

# Court's Instructions for Vehicle Ownership Application

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It is sometimes possible to obtain an Order to assist you in obtaining a title for a vehicle you own but for which you did not receive a title at the time of purchase. The court may issue an Order directing the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to issue a certificate of title for your vehicle.

Before the Court will consider such an Order, you must take the following steps:

- 1) You must make a diligent search to locate the former owner to transfer title.
- 2) You must provide a bill of sale, cancelled check, letter, memorandum, or some means of providing your rights to ownership of the vehicle.
- 3) If the former owner has moved from the area without leaving a forwarding address, you should mail a certified, return receipt requested letter, demanding title to the vehicle to the former owner's last known address.
- 4) You must provide a Vehicle Information Check on the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles' website at <https://services.flhsmv.gov/MVCheckWeb/> which lists the last title number issued to this vehicle and shows that there are no liens against the vehicle.
- 5) You must get a Motor Vehicle Identification Number Inspection Sheet from your county Sheriff's Office, establishing that the vehicle has not been reported as stolen as per the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
- 6) You will be required to complete an Affidavit for Vehicle Title Application and an Affidavit of Diligent Search and Inquiry. *Both documents must be notarized.*
- 7) You must file your completed paperwork with the Clerk of the Circuit Court. The appropriate County Court or Circuit Civil filing fee will be required (jurisdiction is based on vehicle value). If you feel that you cannot afford to pay the filing fee, ask for an Affidavit of Indigency to determine if the fee can be waived.
- 8) After you file your paperwork, your case will be reviewed by Court staff and forwarded to a Judge for consideration. In most instances, you will not have to appear in Court.
- 9) If the Judge signs the Order, you will be notified by the Court when a true copy of the Order is available. This process will take approximately 3 weeks from when your completed paperwork is sent to the Judge.

**If you have legal questions, please consult with an attorney or legal aid.**