



Washington Used Car Buyer's Paperwork Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare for buying a used vehicle from a private seller in Washington. Confirm the latest requirements with the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) before completing your transaction.

QUICK ANSWER

Buying a used car in Washington? Get the signed title and a completed Vehicle/Vessel Bill of Sale (Form 420-065) from the seller, plus an odometer disclosure for vehicles under 10 years old. You have 15 days to transfer the title at a vehicle licensing office, where use tax (roughly 6.5% and up depending on location) is calculated from the sale price on the bill of sale. Washington ended its statewide emissions testing program in 2020, so no smog check is required. Verify current requirements with the Washington DOL.

KEY FACTS

State	Washington
Agency	Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL)
Process	See official source
Notary required	Conditional
Bill of sale	Yes
Odometer disclosure	Yes
Filing deadline	15 days
Last reviewed	May 13, 2026

QUICK REFERENCE

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

Within 15 days

The buyer has 15 days from the date of sale to transfer the title at a vehicle licensing office. Penalties apply after day 15. The seller must separately submit a Report of Sale within 5 days.

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.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Notary: Conditional — Notarization is required for the Vehicle Title Application if the buyer signs outside of a vehicle licensing office. If the buyer signs the application in person at a licensing office, the agent certifies the signature and no notary is needed.

Bill of sale: Yes — Washington requires both buyer and seller to complete the Vehicle/Vessel Bill of Sale (Form 420-065) for all private-party vehicle sales. The sale price on this form is used to calculate use tax.

Odometer disclosure: Yes — Required by federal law for vehicles under 10 years old.

Inspection: No — Washington ended its statewide vehicle emissions testing program on January 1, 2020. No emissions or safety inspection is required from the seller for a private-party sale.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Run a vehicle history report (e.g., CARFAX or NMVTIS) before purchase.
- 2 Verify the seller's name matches the name on the title.
- 3 Ensure the title is free of liens or confirm the lien will be resolved.
- 4 Have the seller sign the title over to you and complete odometer disclosure.
- 5 Obtain a bill of sale from the seller.
- 6 Submit the signed title, application, fees, and proof of insurance to your state DMV.
- 7 Pay any applicable sales tax.

COMMON MISTAKES

- Not verifying that the seller is the titled owner.
- Failing to check for outstanding liens before purchase.
- Missing the deadline to register the vehicle after purchase.
- Not getting a bill of sale.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

Washington DOL — Buy and Register a Vehicle

<https://dol.wa.gov/vehicles-and-boats/vehicles/buying-and-selling-vehicle/buy-and-register-vehicle>

Washington DOL

<https://www.dol.wa.gov>