



Hawaii Used Car Buyer's Paperwork Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for buying a used vehicle from a private seller in Hawaii. Confirm the latest requirements with the Hawaii County DMV Offices before completing your transaction.

KEY FACTS

State	Hawaii
Agency	Hawaii County DMV Offices
Process	See official source
Notary required	Conditional
Bill of sale	Conditional
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	30 days
Last reviewed	May 13, 2026

QUICK REFERENCE

NOTARY Conditional	BILL OF SALE Conditional	ODOMETER Yes	INSPECTION Yes
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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Within 30 days

Buyers must complete the title transfer within 30 days of the seller's date of release. A \$50 late penalty is added to the standard \$10 transfer fee after 30 days.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Buyer checklist

- ☐ **Signed title from seller** **REQUIRED**
The seller must have signed the title over to you. Check that the odometer reading is noted.
- ☐ **Bill of sale** **RECOMMENDED**
Proof of purchase with VIN, price, and both parties' information.
- ☐ **Government-issued photo ID** **REQUIRED**
Required when submitting title transfer paperwork.
- ☐ **Payment for title transfer fees** **REQUIRED**
Fees vary by state. Check your state's official DMV fee schedule.
- ☐ **Proof of insurance** **REQUIRED**
Most states require proof of minimum liability insurance before issuing plates.
- ☐ **Sales tax payment** **CONDITIONAL**
Sales or use tax is typically due when registering the vehicle. Rate and basis vary by state.

Required forms

- ☐ **Signed title from seller** **REQUIRED**
The seller must sign the title over to you. Verify the VIN and odometer reading.
- ☐ **Title transfer application** **REQUIRED**
Form required to apply for a new title in your name. Requirements vary by state.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Notary: Conditional — Hawaii vehicle registration is county-administered. Notarization is generally not required if both parties appear in person with valid ID, but may be required for mail-in submissions or when the seller cannot appear in person. Having signatures notarized is strongly recommended to prevent rejection.



Bill of sale: Conditional — A bill of sale is not required for transfers where the title is properly endorsed; however, a notarized bill of sale is required in Honolulu County if the title is not released by the recorded owner. The seller must also submit a Notice of Transfer within 10 calendar days.

Odometer disclosure: Yes — Required by federal law for vehicles under 10 years old.

Inspection: Yes — A current Hawaii State Safety Inspection Certificate is required by all counties as part of title transfer. The seller must provide the buyer with a valid safety inspection certificate (valid annually; new cars receive a two-year initial inspection).

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Run a vehicle history report (e.g., CARFAX or NMVTIS) before purchase.
- 2 Verify the seller's name matches the name on the title.
- 3 Ensure the title is free of liens or confirm the lien will be resolved.
- 4 Have the seller sign the title over to you and complete odometer disclosure.
- 5 Obtain a bill of sale from the seller.
- 6 Submit the signed title, application, fees, and proof of insurance to your state DMV.
- 7 Pay any applicable sales tax.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not verifying that the seller is the titled owner.
- Failing to check for outstanding liens before purchase.
- Missing the deadline to register the vehicle after purchase.
- Not getting a bill of sale.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

Hawaii DOT — Motor Vehicle Registration

<https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/motorcycle/motor-vehicle-registration/>

Hawaii Motor Vehicle Safety Office

<https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/motor-vehicle-safety-office/>