

# CERTIFICATE OF TITLE FOR A MOTOR VEHICLE

(6-2022)

This is the procedure you must follow when you wish to obtain a certificate of title to a motor vehicle. A key part of this procedure is to notify the last known owner and any bank, company or person that holds a lien ("lienholder") on the vehicle before the title can be awarded to you.

## Section 1 - Last known vehicle owner

If you do not know the name and address of the vehicle's owner and any lienholder, you **must** complete Step 1 and Step 2 in **Section 1**.

If you have the vehicle owner's information proceed to **Section 2** - Petition for Certificate of Title.

### Step 1. Motor vehicle's owner record

- To obtain a certified copy of the motor vehicle's owner record complete form **DL-135** located at <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BDL/BDL%20Form/DL-135.pdf>
- Follow PennDOT's instructions page 2 of the DL-135 form

### Step 2. Response from PennDOT

You will receive a response from PennDOT.

- If the information you receive **does not provide the name of a person with an interest** in the motor vehicle, then you must obtain the history of the vehicle from a commercial source.
- If the information you receive **includes the name of a lienholder** that still may be owed money on a loan, you must:
  - Serve that lienholder: with the Petition for Certificate of Title and the Scheduling Order as indicated in **Section 3**.

OR

- Obtain the lienholder's written, signed and notarized approval to have the title awarded to you and take the original approval to your hearing.

## Section 2 – Form Preparation

- Complete the following form and print one (1) copy. Do not print on both sides of the paper.
  - Petition for Certificate of Title
  - **Scheduling Order (Proposed)**

## Section 3- E-Filing the Documents (OFS Odyssey File & Server)

For full registration and filing instructions, please review the Independent Filer Instructions and OFS Civil Guidelines documents under the Self-Help section of <https://pennsylvania.tylertech.cloud/ofswweb>

- Filing a New Action
  - Go to <https://pennsylvania.tylertech.cloud/ofswweb>
  - Select the Civil category and select your case type
  - Enter the party names and addresses
  - Select each filing code. After selecting the filing code, you will be able to upload your documents
  - Confirm your payment information
  - Submit the filing to the review queue
- Once your filings have been accepted through the OFS Odyssey File & Serve, you will receive an email at the email address that you used to register with, stating if your filing has been approved or denied. **Once you have received the email stating that your filing has been approved, there will be a link to view the approved document(s).**
- Print the necessary amount of copies needed to serve all interested parties with petition and completed scheduling, once your filing has been accepted.

- One (1) copy for your records.
- One (1) copy is to be mailed to the last known address of the last known owner by certified mail return receipt requested, restricted delivery.
- One (1) copy each to any person or company that holds a lien on the motor vehicle (“Lienholder”), by certified mail, return receipt requested, restricted delivery.

## Section 4 - Serving

### Manner of Service

To use these Self-help forms, the manner of service must be **Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, Restricted Delivery**.

#### Step 1. Preparing for service

- Address one (1) envelope to each interested party
- Put the following in each of the addressed envelopes:
  - One (1) time-stamped printed copy from Kiosk of the Petition for Certificate of Title
  - One (1) time-stamped printed copy from Kiosk of the Scheduling Order

#### Step 2. Going to the Post Office

- Take this Checklist with you.
- Take addressed envelopes containing the copies of the Petition for Certificate of Title and the Scheduling Order.
- Take money for postage.

#### Step 3. Completing Domestic Return Receipt (green post card Form 3811)

- At the post office, obtain Domestic Return Receipts (green post card Form 3811). One (1) for each addressed envelope.
- Complete Reverse side of the Domestic Return Receipt (green post card Form 3811) so it will be returned to you as proof of service.
- Section 1 Article Addressed to:
- Section 2 Article Number: Write or stick Certified Mail Receipt Number
- Section 3 Service Type: Check **Certified Mail** check box
- Section 4 Restricted Delivery?: Check **Yes**

The image displays three components related to certified mail service:

- Envelope:** A green envelope with a label for the sender to print their name, address, and ZIP+4.
- Domestic Return Receipt (Form 3811):** The reverse side of a green postcard with sections for:
  - SENDER: COMPLETE THIS SECTION:** Includes instructions to complete items 1, 2, and 3, and to print name and address on the reverse.
  - COMPLETE THIS SECTION ON DELIVERY:** Includes fields for signature, received by (Printed Name), date of delivery, and service type (Certified Mail, Registered Mail, Insured Mail, Certified Mail, Express Mail, Return Receipt for Merchandise, C.O.D.).
  - Article Addressed to:** A field for the recipient's name and address.
  - Article Number:** A field for the article number.
  - Service Type:** Checkboxes for Certified Mail, Registered Mail, Insured Mail, Certified Mail, Express Mail, Return Receipt for Merchandise, and C.O.D.
  - Restricted Delivery? (Extra Fee):** A checkbox for Yes.
- Certified Mail Receipt Label:** A green label with a barcode and tracking information, including the text "U.S. Postal Service™ CERTIFIED MAIL® RECEIPT".

- Pay postage and Mail

#### Step 4. Wait for green post card form 3811 to be returned to you.

- If any of your certified mailings are returned as “unclaimed”, proceed to **Section 5**.
- If your certified mailings are returned as “claimed”, proceed to **Section 6**

## **Section 5 - Unclaimed Certified Mail - Notice of Publication**

Because your certified mailing was returned as unclaimed you now must publish a Notice.

### **Step 1. Legal Journal Advertising**

- Advertise a legal notice with proof of publication at least one (1) time in the legal journal of the county of the last known address for the last known owner and any lienholder.
  - Notice must contain the following information:
    - a specific description of the motor vehicle (year, make, model and Vehicle Identification Number);
    - the fact that the proceeding has commenced in the Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County; and
    - the date, time, place (include the specific courtroom) of the hearing set forth in the Scheduling Order.

### **Step 2. Newspaper Advertising**

- Advertise a legal notice with proof of publication at least one (1) time per week for three (3) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation where any person known to claim an interest in the motor vehicle may be located and where the motor vehicle is located.
  - Notice must contain the following information:
    - a specific description of the motor vehicle (year, make, model and Vehicle Identification Number);
    - the fact that the proceeding has commenced in the Court of Common Pleas of Lehigh County; and
    - the date, time, place (include the specific courtroom) of the hearing set forth in the Scheduling Order.

## **Section 6 - Hearing**

- Dress appropriately. The Court recommends that you dress as if you were attending a formal interview.
- Arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled hearing.
- Take your copy of the Petition and the following items with you to the Courthouse:
  - All returned “claimed” green post cards (Domestic Return Receipt Form 3811) from the last known owner and Lienholder
  - If any green post card (Domestic Return Receipt Form 3811) certified mail return receipt cards are returned “unclaimed”, provide copies of the notice and Proof of Publication from all advertising sources.
  - Any original signed and notarized written approval from the lienholder to have the title awarded to you.
  - Any documentation proving ownership of the vehicle
  - Any documentation from PennDOT
  - Any Vehicle History documentation obtained from a commercial source
- Check in with Court Staff at assigned Courtroom
- When your case is called, present the court with the documents listed above

## **Section 7 - Court order**

- If the Court grants your Petition, it will enter an Order.
- Once the Order is filed, you will need to purchase a certified copy from the Clerk of Judicial Records located in Room 122 of Lehigh County Courthouse.
- Complete MV-217 form. <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BMV/BMV%20Forms/mv-217.pdf>
- Attach court order to form MV-217 and submit to PennDOT.