



Ohio Car Title Transfer Checklist

Ohio is unusual in that title transfers are handled by the County Clerk of Courts — not the Ohio BMV. The BMV registers vehicles and issues plates, but the county Clerk of Courts is the title-issuing authority. Ohio also requires the seller's signature on the title to be notarized. The buyer must apply for the new Ohio title at the Clerk of Courts within 30 days of the date of sale and pay sales tax (5.75% state plus county/transit-authority surtax, total typically 6.5–8%). Most buyers complete the title transfer at the Clerk and then visit a BMV deputy registrar to register the vehicle and get plates.

QUICK ANSWER

Ohio title transfers are processed at the County Clerk of Courts, not the Ohio BMV. The seller's signature on the title must be notarized. Bring the notarized title, proof of insurance, and payment for the title fee and sales tax (5.75% state rate plus local county rate) within 30 days of purchase.

KEY FACTS

State	Ohio
Agency	Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)
Process	In person
Notary required	Yes
Bill of sale	Conditional
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	30 days
Last reviewed	May 21, 2026

QUICK REFERENCE

NOTARY Yes	BILL OF SALE Conditional	ODOMETER Yes	INSPECTION No
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IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Within 30 days

Buyer must apply for the new Ohio title at the County Clerk of Courts within 30 days of the date of sale

Within 30 days

\$5 late penalty applies after 30 days

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Buyer checklist

- ☐ Signed, notarized title from seller **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Completed BMV 3774 (title application) **REQUIRED**
[Form BMV 3774](#)
- ☐ Bill of sale (recommended) **RECOMMENDED**
- ☐ Government-issued photo ID **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Proof of Ohio auto insurance **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Payment for title fee + sales tax **REQUIRED**

Seller checklist

- ☐ Signed and notarized Ohio title (back, seller's section) **REQUIRED**
The seller's signature must be notarized.
- ☐ Odometer disclosure on the title **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Lien release letter (if applicable) **CONDITIONAL**



- ☐ **Remove Ohio license plates** **REQUIRED**
Plates stay with the seller, not the vehicle.

Required forms

- ☐ **BMV 3774 — Application(s) for Certificate of Title to a Motor Vehicle** **REQUIRED**
[Form BMV 3774](#)
Ohio title application. Filed at the County Clerk of Courts.
- ☐ **BMV 3753 — Application for Certificate of Title for Salvage Vehicles** **CONDITIONAL**
[Form BMV 3753](#)
Used for salvage vehicle title transfers.
- ☐ **BMV 4309 — Application for Replacement Certificate of Title** **CONDITIONAL**
[Form BMV 4309](#)
Used when the seller lost the original title before transferring.
- ☐ **BMV 5750 — Affidavit for Transfer Without Probate** **CONDITIONAL**
[Form BMV 5750](#)
Used to transfer a vehicle from a deceased owner without probate, when the estate value qualifies.

FEES

\$15 — Title fee (Paid at the County Clerk of Courts. Counties may add a small notary or processing fee (sourceNeeded — varies).)

5.75% state + county/transit surtax (total typically 6.5–8%) — Sales tax (Collected at the County Clerk of Courts at title transfer. Specific rate depends on the buyer's county of residence.)

sourceNeeded — approximately \$34.50 base plus local fees — Registration fee (annual, at BMV deputy registrar) (Registration is a separate step after title transfer. Fee varies by county and any local permissive taxes.)

\$5 — Late title transfer penalty (Ohio adds a \$5 late fee for title transfers filed more than 30 days after the date of sale (sourceNeeded — verify current amount).)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Notary: Yes — Ohio requires the seller's signature on the back of the title to be notarized. The buyer's signature is also typically notarized at the County Clerk of Courts when the new title is issued.

Bill of sale: Conditional — Ohio does not require a separate bill of sale by statute. A bill of sale is recommended to document the price, date, and odometer reading, especially for sales tax purposes.

Odometer disclosure: Yes — Required by federal law for vehicles less than 20 model-years old. Completed on the back of the Ohio title.

Inspection: No — Ohio does not require a statewide annual safety or emissions inspection. The Cleveland-Akron and Cincinnati-Dayton metro areas previously had E-Check emissions, but the program was discontinued statewide in 2022 (sourceNeeded — verify current status with EPA).

Plates: Ohio plates stay with the owner, not the vehicle. The seller removes plates before delivery; the buyer either transfers plates from another Ohio vehicle they own or obtains new plates at the BMV deputy registrar after title transfer.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Confirm the seller is the titled owner of record on the Ohio title.
- 2 Seller signs the back of the title in front of a notary public; the notary witnesses and stamps.
- 3 Seller completes the odometer disclosure on the title.
- 4 Both parties complete a bill of sale documenting price, date, VIN, and signatures.
- 5 Seller removes Ohio plates from the vehicle.
- 6 Buyer obtains Ohio auto insurance in their name.
- 7 Buyer takes the notarized title, completed BMV 3774, photo ID, proof of insurance, and payment to the County Clerk of Courts within 30 days.
- 8 Buyer pays the \$15 title fee + state and local sales tax at the Clerk.
- 9 Clerk of Courts issues the new Ohio title.
- 10 Buyer visits a BMV deputy registrar with the new title and proof of insurance to register the vehicle and obtain plates.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Seller signing the title without notarization — Ohio rejects non-notarized titles.



- Going to the BMV for the title transfer — title applications go through the County Clerk of Courts, not the BMV.
- Missing the 30-day deadline — Ohio adds a \$5 late fee plus potential sales tax penalties.
- Forgetting that plates stay with the seller — driving on the seller's plates is illegal.
- Trying to register at the BMV before getting the new title from the Clerk of Courts — registration requires a title in the buyer's name first.
- Skipping a bill of sale — the Clerk of Courts may need additional documentation if the title doesn't fully document the price.

OFFICIAL SOURCES**Ohio BMV — Titles**<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/titles-new.aspx>**Ohio BMV — Forms (BMV 3774, 5750, 4309)**<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/doc-forms.aspx>**Ohio Clerk of Courts (Locations)**<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/locations.aspx>**Ohio Department of Taxation**<https://tax.ohio.gov/>**Ohio BMV**<https://www.bmv.ohio.gov>