

How to fill out REG 138 — Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability

California · written against REG 138 (Rev 3/2024), issued under California Vehicle Code 5602

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/forms/california/reg-138-notice-of-transfer-
release-of-liability/

Tells the DMV the car is no longer yours. Until it is filed you are still the registered owner of record, which means parking citations, toll notices and civil liability for whatever the buyer does with the car keep arriving at your address.

This sheet is not the form. Download the blank REG 138 from the California Department of Motor Vehicles at <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/file/notice-of-transfer-and-release-of-liability-reg-138-pdf/> — always take the current revision from the agency rather than a copy. Print this and keep it beside you while you complete theirs.

Every line, in the order you meet it

1	YOU	New owner's name	The buyer's last name or company name, then first name, in capitals. Watch out: This is the block people fill with their own details. The DMV lists exactly that mistake first among its own helpful tips - the buyer goes at the top, you go underneath.
2	YOU	New owner's address	Where the buyer actually lives, with an apartment number if there is one. Watch out: An address that cannot be read is not corrected, it is discarded. The warning box says the information will not be updated or retained, and no notice is sent to tell you.
3	YOU	Odometer reading	Whole miles, split across the two boxes with the form's printed comma between them - thousands on the left, the last three digits on the right. Watch out: No tenths. The box label says so, and a reading with a decimal in it is one of the reasons a notice gets thrown away.
4	YOU	Date of sale, transfer, or lease return	Month, day and year of the handover. Watch out: This is the date the five-day clock runs from, and the date that decides whether a citation two weeks from now is yours or theirs. Put the real date.
5	YOU	Seller's name and address	Your details, in the lower block. Watch out: Capitals in black or blue ink, as the instruction line at the very top of the form asks.
6	YOU	Selling price	Whole dollars, no cents. Watch out: If the car was a gift, the form tells you to enter 0 - not to leave it blank.
7	YOU	Vehicle identification strip	Licence plate or CF number, make or builder, year model, and the full VIN along the bottom. Watch out: All four, on every form. If you sold two cars the same day, that is two separate REG 138s with the right plate and VIN on each - the DMV asks for individual forms.
8	YOU	Seller's signature	One signature, yours, on the rule at the right. Watch out: A co-owner does not have to sign a release of liability. Then file it - online at dmv.ca.gov/nrl if you want any proof it arrived, because a mailed form generates no confirmation at all.

What gets this one rejected

- Filing it late. The form's own headline is Protect Yourself - Submit this form within FIVE days.
- Writing in anything but capitals, or in a colour other than black or blue. The instruction line at the top asks for CAPITAL LETTERS in black or blue ink.
- Swapping the buyer and seller blocks. The DMV lists this first among its helpful tips, which tells you how often it happens.
- One form for several cars sold the same day. The DMV asks for individual forms for each vehicle, each with its own plate and VIN.
- Posting a bill of sale along with it. The form says not to mail a copy of a bill of sale or any other documentation with this form.
- Incomplete or illegible information of any kind. The warning box is blunt: the information WILL NOT be updated or retained, and no notice is sent to tell you so.

Amber is what you write Grey is a block somebody else completes The completed example follows overleaf.

Read off REG 138 (Rev 3/2024) and the California Department of Motor Vehicles's own pages, current as of 2026-08-23. Plain-language help with a form, not legal advice — where this and the agency differ, the agency governs. sellmycarhub.com

Ensure your liability is released by following the instructions below.

This form must be completely filled out. Use CAPITAL LETTERS in black or blue ink.

NOTICE OF TRANSFER and RELEASE OF LIABILITY

Online filing is **FASTER** at dmv.ca.gov/nrl

or mail this completed form to the DMV

NEW OWNER'S LAST NAME (OR) COMPANY NAME		FIRST								
OKAFOR		MARCUS								
NEW OWNER'S ADDRESS		APT NUMBER		ODOMETER READING (NO TENTHS)						
907 BELLA VISTA WAY				142 , 306						
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	DATE OF SALE, TRANSFER, OR LEASE RETURN							
SACRAMENTO	CA	95833	MO. DAY YR.		08 19 2026					
SELLER'S OR LESSEE'S LAST NAME (OR) COMPANY NAME		FIRST				SELLING PRICE (NO CENTS)		WHOLE DOLLARS		
RAMAN		PRIYA				6850				
SELLER'S OR LESSEE'S ADDRESS		APT NUMBER		IF VEHICLE IS A GIFT, ENTER 0 FOR SELLING PRICE						
2418 FRUITVALE AVE										
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE	SELLER'S OR LESSEE'S SIGNATURE							
OAKLAND	CA	94601	X Priya Raman							
VEHICLE LICENSE OR CF NUMBER	MAKE OR BUILDER	YEAR MODEL	VEHICLE ID OR VESSEL HULL NUMBER							
7BXK492	SUBARU	2013	4S4BRBCC1D3241785							

WARNING! You must provide accurate, legible information that includes vehicle/vessel description, your name/address, buyer's name/address, and date of sale/transfer/lease return or the information WILL NOT be updated or retained.

REG 138 (REV. 3/2024) [WWW](https://www.dmv.ca.gov)



NOTICE OF TRANSFER and RELEASE OF LIABILITY

Protect Yourself – Submit this form within FIVE days!

You must provide accurate, legible information or it will not be updated or retained. NO notice will be provided.

You MUST include:

- Vehicle/Vessel Description
- Date of Sale/Transfer/Lease Return
- Odometer Reading
- New Owner's Name & Address
- Your Name & Address

SAVE TIME by filing **ONLINE** at dmv.ca.gov/nrl or scan the QR Code. (Print a receipt for your records.)

This form may also be mailed, but no notification will be sent confirming the DMV has received it.



Helpful Tips

- Pay careful attention to write the new owner's information in the new owner section and the seller's information in the seller's section.
- If you have or sell multiple vehicles at the same time, submit individual forms for each vehicle. Be sure the correct vehicle license plate, vehicle identification number (VIN), and owner is listed on each form.
- File this form within five days of the transaction taking place.
- Protect yourself by submitting this form. This is the best way to make sure the DMV receives your information.

If you are completing this form instead of filing online at dmv.ca.gov/nrl, detach and keep this part for your records and mail the top card to the DMV. Do not mail a copy of a bill of sale or any other documentation with this form.

(See Reverse for Additional Information)

REG 138 (REV. 3/2024) [WWW](https://www.dmv.ca.gov)

Print

Clear Form