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Liens must be released electronically



WisDOT now requires all non-exempt secured parties to release liens electronically. Paper lien releases will no longer be accepted as of January 5, 2025.

This change was made in T accordance with [Wis. Stat. § 342.245](#) and [Wis. Admin. Code ch. Trans 148.03](#) and in response to increases in fraudulent lien releases submitted to the department. The change provides another layer of protection for lien holders and ensures compliance with state law, which requires liens to be released electronically.

Please note that **this change *does not* have any impact on how dealerships process title or registration applications**, nor does it change what dealerships need to do when transacting vehicles when the title is held by the lienholder. Dealers should continue to process their title applications within seven business days of the transactions if a lien shows on the title.

Dealers who are secured parties may need to verify their capability to release liens on eMV PARTNER or their vendor system. If no ability to release liens is present within their system, a new Terminal ID may need to be applied for through WisDOT

in order to release their liens. Dealers may contact the Agent Partnership Unit for assistance in obtaining the capability to release liens electronically.

If you have any questions about this change, [please visit our Lien Information page](#).

Trade-in vehicle titles - what's in a name?



To accept a trade-in vehicle as part of a deal, the trade-in vehicle must be titled to the customer.

If the customer's trade-in vehicle is titled to their spouse, a dealership can accept the vehicle if the title or a Power of Attorney (POA) has been signed by the spouse (the titled owner). The vehicle should not be accepted otherwise.

For example:

Scenario A: John Smith wants to trade in a vehicle. The vehicle is titled to John's wife, Jane. John provides the dealership a title signed by Jane. **The dealership can accept the vehicle in on trade.**

Scenario B: John Smith wants to trade in a vehicle. The vehicle is titled to John's wife, Jane. John provided the dealership a title signed by himself, but there is no signature nor POA provided by Jane. **The dealership cannot accept the vehicle in on trade.**

If the trade-in vehicle is not titled to the customer, and Scenario A does not apply, you have two options:

1. Work directly with the titled owner to purchase the vehicle. (Your customer cannot take advantage of any trade-in tax credit for purchase if they are not the titled owner.)
2. The customer can work with the titled owner to have the vehicle re-titled into the customer’s name. Once the customer’s name is on the title, they can use it as a trade-in.

Pricing rules, and who is responsible, in dealer advertising

When it comes to a vehicle's advertised price, Wisconsin law can be summed up as: *what you see, is what you get*.

When a dealer advertises a vehicle price, any consumer who walks onto the showroom floor should be able to purchase that vehicle for the listed price. You do not need to include taxes, title and registration fees, or the optional service fee in the price, but ***everything else the customer is expected to pay for – including charges such as mandatory dealer add-ons, reconditioning fees, and destination fees —must be included.***

If the service fee is not included in a price, you must have a disclosure that states the service fee is extra.



Many dealer websites rely on a web vendor to manage their vehicle listings, and often vehicle data is shared or transmitted across multiple platforms, from manufacturer to dealer and from dealer to third-party aggregate websites or social media. Dealers are ultimately responsible for any representations made of their inventory, including pricing, regardless of the source.

Incorrect or inaccurate advertisements—mistake or not—can result in the dealer needing to honor a less-than-ideal price on a vehicle. Dealers should have a process in place to regularly review and verify dealer advertising to ensure accuracy and minimize the chances of a costly error.

Vehicle emissions testing in winter and monitor readiness issues



Cold weather can affect evaporative systems, which may prevent a vehicle from passing the emissions inspection. Outside air temperature affects fuel volatility and the amount of vapor formed in the tank causing monitor readiness issues.

It is important that monitors "run" and are "ready" to test. With ready monitors the emissions test will yield a final result of Pass or Fail. If too many monitors are in a "not ready" state, the test result will be a Reject. This is a test with no result, and no path to renew the registration.

Other issues that can affect monitor readiness include batteries that have gone dead, a battery replacement, and vehicles that have been kept in storage or not driven for a while.

If readiness issues persist and the vehicle is kept in a county that requires emissions testing, the motorist can get help by calling the Wisconsin Vehicle Inspection Program (WIVIP) hotline at 1- 866-OBD-TEST (1-866-623-8378).

Quarterly Report

The following numbers have been generated from the Dealer and Agent Section (DAS) Quarterly Report. This data is from the **second quarter** for the fiscal year beginning July 2024 (October through December 2024).

Field Investigation Unit (FIU)

The following statistics represent the Field Investigation Unit's compliance efforts, community outreach and enforcement actions.

Activity	Second Quarter
Complaints closed	337
Dealer inspections	324
Educational presentations	1

APU/DLU

The Agent Partnership Unit (APU) answers phone calls from dealers, government agencies, financial institutions, gas stations, grocery stores and various other types of agents throughout the state. These agents electronically process either title and registration, or renewal registration applications on behalf of the DMV.

The Dealer Licensing Unit (DLU) issues and renews multiple business license types. Individual licenses are issued to individuals who are selling or purchasing vehicles on behalf of dealerships. DLU answers dealer licensing questions as well as provides information about consumer harm and how to file a dealer complaint to the general public.

Activity	Second Quarter
APU phone calls	9,200
DLU phone calls	6,482
Business licenses issued	671
Individual licenses issued	5,081

Lemon Law

DMV receives telephone and email inquiries from consumers, dealers, lawyers, manufacturers, and law makers. The inquiries range from questions about the specifics of the Lemon Law, to assisting all facets of pursuing a claim.

Activity	Second Quarter
Lemon Law inquiries	60

FIU Enforcement Actions

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