



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE • DRIVER SERVICES

## Vehicle Title and Registration

The [Title and Registration Bureau](#) regulates the titling and registration of motor vehicles. A motor vehicle cannot be titled in Montana without also being registered—the two processes occur simultaneously. Pickup campers are an exception—they must be titled, but are not registered.

Under state law, all motor vehicles including motor homes; motorcycles and quadricycles; travel trailers; utility trailers; all-terrain vehicles; sailboats over 12 feet in length; motorboats, jet skis and other motorized vessels; and snowmobiles must be registered with the state.

**Customer Identification Numbers** – Under the new [Montana Enhanced Registration & Licensing Information Network](#) (MERLIN) system, all titling and registration transactions are recorded as part of a customer's unique account:

- For individuals, the customer account number is the driver license or state or tribal identification card number.
- For businesses, the customer account number is the federal employer or tax identification number or, in the absence of these, the number assigned to the business when it registered with the Secretary of State's office.

The Motor Vehicle Division collects customer identification numbers from businesses during titling and registration transactions.

**Mobile Homes** – To move a mobile home or manufactured home on a public highway, you must meet the requirements set out in [15-24-206](#) of the Montana Code Annotated. For further information on this process, contact your [county treasurer](#) or the [Montana Department of Revenue](#).

## Registration Provisions

- **New residents** must apply for a Montana vehicle title and register their vehicles within 60 days of establishing residency.
- **Military Employees:** Non-resident military personnel stationed in Montana may register their vehicles in their home jurisdictions or in Montana, unless they are gainfully employed in Montana outside of their military duties. If they are gainfully employed outside those duties, they must title and register their vehicles in Montana.
- **Non-Residents:** Under MCA [61-3-701 through 704](#), non-residents who are gainfully employed in Montana must present their current out-of-state vehicle registration to the county treasurer's office. Taxes or fees in lieu of taxes are due, along with appropriate registration fees. Non-residents may choose to register by the calendar quarter. The vehicle must display the license plates from both its home state and from Montana.

Under MCA [61-3-321](#), registration fees (see list in Resources sidebar) are in addition to the county option tax levied on light vehicles and the fees

levied in lieu of taxes on other vehicles. Registration fees do not include special plate fees for [personalized plates](#) and [specialty plates](#), or other miscellaneous fees.

Registration fees are due upon renewal or transfer of ownership. No credit is given for taxes or fees paid.

## Titling Provisions

### How to Title a Motor Vehicle

1. Apply at the [county treasurer's office](#) in the county you live in.
2. Present the previous year's Montana registration receipt or out-of-state title:
  - o If you have recently purchased a vehicle from a licensed auto dealer, the dealer will send or deliver the necessary paperwork to the county treasurer's office.
  - o The county clerk may ask you to complete a [Statement of Fact](#) (Form MV100) to clarify certain facts about the title transfer.
  - o Be prepared to pay title and [security interest/lien filing](#) fees.
3. Once the title process has been completed, you must pay all taxes and fees, and your vehicle will be registered and [license plates](#) issued.
4. A copy of the registration receipt **must** be kept in each vehicle at all times, along with proof of liability insurance as required in MCA [61-6-301](#).
5. When the ownership of a vehicle titled in Montana is transferred, the signatures of all parties shown on the face of the title must sign off on the title and have their signatures notarized.

### Corrections to a Title

Any erasures or deletions on the title void the document. See the county treasurer to correct any errors.

### Duplicate Titles

1. Fill out the [Application for Duplicate Certificate of Title](#) (Form MV7). This form can be filled out and printed on your computer.
2. Mail the completed form and a \$10 fee for all motor vehicles, including boats and trailers, to the [Title and Registration Bureau](#).

### Bonded Titles

If you purchase a vehicle from someone and no record of the title can be found, you may apply for a bonded title in accordance with MCA [61-3-208](#).

1. Go to your [county treasurer's office](#) to discuss the bonded title process. Take any proof of ownership and a completed [Vehicle Identification Number Inspection Certificate](#) (Form MV20) with you.
2. Complete the [Affidavit](#) (Form MV10), making sure you include the circumstances through which you acquired ownership. Disclose any [security interests \(liens\)](#) you are aware of and the value of the vehicle:
  - o If the value is over \$500, you must secure a bond equal to the value determined by the surety company.

- If the vehicle is worth \$500 or less, you simply certify to its value. You must either:
    - reference the average trade-in or wholesale value determined by the national appraisal guide as of January 1 for the year in which you are applying, or
    - if an appraisal guide is not available, certify that, to your knowledge, its value is \$500 or less.
  - 3. The Title and Registration Bureau issues a title with the words "BONDED TITLE" and the expiration date of the bond printed on its face.
  - 4. If no claim is made on the vehicle within three years, the bureau then issues a clear title.
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