



Pennsylvania Private Car Sale Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for a private vehicle sale in Pennsylvania. Requirements can vary by vehicle type, lien status, and situation, so always confirm with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) before completing the transaction.

QUICK ANSWER

Pennsylvania sellers sign the back of the title, complete odometer disclosure for vehicles under 10 years old, and keep their license plates — Pennsylvania plates generally stay with the seller. The buyer must complete Form MV-4ST (Vehicle Sales and Use Tax Return/Application for Registration) and apply for title at a PennDOT Driver License Center or authorized agent within 20 days of purchase.

KEY FACTS

State	Pennsylvania
Agency	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)
Process	See official source
Notary required	No
Bill of sale	Conditional
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	20 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 20 days
Buyer must apply for title within 20 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 — Pennsylvania generally does not require notarization for private vehicle sales.

Bill of sale: Conditional — Not required by law but 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 Pennsylvania license plates — plates stay with the owner.
- 3 Provide the buyer with the signed title.
- 4 Buyer must complete Form MV-4ST (Vehicle Sales and Use Tax Return/Application for Registration) and apply for title within 20 days.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Seller leaving plates on the vehicle — Pennsylvania plates go with the owner, not the vehicle.
- Buyer missing the 20-day title transfer deadline.
- Not completing the odometer disclosure on the title.
- Not retaining a copy of the signed title.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

PennDOT — Buying and Selling a Vehicle

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/TravelInPA/Pages/Buying-and-Selling-a-Vehicle.aspx>

PennDOT — Vehicle Registration

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov/TravelInPA/Pages/Motor-Vehicle-Registration.aspx>

PennDOT

<https://www.penndot.pa.gov>