

FACT SHEET

Recovered Theft Vehicle Procedure

PURPOSE

This fact sheet explains the requirements for titling and registering recovered theft vehicles that qualify for the special "T" title brand designation on the vehicle's certificate of title. It describes the documentation required for titling and registration as well as vehicle restoration requirements. All recovered theft vehicles must be equipped as required by the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code and the PA Vehicle Equipment and Inspection Regulations for the proper body type of the vehicle. Since recovered theft vehicles are required to pass the safety inspection program, no exceptions can be made.

DEFINITIONS

Theft Vehicle - A vehicle, other than an antique or classic vehicle, which was reported stolen.

Recovered Theft Vehicle - A vehicle, other than an antique or classic vehicle, which was reported as stolen but subsequently recovered.

PROCESSING PROCEDURE INFORMATION

Upon payment to the insured of the replacement value for a theft vehicle, the owner or insurer must apply for a certificate of salvage, branded as a theft vehicle. If the vehicle has been recovered, the vehicle must be assessed as to the level of damage at the time of recovery by an insurer or licensed physical damage appraiser. If the insurer is a self-insurer, the assessment of damage must be completed by a licensed physical damage appraiser who is not affiliated with or employed by the self-insurer. **NOTE:** The assessment must include the replacement value of the vehicle and level of damage in dollars.

- Recovered theft vehicles with repairs that exceed the replacement value of the vehicle, and a salvage certificate was issued, will be processed as a reconstructed vehicle. These vehicles will receive a certificate of title branded as reconstructed recovered theft vehicle.
- Recovered theft vehicles with repairs that are more than 50% of the replacement value of the vehicle, and the owner elects to retain title to the vehicle, will be processed as recovered theft vehicles. These vehicles will receive a certificate of title branded as a recovered theft vehicle only. **NOTE:** If the owner is an individual, please refer to the 4th bullet below.
- Recovered theft vehicles, where an owner has received a salvage certificate and after payment has been made by the insurance company, with repairs that are 50% or less than the replacement value of the vehicle, the owner may apply for an unbranded certificate of title.
- An individual who has not been paid the replacement value for the vehicle and has not received a certificate of salvage may use the existing certificate of title without applying for a new certificate of title.

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR TITLING AND REGISTRATION

1. A legible copy of the insurance company or licensed physical damage appraiser's report that includes the actual cash value of the vehicle. If the insurer is a self-insurer, the assessment of damage must be completed by a licensed physical damage appraiser who is not affiliated with or employed by the self-insurer.
2. Completed Form MV-1, "Application for Certificate of Title." **NOTE:** Issuing agents are prohibited from issuing temporary registration plates or transferring a registration in conjunction with an application for a recovered theft vehicle title. Issuing agents should remind applicants that the vehicle cannot be operated until the application is received and registration plates are issued or transferred by PennDOT after the recovered theft title is processed. Although issuing agents are prohibited from transferring a registration plate in these instances, the issuing agent may provide the registration plate transfer and proof of insurance information on [Form MV-426B, "Application for Reconstructed, Specially Constructed, Collectible, Modified, Flood,](#)



[Recovered Theft Vehicles and Street Rods.](#)” when a transfer of registration plate is requested. However, the vehicle may not be operated legally on the highway until the vehicle is retitled and the registration documents are received by the vehicle owner.

3. Completed [Form MV-426B, “Application for Reconstructed, Specially Constructed, Collectible, Modified, Flood, Recovered Theft Vehicles and Street Rods.”](#) (Refer to [Form MV-426B](#), found on our website at www.pa.gov/dmv, for detailed instructions.)
4. The properly assigned Pennsylvania Certificate of Salvage or out-of-state certificate of salvage. When the Pennsylvania Certificate of Salvage is not branded a theft vehicle by the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and PennDOT’s attempts to verify that the vehicle was stolen fail, the applicant will be required to provide a copy of the recovered vehicle theft police report.
5. Four (4) clear color photos of the vehicle - front, both sides and rear showing the completed vehicle. (See [Form MV-426B](#) for detailed instructions on photographs.)
6. Bill of sale and other receipts for parts purchased and used in repairs. When parts are used from other vehicles, the vehicle’s identification number must be listed on the bill of sale, receipt or listing, if taken from applicant’s inventory of parts (Example: fenders, cowls, left or right 3/4 nose, rear clip, etc. - 1234V1-AT89876).
7. Fees: Title fee, sales tax and applicable registration fee for the vehicle type. If the applicant is claiming exemption from sales tax, the applicable exemption reason code must be recorded on Form MV-1. **For a complete listing of motor vehicle fees, refer to [Form MV-70S, “Bureau of Motor Vehicles Schedule of Fees.”](#)**

PENNSYLVANIA INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

Recovered theft vehicles must be inspected by a Pennsylvania enhanced vehicle safety inspector at a designated official enhanced vehicle safety inspection station located in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The vehicle owner shall not be the inspecting mechanic.

Locations of enhanced inspection stations can be found on PennDOT’s website at www.pa.gov/dmv by selecting Inspection Information under the Vehicle Services heading.