



Washington Car Title Transfer Checklist

Use this checklist to prepare the documents commonly needed to transfer a vehicle title in Washington. Requirements can vary by vehicle type, lien status, county, and transaction details, so always confirm with the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) before submitting.

QUICK ANSWER

A Washington title transfer is completed at a vehicle licensing office (Washington DOL). The buyer generally has 15 days to transfer the title, and use tax is calculated from the sale price recorded on the Vehicle/Vessel Bill of Sale (Form 420-065). The state title fee is about \$15, and Washington no longer requires an emissions test. Separately, the seller should file a Report of Sale within 5 business days. Verify current fees and 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	July 6, 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; late penalties apply after that.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

Buyer checklist

- ☐ Signed title from seller **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Government-issued photo ID **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Proof of insurance **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Title transfer fee payment **REQUIRED**
- ☐ Sales tax payment **CONDITIONAL**

Seller checklist

- ☐ Signed vehicle title **REQUIRED**
Sign exactly as your name appears on the title. Do not use a different signature.
- ☐ Odometer disclosure **REQUIRED**
Complete the odometer section on the title or a separate form.
- ☐ Lien release (if applicable) **CONDITIONAL**
If the vehicle had a loan, obtain a lien release letter from the lender.

FEES

\$15 — Title fee (State title transfer fee as published; local service and filing fees may be added. Verify the current total with the Washington DOL.)



About 6.5% and up — Use tax (Combined state and local use tax based on the sale price and where you live; some areas add Regional Transit Authority (RTA) excise tax.)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Notary: Conditional — The Vehicle Title Application may need to be notarized if it is signed outside a vehicle licensing office; when signed in person at a licensing office, the agent certifies the signature and no notary is needed.

Bill of sale: Yes — The Vehicle/Vessel Bill of Sale (Form 420-065) documents the sale price 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, and does not require a periodic safety inspection for standard private-party transfers.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

- 1 Seller signs the title in the seller's signature section.
- 2 Seller completes odometer disclosure on the title.
- 3 Buyer collects the signed title, bill of sale, and any other required documents.
- 4 Buyer submits all documents and fees to the state motor vehicle agency.
- 5 Buyer pays applicable sales tax and title fee.
- 6 New title is mailed to the buyer (timeline varies by state).

COMMON MISTAKES

- Missing the 15-day title transfer window.
- Assuming an emissions test is needed — Washington ended that program in 2020.
- Overlooking Regional Transit Authority (RTA) tax in the Sound Transit district.
- As a seller, forgetting the separate 5-business-day Report of Sale.

OFFICIAL SOURCES

Washington DOL — Title Transfer

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

Washington DOL

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