

Maine can be a tough state?especially on motor vehicles. Cars get damaged in severe weather or accidents, or sometimes they simply get too old to keep on the road without spending a lot of money.

When a vehicle is damaged beyond repair in an accident, or when it is given up as not roadworthy by its owner, it is considered a salvage vehicle. Salvage vehicles are treated uniquely under the law.

#### Certificate of Salvage

If a motor vehicle is declared a total loss by an owner or insurer, an application for a certificate of salvage must be filed along with a \$33 fee. The application can be obtained by contacting any Maine BMV office. As part of the application process for a salvage certificate, the owner or insurer must surrender the standard title certificate.

After the salvage certificate is issued, it takes the place of the title as the official ownership document for the car. If the vehicle is recycled or destroyed, the salvage certificate must be kept on file by the auto recycler.

If a certificate of salvage is lost or destroyed, you need to fill out a duplicate application and pay a \$33 fee, plus another \$10 for a rush order, if needed. Duplicate title applications can be obtained at any Maine BMV office or online.

Maine salvage certificates follow the same general rules as title certificates, including those rules regarding suspensions and lienholders.

#### Buying a Salvaged Vehicle

Salvaged vehicles may be offered for sale in Maine under specific circumstances and after meeting special requirements:

An inventory of the parts used to repair or rebuild the vehicle, complete with receipts, must be made available by the seller.

The seller must reapply to the Maine BMV to change the title status back from salvage and obtain a new title. The new, reconstructed title will be stamped to reflect that the vehicle was once salvaged and rebuilt or repaired. A vehicle can be re-registered for the road once the new, reconstructed title is obtained.

So if you're buying a used vehicle, make sure you check the title to see if it says "rebuilt" or "salvage rebuilt," which means the vehicle has previously been salvaged or undergone major repairs.