



Michigan Private Car Sale Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for a private vehicle sale in Michigan. Requirements can vary by vehicle type, lien status, and situation, so always confirm with the Michigan Secretary of State — Vehicle Services before completing the transaction.

QUICK ANSWER

Michigan sellers sign the back of the title, complete odometer disclosure for vehicles under 10 years old, and keep their license plates — Michigan plates generally stay with the seller, not the vehicle. The buyer must apply for a new title at a Michigan Secretary of State (SOS) branch office within 15 days of purchase. Michigan has a relatively short 15-day title transfer window — verify the current deadline with the Michigan Secretary of State.

KEY FACTS

State	Michigan
Agency	Michigan Secretary of State — Vehicle Services
Process	See official source
Notary required	No
Bill of sale	Conditional
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	15 days
Last reviewed	May 10, 2026

QUICK REFERENCE

NOTARY No	BILL OF SALE Conditional	ODOMETER Yes	INSPECTION Not specified
--------------	-----------------------------	-----------------	-----------------------------

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Within 15 days
Buyer must apply for title within 15 days of purchase

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Seller checklist

- ☐ **Signed vehicle title** **REQUIRED**
The seller must sign the title over to the buyer. Sign exactly as your name appears on the title.
- ☐ **Odometer disclosure statement** **REQUIRED**
Required by federal law for vehicles less than 10 years old under 16,000 lbs. Usually completed on the title itself.
- ☐ **Bill of sale** **RECOMMENDED**
A written record of the sale including VIN, price, date, buyer and seller information. Requirements vary by state.
- ☐ **Vehicle history report (recommended)** **RECOMMENDED**
Not required but strongly recommended. Helps buyer verify ownership and history.
- ☐ **Release of liability / notice of sale filed with state** **CONDITIONAL**
Protects the seller from liability after the vehicle is sold. Requirements and process vary by state.
- ☐ **Lien release (if vehicle had a loan)** **CONDITIONAL**
If there is an outstanding loan on the vehicle, the lienholder must release the lien before or at the time of sale.

Required forms

- ☐ **Signed vehicle title** **REQUIRED**
The certificate of title signed over to the buyer.
- ☐ **Odometer Disclosure Statement** **CONDITIONAL**
May be on the title itself or a separate form for older titles.



SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Notary: No — Michigan generally does not require notarization for private vehicle sales.

Bill of sale: Conditional — Not required by state law but recommended. A written receipt or bill of sale is good practice.

Odometer disclosure: Yes — Required for vehicles under 10 years old. Completed on the title itself.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Seller signs the back of the title in the seller's assignment section and completes odometer disclosure.
- 2 Seller keeps their Michigan license plates — plates go with the owner, not the vehicle.
- 3 Seller may report the sale to Michigan SOS to limit future liability.
- 4 Provide the buyer with the signed title and a written bill of sale.
- 5 Buyer must apply for a new title at an SOS branch office within 15 days.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Seller leaving plates on the vehicle — Michigan plates stay with the owner.
- Buyer missing the 15-day title application deadline — Michigan has a relatively short 15-day title transfer window; verify the current deadline with the Michigan Secretary of State.
- Not completing the odometer disclosure on the title.
- Not notifying the SOS of the sale, which can leave the seller liable for fines and violations.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

Michigan SOS — Titles and Registration

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/vehicles/title-registration>

Michigan SOS — Buying and Selling a Vehicle

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos/vehicles/title-registration/buying-selling>

Michigan Secretary of State

<https://www.michigan.gov/sos>