

When a vehicle has suffered damage that would cost more to repair than the vehicle's market value, it may be declared salvage. It will be issued a salvage certificate of title (\$4) and removed from the road? a salvage vehicle cannot be registered.

If a licensed rebuilder performs repairs on a salvage vehicle that bring it back to road-worthiness, the "salvage" branding on the title may be changed to "rebuilt." The vehicle may then be registered and used.

#### Inspections for Rebuilt Vehicles

Before this can happen, though, the vehicle must pass a safety inspection at an Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Safety Testing Lane.

After that, vehicles eight model years or newer must pass a salvage vehicle inspection. This inspection is performed by the Illinois State Police. It's not a safety inspection. Rather, the police are looking for signs that the vehicle (or any of its parts) was stolen.

You'll need to bring quite a bit of documentation with you to the salvage inspection station. A complete list is available in the informative Salvage Vehicle Inspections brochure.

In some cases, the inspectors will remove parts in order to access the vehicle's identification numbers. Generally, some or all of the following will be checked:

- Public VIN

- Transmission number

- Body number

- Federal stickers

- Engine number

- Frame number

- Any mylar stickers

If any stolen parts are detected, they will be seized as evidence at the time of the inspection.

The fee for the inspection is \$94. The fee for retitling the vehicle is \$95. These fees must be paid separately at the time of the inspection, and they must be paid by check or money order. You may not use cash, debit cards, or credit cards to pay these fees.

#### Salvage Vehicle Inspection Stations

Inspections require appointments. Only a few offices of the Secretary of State perform this inspection. They are:

- 103 W. Roosevelt Road

- Villa Park, IL 60181

- (630) 693-0551

- 3301 N. Main

- East Peoria, IL 61611

- (309) 694-7961

2719 S. 11th St.

Springfield, IL 62703

(217) 557-2084

400 W. Main St.

Belleville, IL 62220

(618) 236-8755

Remember that you must first bring the vehicle to an Illinois Department of Transportation Safety Testing Lane for a safety test.

#### Consumer Warnings

After Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, thousands of water-damaged vehicles are appearing on the used car market. Titles that have been transferred from state to state may lose any indication that the vehicle was ever declared salvage.

Protect yourself from buying a salvage vehicle that wasn't properly repaired. Be wary of a vehicle with an out-of-state title or one where the seller's name is not the one on the title.

Also check for water damage, moldy smells, discolored carpet, and other signs that the vehicle may have been submerged.

You may also want to avail yourself of one of the many title investigation services. These title search companies will, for a small fee, check all instances of the vehicle's VIN number on titles in every state. Even your dealer may honestly not know that he or she is selling a vehicle with a title that has been "cleaned" of the salvage designation.

#### Salvage Dealer Rule Changes

Out-of-state salvage dealers who conduct business within Illinois no longer need to be licensed by the Secretary of State; they simply need to be licensed in their home state. However, out-of-state dealers must maintain a record of each salvage or junk vehicle they sell within Illinois, and make the record available to the Secretary of State.