



North Carolina Private Car Sale Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for a private vehicle sale in North Carolina. Requirements can vary by vehicle type, lien status, and situation, so always confirm with the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (NCDMV) before completing the transaction.

QUICK ANSWER

North Carolina sellers sign the back of the title, complete odometer disclosure for vehicles under 10 years old, and keep their license plates — NC plates generally go with the seller, not the vehicle. The buyer must complete Form MVR-1 (Application for Certificate of Title), apply for title at an NCDMV license plate agency, and pay the 3% Highway Use Tax within 28 days of purchase.

KEY FACTS

State	North Carolina
Agency	North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (NCDMV)
Process	See official source
Notary required	No
Bill of sale	Conditional
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	28 days
Last reviewed	May 10, 2026

QUICK REFERENCE

NOTARY No	BILL OF SALE Conditional	ODOMETER Yes	INSPECTION Not specified
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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Within 28 days
Buyer must apply for title within 28 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 — North Carolina generally does not require notarization for private vehicle sales.

Bill of sale: Conditional — Not required by state law but strongly recommended as proof of the transaction.

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

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Seller signs the back of the title in the seller's signature section and completes odometer disclosure.
- 2 Seller keeps their North Carolina license plates — plates go with the owner.
- 3 Provide the buyer with the signed title and a bill of sale (recommended).
- 4 Buyer must apply for title and pay Highway Use Tax at an NCDMV license plate agency within 28 days.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Seller leaving plates on the vehicle — NC plates go with the owner, not the vehicle.
- Buyer missing the 28-day title application deadline.
- Not completing the odometer disclosure on the title.
- Buyer not budgeting for the 3% Highway Use Tax.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

NCDMV — Vehicle Titles

<https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/title-registration/vehicle/Pages/default.aspx>

NCDMV — Highway Use Tax

<https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/title-registration/taxes/Pages/default.aspx>

North Carolina DMV

<https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/>