

The first thing most people think of when they think of a salvaged vehicle, is the image of an abandoned vehicle that has been sitting out in the open, perhaps in a junkyard, for a dozen years or so. While that might be the case some of the time, much of the time it is not.

How to Find Totaled Vehicles

In some cases, the vehicle owner will opt to retain the "salvage rights" to a vehicle that has been in an accident and declared "totaled" by the insurance company. If this is the case, the owner may choose to either keep the car for use as parts, or sell the vehicle to someone else who wants to repair and reconstruct the vehicle.

Another way to obtain "totaled" vehicles is through insurance company or lender auctions. Check the local newspapers or search the Internet for auto salvage yards, auto recycling, or auto dismantling. You can even find motorcycles to reconstruct and register as a salvaged vehicle.

What is a Salvaged Vehicle?

Many vehicles are officially titled "totaled," meaning that the damage to the vehicle is declared a "total loss" by the car insurance company. This occurs when the insurance adjuster decides that to repair the vehicle would cost more money than the vehicle is worth. Totaled cars are then either returned to their owners if the owner has the option of "salvage rights," or sold off to salvage buyers at auction.

Some salvage buyers will then dismantle the vehicles and resell the surviving parts. Some buyers will repair and restore the vehicles to an operating condition, then re-sell the reconstructed vehicle on the used-car market.

Registering a Salvaged Vehicle

Alaska treats salvage vehicles the same as a reconstructed or custom-built vehicle. Registration of a salvaged or reconstructed vehicle is different from the procedure for registering a regular vehicle. Follow the instructions on our custom-built car registration page, or, do the following:

- Make sure you have the proper title to the vehicle; make sure that the vehicle identification number on the title is the same as the number on the chassis.

- Complete a Reconstructed Vehicle Affidavit and have your signature notarized.

- Have all of the receipts, bills of sale, and invoices for any major parts obtained that went into the repair of the salvaged vehicle.

- Have the vehicle inspected by either a law enforcement office or a DMV representative.

- Make sure that any liens showing on the title have been properly released.

- Complete the Application for Title & Registration and submit it, along with the notarized Reconstructed Vehicle Affidavit, inspection paperwork, clear titles, and bills of sale to the DMV.

If you need additional information on registering or titling a salvaged vehicle, you may contact your local DMV office.