

Any vehicle damaged by collision, fire, flood, accident, trespass, or other occurrence to the extent that the cost of parts and labor makes it uneconomical to repair, fits into Montana's legal definition of a salvaged vehicle.

Purchasing a salvaged vehicle can be a roll of the proverbial dice, especially if you aren't car-mechanic literate. There have been many documented cases of shady car dealers selling salvaged vehicles that cosmetically look factory new, but are mechanically corrupt. With the complicated electronic components of today's car engines, it's easy to hide a salvaged vehicle's flaws. It's a problem that Montana's Motor Vehicle Division, in conjunction with its parent organization the Department of Justice, continues to battle.

To protect you the consumer, the State mandates a stringent application process for any person applying for a Rebuilt Salvage Vehicle certificate. First, the vehicle identification number (VIN) must be inspected and verified by either a law enforcement official or an authorized driver license employee. The applicant must also provide a bill of sale for all component parts and his or her insurance company must submit a legible damage report.

If you have questions or feel you may have been a victim of a slippery car deal, contact the Office of Consumer Protection at:

1219 Eighth Ave.

P.O. Box 200151

Helena, Montana 59620-0151

(406) 444-1588