

FACT SHEET

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR PENNDOT ALTERNATIVE TITLE PROCESS

PURPOSE

This fact sheet provides information about PennDOT's alternative title process.

ALTERNATIVE TITLE PROCESS

Customers must first attempt to contact the owner of record of the vehicle purchased and ask for the title. If you do not know who the owner of record is, you may be able to obtain information from the vehicles current titling jurisdiction through that jurisdiction's established process.

When a title or Manufacturer's Statement of Origin (MSO) is not available for the purpose of titling or cancelling a title, you may submit documentation to PennDOT for review. Below is a list of items that you will need to provide to PennDOT for review. These items should be sent to the attention of the PennDOT Research & Support Operations Sections at 1101 South Front St., Harrisburg PA 17104.

PennDOT will review the information you provide through a multi-tier review process and determine if ownership can be established without a title, MSO or Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (MCO). If the submitted information is determined to be adequate to transfer title, you have the option to have this service done at PennDOT's Riverfront Office Center (ROC) location in Harrisburg or you can go to an authorized PennDOT Agent. PennDOT will ask you to identify the location you would like to do the title and registration transaction. PennDOT will send the documentation to that PennDOT Agent or the PennDOT ROC Counter with the completed MV-11 form along with the authorization to complete this title work.

If the vehicle on the owner's property is abandoned, the seller should follow the abandoned vehicle process. To review the steps for disposal of an abandoned vehicle, please go to the PennDOT Driver and Vehicle Services website and review the following [Fact Sheet](#), (Disposal of Abandoned Vehicles from Private Property)

If PennDOT cannot establish ownership based on the information you submit, it will be necessary to obtain a court order that identifies the vehicle by serial number/VIN and names you as the owner prior to submitting an application for title or cancellation of title. To review the steps for obtaining a court order, please go to the PennDOT Driver and Vehicle Services website and review the following [Fact Sheet](#) (Involuntary Transfer of Ownership of a Vehicle by Court Order)

I. Documentation that is required for review by PennDOT:

1. Provide a letter including the following information and attach it to the supporting documentation listed below. You must explain why it is impossible for you to obtain the proper proof of ownership documents.

- a. Vehicle's identification number (VIN)
- b. Name of the previous owner (current seller of the vehicle)
- c. Address of the previous owner (current seller of the vehicle)
- d. Date of sale of the vehicle to you as the new owner
- e. Information explaining how the purchase of the vehicle was completed

2. If the current seller or purchaser knows who the owner is from the vehicle's record, please attach evidence that efforts were made to contact the owner of record of the vehicle by either the seller or the purchaser and that either or both the seller and purchaser have been unsuccessful in reaching the current owner of record to obtain a title. This evidence can be in the form of a registered letter sent to the owner's last known address. Proof of the registered letter must be attached. Proof includes, but is not limited to the returned unclaimed registered letter.

3. For manufactured homes, a complete deed search and all deed documents going back to the beginning to present time must be included.

II. Information that pertains to and support the existence of the sale of the vehicle as listed in Section I above.

Below is a list of Items that will assist in PennDOT's Review. Please note, it is not necessary to provide all the documents below but provide as many as you can to add more clarification during PennDOT's review. Below are examples of the documents you can provide:

1. The original, or certified copies (no photocopies allowed), which pertain to and support the existence of the sale of the vehicle. Please submit as many of the listed items you have available:
 - a. Bill of sale for the vehicle,
 - b. Previous registration credential, temporary registration document or transferable registration card from another jurisdiction,
 - c. A receipt related to purchase of the vehicle,
 - d. Image of front and back of a cancelled check from the purchase of the vehicle,
 - e. Any additional documents that support the transaction,
 - f. If manufactured home, photographs of the vehicle/home,
 - g. If manufactured home, deed research if manufactured home.
2. If the vehicle was not previously titled in Pennsylvania, you will need to complete a lien search. Verification of a Lien is necessary to verify if there is a lien on record or not. Please review the below items regarding lien information:

Vehicle purchased within PA

PennDOT will determine if there is a lien on the vehicles record and advise the purchaser.

- a. If there is no lien, no additional items will be needed for this section.
- b. If there is a lien, a lien satisfaction letter from the lienholder will be required to be submitted with the supporting documentation. PennDOT will provide instructions to you on how to proceed in this scenario.

Vehicle purchased out of state

If you know which state previously issued a titled for the vehicle, you will need to reach out to the titling jurisdiction and follow their established process on obtaining lienholder or lender information to determine if there is a lienholder or financial institution with a security interest in the vehicle. If you don't know in which state the vehicle was previously titled, you can use the National Motor Vehicle

Title Information System (NMVTIS) customer's portal to find out what state the vehicle was titled in or use one of the car searches available on the Internet.

- c. If there is a lien, a lien satisfaction letter from the lienholder will be required.
- d. If there is no lien, please provide the response you receive from that jurisdiction.

Please Note: Authorized agents are under contract to PennDOT and may charge a market driven service (delivery) fee; these are in addition to any PennDOT statutory fees for temporary, or in some cases, permanent motor vehicle registration plates and cards or other related products and services offered by the agent. The agent's service (delivery) fees are market driven and vary by agent. To compare service (delivery) fees, you are encouraged to contact the authorized agents in your area for the applicable service (delivery) fees charged.