



Photo courtesy of ARW Truck Equipment Ltd.

Out-of-Province Registered Owner Search Guide

Prepared for the Automotive Retailers Association
Guide

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Introduction to the Guide

Purpose of the Guide

Many Canadian provinces, governed by acts like the *Warehouse Lien Act*, *Motor Vehicle Act*, or *Traffic Safety Act*, oversee the process of disposing of unclaimed vehicles. Authorities, including the police or towing companies, may impound and dispose of these vehicles to cover costs. Generally, tow operators are obligated to contact the registered owner(s), notifying them of the intention to dispose of the vehicle if outstanding fees remain unpaid. The process for identifying and contacting the registered owner varies by province. In some provinces information on how to identify and contact the owner of a vehicle is readily accessible, while in others it is not.

To aid towers in identifying the registered owners of unclaimed vehicles the Automotive Retailers Association (ARA) and Tow Canada Magazine engaged MNP LLP (MNP) to develop a guide outlining the process for identifying and contacting the registered owner of a vehicle in each province in Canada and selected US jurisdictions.

What Informed the Guide?

The information contained in this guide was informed by:

- **An online survey of towers from B.C. and other Canadian provinces** to identify the challenges they face when trying to contact the registered owner of an out-of-province vehicle and learn about the practices they currently employ when trying to contact the owner.
- **A web-based search** that gathered information on how to obtain information on the registered owner of a vehicle from the relevant provincial government agency in each province and state.
- **Telephone calls and email communication with government agencies in each jurisdiction** to confirm the process for identifying the registered owner of a vehicle.
- **Telephone calls and email communication with industry representatives and towing associations** to gather more information on the process used to get contact information of the owner in each jurisdiction.

Organization of the Guide

The remaining sections of this guide are organized as follows:

- **Limitations of the guide:** This section outlines the limitations of this guide.
- **Canadian Provinces:** This section provides instructions on how to conduct a registered owner (RO) search in each Canadian province.
- **United States:** This section provides instructions on how to conduct a RO search in US states.

Limitations of the Guide

In preparing the guide, MNP has relied upon the completeness, accuracy, and fair presentation of all information and data obtained from publicly available sources and those consulted. The accuracy and reliability of the findings and opinions expressed are conditional upon the completeness, accuracy, and fair presentation of the information underlying them.

Additionally, the findings and sources presented in this guide are current as of December 2023 and are subject to change without notice. MNP is under no obligation to advise of any change brought to its attention which would alter those findings or opinions.

Canadian Provinces

This section summarizes the processes for contacting the registered owner of a vehicle in each of the ten Canadian provinces.

Stolen Vehicle

To check whether the vehicle has been reported stolen in Canada, the Canadian Police Information Centre web site can be used. By inputting the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) of the towed vehicle you can search the database. The database is available at: <https://www.cpic-cipc.ca/sve-rve-eng.htm>

If the search indicates the vehicle has been reported stolen contact your local police detachment.

Boats

All boats with 10 hp or above should be registered with the National Vessel Registry. To search the registry, go to Transport Canada's vessel registration query system (<https://wwwapps.tc.gc.ca/Saf-Sec-Sur/4/vrqs-srib/eng/vessel-registrations>) and enter the hull number along with other relevant information. The service is free and will provide information on the owner of a vessel, including the name and address.

Alberta

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Alberta a courtesy letter can be used.

Courtesy Letter Process¹

A Courtesy Letter is proof that the towing company has attempted to contact the last registered owner of the vehicle at the most recent address in the Alberta Motor Vehicle System (MOVES). In Alberta the address in MOVES is used for serving documents for court purposes.

To notify the last registered owner of a towed vehicle about the location of their vehicle, you must go through an authorized Alberta registry agent. A registry agent needs to be provided with:

- The VIN of the towed vehicle,
- A copy of the towing slip, and
- An original request letter on the letterhead of the towing company signed by an authorized company officer.

The request letter must be dated and received by the registry agent within 15 days of the towing date provided on the towing slip. If more than 15 days have passed from the towing date provided in the towing slip you may contact the Data Access and Contract Management Unit (DACMU) at 780-427-0024 to explore alternative approaches.

¹ Data Access and Contract Management Unit (DACMU), email communication.

Contact information for Registry Agents

A list of registry agents is available from <https://www.alberta.ca/lookup/find-a-registry-agent.aspx> or the most recent list of authorized registry agents that can be obtained by contacting Agnes Connors at agnes.connors@gov.ab.ca

Cost

The government charges a \$15 service fee per search and \$30 for each courtesy letter. In addition, registry agents may apply a service charge. The best approach is to contact a couple of registry agents and inquire about the service to be provided and the fees.

What happens next?

A registry agent is not authorized to release the contact information of the last registered owner of the towed vehicle. However, if the owner of the vehicle is identified the registry agent will prepare and mail:

- A courtesy letter to the most recent address of the last registered owner in Alberta. This notifies them about the location of the vehicle and provides them with the information needed to contact the towing company and clarify the reason for towing and the status of their vehicle.
- A confirmation of mailing letter to the towing company confirming the date and time the courtesy letter was mailed to the last registered owner of the towed vehicle.

When a courtesy letter is returned as undeliverable, at the request of the towing company, the registry agent may produce and mail to the towing company a returned mail notice confirming that the courtesy letter could not be delivered.

If a registry agent cannot prepare the required courtesy letter, the agent will forward the towing company's request package to the DACMU in Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction for review, interpretation, and approval.

If a courtesy letter cannot be mailed, a registry agent will prepare a not found report letter that is mailed to the towing company.

Note: It may be difficult finding a registry agent and you may have to call several to find one. One agent that does send courtesy letters is:

Mac Registries Ltd
16977 127st NW Edmonton, AB
T6V 0T1
780-705-1113

The towing company must first open a billing account before they can process the request.

In addition, you will need to provide the following:

- A request on the company letterhead
- A copy of the towing slip

Please note that the towing slip must:

- Be submitted to the agent within 15 calendar days from the date on the slip
- Indicate the towed vehicle's VIN

If the request is submitted more than 15 calendar days after the date on the towing slip, the towing company must also provide a court order.

Once they receive all required documents and payment, they can proceed with the request and send you a copy of the letter that will be sent to the client (vehicle owner).

The cost of the letter, search, and courier service will be billed to the towing company's billing account.

British Columbia

To identify the owner of a vehicle that is registered in British Columbia the ARA search request service can be used. ARA also offers a course on impound lot administration designed for owners, managers and employees of towing companies available for ARA towing division members through the following link: <https://training.ara.bc.ca/product/impound-lot-operator/>

ARA Search Request Service²

Registered Owner Search is an online service available on the ARA website at: <https://marketplace.ara.bc.ca/login-for-searches/>. The service is only available for ARA members in good standing.

ARA towing division members who are using this service for the first time

If you are an ARA member but have not used this service before, you need to apply to be registered by completing this form: <https://marketplace.ara.bc.ca/services/>

After the registration is approved, you may use the registered owner search service.

ARA members who have registered for the service

If you are an ARA member and have used this service before, you need to:

- Log in to the portal with your username and password,
- Provide the VIN of the towed vehicle,
- Provide a tow bill and a search request,
- Pay the fees for the search (approximately \$12.50 as of December 2023).

A response may take up to 48 hours and will include the contact details of the owner (including name and address).

A towing company that is not an ARA member

If you are not an ARA member but want to join, you may apply for a new membership, by completing the application form at: <https://www.ara.bc.ca/join-us/> and following the process.

² ARA website. Retrieved from <https://marketplace.ara.bc.ca/>

Manitoba

Under Manitoba's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) is generally unable to provide information on a vehicle owner to a towing company without a court order.

Towers who have impounded a vehicle that is registered in Manitoba can use a lien check or contact MPI to identify the owner.

Check for Liens

You can do a lien search at <https://teranetmanitoba.ca/personal-property/> to identify if any money is owed on a towed vehicle. A \$12 fee would apply if the copy of the results is requested online and \$17 if the request is made by mail.³

If the vehicle has an unpaid amount, the search may disclose information about the person who owes the money (debtor) or the entity to whom the money is owed (creditor).

Under the Manitoba Warehouseman's Lien Act notice is given to the owner of the vehicle and any other party who has registered an interest in the vehicle as of the date the vehicle was impounded.⁴

Contact MPI⁵

There is not a formal process for finding the registered owner of a vehicle in Manitoba. However, an MPI representative suggested reaching out to MPI by phone. Contact information can be found on the MPI website at: <https://www.mpi.mb.ca/pages/contact-us.aspx>

You would need to provide the license plate, VIN number, and a brief explanation of the situation. An MPI agent will then verify the plate number. If there's a claim on the vehicle, the request will be redirected to the insurance adjuster. In the absence of a claim, the agent will direct the request to the registration department which will advise on next steps.

³ Personal Property Registry fees. Retrieved from <https://teranetmanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023-PPR-Fee-Schedule-EN.pdf>

⁴ *The Warehousemen's Liens Act*. Retrieved from : <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/reccsm/w020e.php>

⁵ MPI, personal communication, December 20, 2023

New Brunswick

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in New Brunswick contact the Department of Justice and Public Safety.

Contact Department of Justice and Public Safety in New Brunswick⁶

To notify the last registered owner of a towed vehicle about the location of their vehicle you can contact reception at the Department of Justice and Public Safety at 506-453-2410, explain the situation and provide the following information:

- The VIN of the towed vehicle, and
- A license plate.

The department will send out a letter to the registered owner(s), asking them to contact the towing company. An owner would have 30 days to respond.

If the owner does not reach out to the towing company within 30 days, the department sends a list of abandoned vehicles to the Royal Gazette, the official government gazette for the province of New Brunswick.

The Royal Gazette then publishes a notice. This notice serves as a final attempt to inform the owner that the vehicle is scheduled for sale if not claimed promptly. The published information includes the vehicle description, the owner's name, and the location of the vehicle.

If you have any questions, you can contact the Licensing Officer by sending an email at Cristina.Vinci-Trecartin@gnb.ca

⁶ Department of Justice and Public Safety, personal communication, December 13, 2023

Newfoundland and Labrador

Under the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the Newfoundland and Labrador Motor Vehicle Division does not disclose private information regarding drivers and vehicles and will not contact the owner of the vehicle on behalf of a towing company.

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Newfoundland and Labrador the steps below may be used gather more information on the vehicle:

Check the Vehicle

You can examine the vehicle for any information about the owner, such as registration stickers, license plates, or contact details on documents inside the car.

Contact Local RCMP Detachment

If you have a vehicle that was towed as a result of police impoundment or the vehicle may be stolen or involved in crime, contact the local RCMP detachment using the non-emergency line.⁷

Check for Liens

Do a lien search through Atlantic Canada On-Line (ACOL) at <https://pprs.acol.ca/lc/> to identify if any money is owed on a towed vehicle.

The ACOL Personal Property Registry System (PPRS) allows both businesses and individuals to register and inquire about personal property interests across the designated provinces and territories in Canada.⁸

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| ○ New Brunswick | ○ Nunavut |
| ○ Newfoundland and Labrador | ○ Prince Edward Island |
| ○ Northwest Territories | ○ Yukon |
| ○ Nova Scotia | |

A fee of approximately \$10 would apply for a search.

If the vehicle has money owing against it, the search may disclose information about the person who owes the money (debtor) or the entity to whom the money is owed (creditor).

Under the Newfoundland Warehouse's Lien Act notice is given to the owner of the vehicle and any other party who has registered an interest in the vehicle as of the date the vehicle was impounded.⁹

⁷ RCMP local detachment office, personal communication, December 4, 2023.

⁸ PPRS website. Retrieved from <https://www.acol.ca/?q=en/service/pprs/about-pprs-introduction>

⁹ *An Act Respecting Warehouse's Liens*. Retrieved from: [https://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/annualstatutes/RSN1990/W02.c90.htm#:~:text=\(1\)%20A%20warehouse%20has](https://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/annualstatutes/RSN1990/W02.c90.htm#:~:text=(1)%20A%20warehouse%20has)

%20a,by%20his%20or%20her%20authority.

Nova Scotia

Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, Access Nova Scotia does not disclose private information regarding drivers and vehicles and will not contact the owner of the vehicle on behalf of the towing company.

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Nova Scotia the steps below may be used gather more information on the vehicle:

Check the Vehicle

You can examine the vehicle for any immediate information about the owner, such as registration stickers, license plates, or contact details on documents inside the car.

Contact Local RCMP Detachment

If you have a vehicle that was towed as a result of police impoundment or the vehicle may be stolen or involved in crime, contact the local RCMP detachment using the non-emergency line.¹⁰

Check for Liens

Do a lien search through Atlantic Canada On-Line (ACOL) at <https://pprs.acol.ca/lc/> to identify if any money is owed on a towed vehicle.

The ACOL Personal Property Registry System (PPRS) allows both businesses and individuals to register and inquire about personal property interests across the designated provinces and territories in Canada:¹¹

- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Prince Edward Island
- Yukon

A fee of approximately \$10 would apply for a search.

If the vehicle has money owing against it, the search may disclose information about the person who owes the money (debtor) or the entity to whom the money is owed (creditor).

Under the Nova Scotia Warehouseman's Lien Act notice is given to the owner of the vehicle and any other party who has registered an interest in the vehicle as of the date the vehicle was impounded.¹²

¹⁰ RCMP local detachment office, personal communication, December 4, 2023.

¹¹ PPRS website. Retrieved from <https://www.acol.ca/?q=en/service/pprs/about-pprs-introduction>

¹² *An Act Respecting Warehousemen's Liens*. Retrieved from :

<https://nslegislature.ca/sites/default/files/legc/statutes/warelien.htm>

Ontario

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Ontario contact Service Ontario and request either a used vehicle information package or a vehicle confirmation letter. It is important to note that Service Ontario is not able to provide contact details for registered owners. This can only be obtained through bailiff services at a cost of \$350 or more.

You can also use eimpound.com which is described below or ARA towing division members can use the ARA search request services (see information on British Columbia).

Used Vehicle Information Package¹³

A used vehicle information package (UVIP) is a description of a vehicle and its Ontario history. It contains:

- The vehicle details (including the year, make, model, colour, body type, cylinders and power)
- A vehicle registration history in Ontario (including all present and previous owners, their city of residence and odometer reading)
- Information about the vehicle currently attached to that plate number
- Vehicle lien information (a lien claimant has a right to the car or the amount of the lien from the buyer of the vehicle once the transfer is completed)
- Retail Sales Tax (RST) information the average wholesale value of the vehicle (minimum value on which Retail Sales Tax (RST) will apply)
- Last known status of the condition of the vehicle:
 - including if it is registered as unfit and needs a Safety Standards Certificate to be registered
 - if it's been reported as wrecked
- Bill of sale section

How to order

A UVIP can be ordered through the Service Ontario website:

https://www.services.gov.on.ca/wps85/portal/s2i/lut/p/z1/hY9fC4lwFMU_ja_e2xSz3kZRJGGBkLoXmbGmoJvMIV-RU9B4n26f37nHC4wKIAp_molt61WvHNzylqPmJEaLhK410auPaShUgTggThBvkSwtwZZ4qi07MlpHQR69mIE4Hs49FxJaEU_CjKhqh2FBjJsdP39gqo6iCUwlx7CCOM_jVs31g7j1kMPp2nytbLctNq_cw_SRo9Wih-SRj6w-ba99X-LPI3UMCvXw!!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

To order a UVIP you will need:

- The vehicle identification number (VIN) or the licence plate number of the used vehicle and
- Your name and address, your Ontario driver's license (if applicable) or registrant identification number (RIN)¹⁴ (if applicable).

¹³ Service Ontario. Used Vehicle information package. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/used-vehicle-information-package>

¹⁴ A RIN is issued by Service Ontario and is used by businesses to register a vehicle in Ontario.

Cost and Delivery

The cost for a UVIP is \$20 (as of December 2023).

The UVIP will be mailed to the delivery address provided. It will be sent within 5 business days of your online purchase and you can expect up to 10 days of delivery time.

Vehicle Confirmation Letter^{15,16}

If you have only a vehicle's VIN number or license plate and need to get additional information on the owner of a vehicle, you can request a vehicle confirmation letter. However, this process will provide only the name of the owner, and no contact information.

Cost and Delivery

Confirmation letters cost \$6 each (as of December 2023) and can be obtained as follows:

- Online <https://www.jtips.mto.gov.on.ca/jtips/seu/initiateRequest>
- By mail to

Ministry of Transportation
Licensing Administration and Support Office
Special Enquiry Unit
87 Sir William Hearst Avenue
Room 178
Toronto, ON M3M 0B4
Fax: 416-235-4414

If sending a request by mail, you need to provide a letter on company letterhead, explaining the situation, and providing the VIN or licence plate number along with details on the requested information. It is important the letter is signed by an officer of the company.¹⁷ Payment should also be included with the request.

Payment

The fee, in the form of a cheque or money order, must be made payable to the "Minister of Finance/MTO" and drawn on a Canadian bank account. To use VISA or Mastercard, a Credit Card Authorization Form must be used, which is available on this website: <https://forms.mgcs.gov.on.ca/en/dataset/023-sr-lv-034>

¹⁵ Service Ontario, personal communication, November 30, 2023

¹⁶ Service Ontario, Uncertified Vehicle Record. Retrieved from <https://www.ontario.ca/page/uncertified-vehicle-record>

¹⁷ Ibid

Eimpound.com

eimpound.com is a free web service allowing law enforcement and tow providers in North America to electronically identify and notify lien holders and owners. The service searches information on the registered owners and lien holders through state Divisions of Motor Vehicles databases.¹⁸

To start the search, a towing company needs to: ¹⁹

- Sign up.
- Enter or upload vehicle's VINs.

Lien holders

The search time varies but it can take up to a couple of hours. If eimpound finds the lien holder and owner, it will send an e-receipt to the towing company and contact the lien holder.

If there is no initial match in the eimpound database within the next two business days eimpound will search other lien record databases.

Registered owners

If eimpound finds the registered owner of a vehicle, it will provide all available information to a towing company, including contact details. Because of privacy laws in Canada, the level of detail of contact information may vary.²⁰

¹⁸ Southwest tow operators. Retrieved from <https://swtowop.org/index.php/news/352-free-online-service-gaining-popularity-among-tow-companies-and-law-enforcement>

¹⁹ eimpound website. Retrieved from <https://www.eimpound.com/eimpound/home/features>

²⁰ eimpound, personal communication, December 13, 2023

Prince Edward Island

Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the Government of Prince Edward Island does not disclose information regarding drivers and vehicles and will not contact the owner of the vehicle on behalf of a towing company.

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Prince Edward Island the steps below may be used gather more information on the vehicle:

Check the Vehicle

You can examine the vehicle for any information about the owner, such as registration stickers, license plates, or contact details on documents inside the car.

Contact Highway Safety Department at Prince Edward Island

The Highway Safety Department in Prince Edward Island deals with police impoundments and criminal violations registered under the Highway Traffic Act. If a peace officer forwards a copy of a notice of impoundment to the department, the department will send a copy of that notice by registered or certified mail to the last known address of the owner.²¹

Check for Liens

Do a lien search through Atlantic Canada On-Line (ACOL) at <https://pprs.acol.ca/lc/> to identify if any money is owed on a towed vehicle.

The ACOL Personal Property Registry System (PPRS) allows both businesses and individuals to register and inquire about personal property interests across the designated provinces and territories in Canada.²²

- New Brunswick
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Northwest Territories
- Nova Scotia
- Nunavut
- Prince Edward Island
- Yukon

A fee of approximately \$10 would apply for a search.

If the vehicle has money owing against it, the search may disclose information about the person who owes the money (debtor) or the entity to whom the money is owed (creditor).

Under the Price Edward Island Warehouseman's Lien Act notice is to given to the owner of the vehicle and any other party who has registered an interest in the vehicle as of the date the vehicle was impounded.²³

²¹ Highway Traffic Act, p. 128. Retrieved from https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/h-05-highway_traffic_act.pdf

²² PPRS website. Retrieved from <https://www.acol.ca/?q=en/service/pprs/about-pprs-introduction>

²³ *Warehousemen's Lien Act*. Retrieved from: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/legislation/W-01-Warehousemens%20Lien%20Act.pdf>

Quebec

The process for identifying the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Quebec depends on whether the vehicle is a commercial vehicle or a private vehicle.

Commercial Vehicles

Check for Liens

For commercial vehicles, you can do a lien search through the Register of Personal and Movable Real Rights (RDPRM) at <https://www.rdprm.gouv.qc.ca/fr/pages/lerdprm.html>. The search checks for any registered security interests affecting the property and identifies the name of the company owning the vehicle. As of December 2023, a \$16 fee would apply for a search.²⁴

Vehicle Record Request

You can request a vehicle record through Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) at <https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/blob/saaq/documents/formulaires/vehicle-record-request.pdf>.

A vehicle record request will not provide the name of the individual debtor, only the names of the businesses or company will be shown.²⁵ A \$13.50 fee would apply (as of December 2023).

The request must be sent by mail to:²⁶

Division de la diffusion (act. 850)
Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec Édifice Jean-Lesage
333, boulevard Jean-Lesage
Case postale 19600, succursale Terminus
Québec (Québec) G1K 8J6

Private Vehicles

For private vehicles, you can do a search through the private investigation agency SIR Quebec. SIR Quebec collaborates with the Towing Association of Quebec and can conduct vehicle searches using VIN numbers and license plates.^{27,28}

²⁴ RDPRM website. Retrieved from <https://www.rdprm.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Pages/Accueil.html>

²⁵ Government of Quebec. Don't Fall for Stories. Retrieved from <https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/blob/saaq/documents/publications/dont-fall-stories.pdf>

²⁶ SAAQ website. Retrieved from <https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/saaq/rates-fines/fees-other-services/>

²⁷ SIR Quebec, personal communication, December 1, 2023.

²⁸ SIR Quebec. Retrieved from <https://sirqc.com/en/>

To utilize this service, submit the application form provided below to SIR Quebec at info@sirqc.com. The cost for this service is approximately \$150 (as of December 2023).

File opening form to identify a QC vehicle in impound

CONTACT INFO	
FIRST NAME/ NAME	
Ref number	
Phone(s)	
EMAIL	
Company address	
Billing	
Issue the invoice in the name of	
Person in charge	
Contact details of the person in charge (phone, email)	
Special note for invoicing	
<u>Credit Card info</u>	

MANDATE

NATURE OF THE REQUEST	
VEHICLE	Make: Model: Year: Color: VIN: QC Plate:
RELEVANT INFORMATION	
EXTRA INFO	

Saskatchewan

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Saskatchewan use a lien check or contact Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI).

Check for Liens²⁹

Do a lien search through the Saskatchewan Personal Property Registry (SPPR) at <https://www.isc.ca/SPPR/Pages/SearchLiens.aspx> to identify if any money is owed on a towed vehicle. As of December 2023, a \$10 fee would apply for a search.

If the vehicle has an amount owing against it, the search may disclose information about the person who owes the money (debtor) or the entity to whom the money is owed (creditor).

Contact SGI³⁰

There is not a formal process for finding the registered owner of a vehicle in Saskatchewan. However, you can reach out to SGI by emailing afsearches@sgi.sk.ca and providing details such as the license plate, VIN number, and a brief explanation of the situation. Depending on the situation, SGI will provide further guidance.

²⁹ ISC website. Retrieved from <https://www.isc.ca/SPPR/Pages/SearchLiens.aspx>

³⁰ SGI, personal communication, December 20, 2023

United States

This section summarizes the processes for contacting the registered owner of a vehicle in five US states.

Contacting the registered owner of a vehicle, boat, or trailer in most US states often involves a similar procedure. Typically, the Department of Motor Vehicles website in the respective state will have a form that needs to be filled out to request access to the owner's information.

Stolen Vehicle

To check whether the vehicle has been reported stolen in the US, the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS) can be used. NMVTIS is the publicly available system in the United States to which all insurance carriers, auto recyclers, junk yards, and salvage yards must, according to federal law, consistently report.³¹

NMVTIS provides a list of the approved data providers that offer vehicle condition and history information, available at https://vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov/nmvtis_vehiclehistory#1-0. The providers' links offer NMVTIS data to all interested parties (e.g., consumers, car dealerships, financial institutions, etc.).

California

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in California submit a Request for Record Information.

Request for Record Information

A Request for Record Information (INF 70) form is used to request a copy of vehicle or vessel records. It provides the following information:

- **Current record** – current registered owner name, legal owner name and address, vehicle description, registration status, etc.
- **Owner as of date** – the name of the registered and legal owner as of the date specified.
- **Ownership history** – current owner and generally the three previous registered owners.
- **All vehicles owned by individual/business** – a single record or list of eight or fewer vehicles owned by a specific individual/business at the address provided.

The form <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/uploads/2023/04/Revised-upload-INF-70.pdf> should be printed, filled out and mailed to the Department of Motor Vehicles at:

Public Operations – MS G199

³¹ National Motor Vehicle Information System website. Retrieved from https://vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov/nmvtis_vehiclehistory

P.O. Box 944247
Sacramento, CA 94244-2470

A cheque or money order for the \$5 USD fee should be included with the form.

The time to process the request may be up to five or six weeks.

Commercial Requester Account

To request protected personal information and data on a regular basis, you may need to apply for a data records contract. More information on this process can be found on State of California Department of Motor Vehicles here: <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/vehicle-industry-services/motor-carrier-services-mcs/motor-carrier-services-mcs-records-and-information/commercial-requester-accounts-cra/>

Washington

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Washington State submit a Vehicle Record Request.

Vehicle Record Request

A Vehicle Record Request can be submitted:

- Online through <https://wadolpublicrecords.nextrequest.com/requests/new>
- By mail by completing the form (<https://www.dol.wa.gov/sites/default/files/forms/224003.pdf>) and sending it to the following address:

Vehicle/Vessel Records Disclosure Unit
Department of Licensing
PO Box 2957
Olympia, WA 98507

Businesses outside Washington State need to include a legible copy of their current business license.

Cost

If requested online there is no fee.

If by mail, there is a \$2 fee associated with this search. Once the request is processed, a towing company will receive an invoice with instructions about how to mail the payment. The process may take a couple of weeks.

Towing companies must also provide an active business license.

Apply for a Contract

To request protected personal information and data on a regular basis, you may need to apply for a data records contract. More information can be found on the Washington State Department of Licensing here: <https://www.dol.wa.gov/about/data-services-requests/vehicle-and-boat-data-requests>

Oregon

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Oregon submit a Request for Information.

Request for Information

A Request for Information form is used to request vehicle or vessel records.

The form <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/Forms/DMV/7122fill.pdf> should be printed and completed. For a registered owner search, the Vehicle Record Print option should be selected. There is a \$4 fee associated with this search.

Towing companies located outside of Oregon, should submit a copy of the registration for one of their vehicles. The registration should have the company name on it.

All required documents and a check or money order payable to "Oregon DMV" should be mailed to the DMV Record Services to the address provided in the form:

1905 Lana Avenue NE
Salem, OR 97314-2250

The process may take a couple of weeks.

Set up an Account

You can apply for a DMV Record Inquiry Account. Eligible account holders can receive personal information via fax or by ordering online. More information can be found on Oregon Driver & Motor Vehicle Services website here:
https://www.oregon.gov/odot/DMV/pages/records/recinquiry_daveacct.aspx

Montana

To identify the owner of a vehicle, boat or trailer that is registered in Montana fill the Release of Motor Vehicle Records Form.

Request for Information

The form <https://www.dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/Release-of-Motor-Vehicle-Records-3.pdf> should be printed and completed. For a registered owner search, the current vehicle information option should be selected. The fee is \$6.18 (as of December 2023).

The form and the check payable to State of Montana should be mailed to the address provided in the form:

P.O. Box 201431
302 N Roberts
Helena, MT 59620-1431

New York

To identify the owner of a vehicle that is registered in New York register for a Dial-In Search account through the Department of Motor Vehicles website (<https://dmv.ny.gov/records/dial-search-accounts>).