



Ohio Used Car Buyer's Paperwork Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for buying a used vehicle from a private seller in Ohio. Confirm the latest requirements with the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) before completing your transaction.

QUICK ANSWER

Ohio buyers must apply for a new title at the County Clerk of Courts within 30 days of purchase. Verify the seller's signature on the title is properly notarized before accepting it — the Clerk will reject a non-notarized title. Pay the title fee and applicable sales tax (5.75% state rate plus local county rate) to the Clerk of Courts.

KEY FACTS

State	Ohio
Agency	Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)
Process	See official source
Notary required	Yes
Bill of sale	Conditional
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	30 days
Last reviewed	May 10, 2026

QUICK REFERENCE

NOTARY Yes	BILL OF SALE Conditional	ODOMETER Yes	INSPECTION Not specified
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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Within 30 days
Apply for title at the County Clerk of Courts within 30 days of purchase

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.



FEES

Title fee + sales tax (5.75% state + local county rate) (Sales tax is paid to the County Clerk of Courts at the time of title application. Rate varies by county.)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Notary: Yes — Ohio requires the seller's signature on the title to be notarized. Verify the title has a notary stamp and signature before accepting it.

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

Odometer disclosure: Yes — Required for vehicles under 10 years old. Should be completed on the title by the seller.

Inspection: Not specified — Inspection requirements vary by state and vehicle type. Check your state agency.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Verify the seller's name matches the title and check for outstanding liens.
- 2 Ensure the seller's signature on the title is properly notarized.
- 3 Verify the odometer disclosure is complete.
- 4 Obtain a written bill of sale.
- 5 Apply for a new title at the County Clerk of Courts within 30 days.
- 6 Pay title fee and applicable sales tax at the County Clerk of Courts.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Accepting a title without a notarized seller signature — the County Clerk will reject it.
- Missing the 30-day deadline — penalties apply.
- Not verifying that the notarization is complete and properly executed.
- Failing to check for liens before purchase.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

Ohio BMV — Titles

<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/titles-new.aspx>

Ohio BMV — County Clerk of Courts Locations

<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/locations.aspx>

Ohio BMV

<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov>