should build boost smoothly. Hesitation, power cuts, or an EPC warning light can point to a sticking turbo actuator or EGR issues.
- DSG behaviour at low speed**
If the car has the DQ200 automatic, drive in stop-and-go traffic for at least 10 minutes. Feel for jerky shifts between 1st and 2nd, shuddering when pulling away, or long pauses between gears.
- Dashboard warnings on the move**
Watch for DPF, AdBlue (2015+ cars only), and engine management lights during the drive. An AdBlue countdown warning is serious: after a set number of restarts, the car will refuse to start.

NOTES

THIS CAR AT A GLANCE

Diesel Golf, built 2012-2020. The EA288 engine is solid, but the EGR valve and DQ200 DSG automatic are the weak links.

KNOWN WEAK POINTS

EGR valve carbon buildup

Clogs from short trips, rough idle
€300-1,200

DQ200 DSG mechatronics

Jerky shifts, loss of drive
€1,200-3,000

DPF clogging

Blocks without regular highway use
€300-1,800

Turbo actuator sticking

Boost loss and limp mode
€400-1,800

Dual mass flywheel wear

Rattle at idle, manual cars only
€800-1,500

