

# FACT SHEET

## Imported and Exported Vehicles Procedures

### PURPOSE

This fact sheet explains the procedures and documents necessary for titling imported vehicles (also known as foreign market vehicles or grey market vehicles) in Pennsylvania and for vehicles currently titled in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania being exported to another country. These procedures should be reviewed **prior** to importing or exporting a vehicle.

### IMPORTED VEHICLE PROCEDURES

An imported vehicle is any vehicle brought into the United States (U.S.) from any foreign country (including Canada). These vehicles "may" or "may not" meet the requirements in the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (and the policies and regulations adopted as a result of this Act) and EPA Emission Standards. This procedure also includes U.S. manufactured vehicles that are produced for export and subsequently imported.

**NOTE:** Guam, America Samoa, U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico are all governed as U.S. territories and vehicles shipped from these U.S. territories do not need to follow the import procedures.

Motor vehicles manufactured not more than 25 model years ago are subject to the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and emissions requirements in order to be imported permanently and **cannot** be titled and registered in Pennsylvania without proof of conformity with those requirements. Vehicles manufactured to meet the FMVSS will have a certification label affixed by the original vehicle manufacturer in the area of the driver-side door. To make importation easier, when purchasing a vehicle certified by a foreign country as meeting U.S. standards, the buyer should have the sales contract verify that a certification label has been attached to the vehicle and present this document at time of importation.

A vehicle without this certification label must be imported as a nonconforming vehicle. In this case, the importer must contract with a U.S. Department of Transportation Registered Importer.

PennDOT will issue a certificate of title and a registration for an imported vehicle when the applicant submits proof that the vehicle complies with FMVSS and emissions requirements. Vehicles not conforming to those requirements which are subsequently brought into compliance will be issued a Pennsylvania certificate of title branded with a "G" ("G" - Originally Mfd. for Non-U.S. Distribution).

Applicants must submit the following documentation:

- ❖ Completed Form MV-1, "Application for Certificate of Title," from an authorized agent. The authorized agent will complete the MV-1 application. A tracing or verification of the vehicle identification number (VIN) by a certified inspection mechanic or notary public employed by a full agent is required. (If the applicant is serving in the military and the vehicle is physically located out-of-state, a police officer, a mechanic employed by a dealer or an armed forces installation provost marshal or motor transportation officer can verify the VIN.) **NOTE:** Notarization of the applicant's signature is required on Form MV-1.
- ❖ Original vehicle proof of ownership documents.
  1. English translations for all documents written exclusively in foreign language are required. (Note: Kilometers must be converted to U.S. miles.)
  2. The following U.S. Customs Entry Forms are acceptable proof in the U.S. for the purpose of titling and registration. Only one of these acceptable documents must be submitted with Form MV-1:
    - a. CBP7501, Entry Summary. **NOTE:** May or may not have a U.S. Customs Officer's signature.

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- b. CBP3461, Entry/Immediate Delivery. **NOTE:** May or may not have a U.S. Customs Officer's signature.
- c. CBP3461ALT, Entry Immediate Delivery Alternate. **NOTE:** May or may not have a U.S. Customs Officer's signature.

**NOTE:** The above forms must have the Port of Entry Number OR U.S. Customs stamp/seal or both recorded on the document.

Generally, U.S. Customs maintains the original copies of the U.S. Customs Entry Forms listed above for their records. U.S. Customs provides the vehicle importer with a copy of the form and that copy must be included with the Pennsylvania application for title and registration. A notarized copy of the Customs document provided to the vehicle importer may be submitted with a notation indicating *"This is a true and accurate copy of the U.S. Customs document in the vehicle owner's possession."* **NOTE:** If multiple vehicles are listed on the U.S. Customs Entry Form and the customer is not titling all of the vehicles listed, a notarized copy of the Customs document provided to the vehicle importer may be submitted with the same notation listed above. The notarized copy must be included with the other documentation submitted with the application. When multiple vehicles are not listed individually on an acceptable U.S. Customs Entry Form, the form must contain a notation that the form covers multiple entry vehicles and reference an attached listing of said vehicles.

- 3. All additional importation shipping documents establishing vehicle ownership and indicating how the vehicle entered the U.S. (i.e., bill of lading, shipping invoice, etc.).
- 4. A properly completed U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Form HS-7, "Declaration (Importation of Motor Vehicles and Motor Vehicle Equipment Subject to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety, Bumper and Theft Prevention Standards)."
- 5. A copy of properly completed Form EPA 3520-1 that has been supplied to U.S. Customs at the Port of Entry. **NOTE:** Form EPA 3520-1 is not required for imported trailers or for vehicles over 25 years old.
- 6. A letter from the vehicle manufacturer that includes information regarding the vehicle's safety and EPA compliance.
- 7. If applicable, the original "**Bond Release Letter**" from the U.S. Department of Transportation, NHTSA. **NOTE:** If the customer is unable to provide the original copy of the Bond Release Letter, the customer must contact the "registered importer." The "registered importer" will need to request that NHTSA send another copy of the letter to the customer or send an electronic copy (e-mail) of the letter to the customer.
- 8. Pennsylvania sales tax is due on the purchase price of the vehicle. (No sales tax exemption is available for military personnel.)

**NOTE:** For Military Personnel Only:

If you owned the vehicle for more than six months prior to applying for a Pennsylvania Certificate of Title and your home of record was Pennsylvania at the time of purchase, sales tax will be based on 6% (7% for residents of Allegheny County and 8% for City of Philadelphia residents) of the vehicle's purchase price or on fair market value at time of first entry into Pennsylvania, less credit for tax paid in a reciprocal state.

If you owned the vehicle less than six months prior to applying for Pennsylvania Certificate of Title and your home of record is Pennsylvania, sales tax will be based on 6% (7% for residents of Allegheny County and 8% for City of Philadelphia residents) of the vehicle's purchase price at time of first entry into Pennsylvania, less credit for tax paid in a reciprocal state. You must attach a tax receipt from a reciprocal state to the application for title.

- 9. Proof of insurance is required, if registration is requested.
- 10. Check or money order must be made payable to the "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) personnel are not exempt from the above requirements.

**PENNSYLVANIA PORTS OF ENTRY – [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov)**

**ERIE U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

Erie International Airport/Tom Ridge Field  
4459 W. 12th Street  
Erie, PA 16505  
(814) 833-1355  
Hours of operation: 8:00am – 9:30pm Monday-Friday

**HARRISBURG/MECHANICSBURG U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

Custom Border Protection  
1215 Manor Drive  
Suite 301  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
(717) 691-7136  
Hours of operation: 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday

**PHILADELPHIA U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Room 102  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
(215) 717-5952  
Hours of operation: 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday

**WILKES BARRE/SCRANTON U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

102 Hanger Road  
Airport Aviation Bldg.  
Room 201  
Avoca, Pa 18641  
(570) 457-8024  
Hours of operation: 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday

**LEHIGH VALLEY U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION**

997 Postal Road  
Allentown, Pa 18109  
(610) 266-1042  
Hours of operation: 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday

**PITTSBURGH U.S. CUSTOMS BORDER AND PROTECTION**

700 Airside Drive  
Cargo Bldg. A  
Moon Township, PA 15108  
(412) 472-0715  
Hours of operation: 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday

**EXPORT VEHICLE PROCEDURES**

The vehicle owner exporting a vehicle from the U.S. must present to the U.S. Customs Office, at the Port of Exportation, the vehicle and the required documents describing the vehicle. The vehicle and documents must be submitted to the U.S. Customs Office at least 72 hours prior to export of the vehicle by air, vessel or land.

**NOTE:** The vehicle must be presented prior to the time of export for inspection by a U.S. Customs Officer.

The following documents are required to be presented:

- ❖ The original certificate of title or a certified copy of the original certificate of title and two additional copies of the original certificate of title must be provided to the U.S. Customs Officer prior to export of the vehicle.

- ❖ If the vehicle was salvaged, the original certificate of salvage, or a certified copy of the original certificate of salvage and two additional copies of the original certificate of salvage, must be provided to the U.S. Customs Officer prior to the export of the salvage vehicle.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

- Q. Are motor vehicles imported from Canada considered the same as vehicles imported from a foreign country?
- A. Yes. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has advised that vehicles made in Canada for the Canadian market, U.S. manufactured vehicles originally intended for the Canadian market, or other foreign made vehicles available for the Canadian market may not meet the requirements in the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act (and the policies and regulations adopted as a result of this Act) and EPA emission standards. In addition, certain makes of vehicles - Volkswagen, Volvo, etc. - for certain model years - 1988, 1996 and 1997- do not meet U.S. DOT safety standards. The vehicle's manufacturer's label may be inspected to determine whether the vehicle was manufactured for U.S. distribution. The potential vehicle purchaser/importer should verify this information before purchasing this vehicle.
- Q. Who can import a vehicle into the U.S.?
- A. Anyone can import a vehicle into the U.S., if the vehicle is being brought into the U.S. for the personal use of the person importing the vehicle if the vehicle complies with U.S. EPA emissions and DOT safety standards. Otherwise, a U.S. Department of Transportation Registered Importer must import the vehicle.  
**NOTE: A non-U.S. resident may import a vehicle into the U.S. for up to one year, but at the end of the one-year time frame, the vehicle must be exported. There are no exceptions to this policy.**
- Q. Is there a timeframe an individual must retain an imported vehicle brought into the U.S. for personal use before selling the vehicle?
- A. No.
- Q. How is the term "personal use" defined when being used in the previous question?
- A. "Personal use" means the imported vehicle is not being brought into the U.S. for resale, but for the owner's use.
- Q. Are there any special provisions provided to a member of the U.S. military importing a vehicle into the U.S.?
- A. No. U.S. military personnel must follow the same procedures as anyone else.
- Q. Are any imported vehicles still identified as "grey market vehicles" or is this term no longer relevant?
- A. Generally, the term now applies to European manufactured vehicles more than Canadian manufactured vehicles that are not certified for use in the U.S.
- Q. Are all vehicles from Canada being imported into the U.S. considered to be conforming?
- A. No. The vehicle's manufacturer's label may be inspected to determine whether or not the vehicle was manufactured for U.S. distribution.
- Q. Can a vehicle being imported into the U.S. from Canada be checked for liens, brands or whether the vehicle was reported stolen?
- A. Yes. Canadian authorities strongly suggest that no vehicle be titled or registered until it is checked for liens, brands and stolen status. To do so, visit [www.autotheftcanada.com](http://www.autotheftcanada.com) and follow the "Newsletter" link to [Lienquest.com](http://Lienquest.com). "Lienquest.com" will provide direct, on-line information regarding liens and brands in Canada. A fee is charged for each request.
- Q. Can a truck or truck tractor certified to the Canadian motor vehicle safety standards as an incomplete vehicle be imported into the U.S.?
- A. No. These vehicles would not be eligible for importation.
- Q. Do foreign students or foreign nationals coming into Pennsylvania to attend school or on an extended job assignment have to title and register their vehicle here?

- A. No, per a U.N. agreement.
- Q. If a vehicle was brought into Pennsylvania by a student or someone with a work visa, can they sell the vehicle, and could it be titled here in Pennsylvania?
- A. Not without proof of legal entry and ownership as outlined in the procedures listed above. In addition, the vehicle must be brought into compliance with U.S. DOT and EPA standards.
- Q. Can an issuing agent issue a temporary plate on an imported vehicle when all the required documentation is attached to the title and registration application?
- A. No. Issuing agents may NOT issue a new registration plate or transfer an existing registration plate to an imported vehicle until PennDOT approves and processes the title application.
- Q. What responsibility does the U.S. Department of Transportation have regarding imported vehicles?
- A. The U.S. Department of Transportation is responsible for the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). Questions regarding vehicle safety requirements should be directed to their office.
- Q. What responsibility does the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have regarding imported vehicles?
- A. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is responsible for the Federal EPA vehicle standards. When calling the EPA regarding an imported vehicle, the vehicle make, model, year, and vehicle identification number and, if the vehicle has already been imported, the Port of Entry, date of entry and entry number from the EPA Form 3520-1 must be provided.
- Q. If more information is required, what PennDOT or U.S. government agencies may be contacted?
- A. The U.S. Department of Transportation, Director, Office of Vehicle Safety Hotline, 400 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20590, or phone 202-366-5291, fax 202-366-1024 or at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Investigation/Imports Section, Manufacturer's Operations Division, 401 M Street SW, Washington, DC 20460, or at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).
- U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20229, or [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) – click Trade – Basic Importing and Exporting – Imported Motor Vehicles.

*Please Note: Authorized agents are under contract to PennDOT and may charge a market driven service (delivery) fee; these are in addition to any PennDOT statutory fees for temporary, or in some cases, permanent motor vehicle registration plates and cards or other related products and services offered by the agent. The agent's service (delivery) fees are market driven, and vary by agent. To compare service (delivery) fees, you are encouraged to contact the authorized agents in your area for the applicable service (delivery) fees charged.*