

How to fill out an Iowa title

Iowa Certificate of Title · 9 of 10 boxes are the seller's · rules as of 2026-08-23

This sheet is not the title. It is the checklist to keep beside one. Any alteration or erasure on an Iowa title is not a crossing-out, it is a notarised Affidavit of Correction attached to the document, or a replacement title. The order the block itself runs in: the buyer's name and address across the top, the odometer reading and its notation, the transfer or sale date, the SALE or GIFT tick, the purchase price, the two damage questions, then your signature and printed name - and the buyer's signature and printed name underneath yours.

Who has to sign

You, as the transferor	On the Signature(s) of Transferor(s)/Seller(s) line, with your name printed underneath it. No notary, no witness, no appointment - Iowa asks for the signature and the printed name and nothing else.
Every owner, if the front says "and"	761 IAC 400.13(1): names joined by "or" mean any one signature transfers the vehicle; in all other cases the signature of each named owner is required.
The buyer, on the line below yours	New since the 2023 redesign and easy to miss. Iowa DOT's own answer is that both parties sign whether or not there is an odometer or damage disclosure and whether the transfer was a gift or a sale.
Nobody, over the top of a mistake	A wrong sale date, a name in the wrong box, a misspelling - each is a tick box on Form 411219, and the affidavit that carries it has to be notarised and attached to the document with the error in it.
Your lender, if a security interest is printed on the front	Either on the face of the certificate over their own signature, or on a separate notarised release, Form 411168. Iowa allows both and the choice is theirs.
An attorney in fact, if you cannot be there	Form 411021 names the vehicle and lists what the agent may do; a general power of attorney needs Form 411020 alongside it, one affidavit per vehicle.

Every box, in the order you meet it

#	WHO	BOX	WHAT GOES IN IT
0	YOU	Before any box: read the connector on the front	Two owners joined by "or" means either of you can sign the assignment alone. Any other wording means both signatures. Watch out: The exception catches people out: a replacement title or a junking certificate needs every owner regardless of the connector, so an "or" title does not save you if what you actually need is a duplicate.
1	YOU	Name and address of the transferee	Printed on the top line of the assignment area, with street, city, state and zip in their own columns. Watch out: The 2023 redesign added prompts along this line for one reason, and the department states it plainly: to ensure only transferee/buyer info is noted on this line. Sellers were writing themselves in.
2	YOU	The odometer reading	Whole miles, no tenths, on any vehicle of model year 2011 or newer, with one of the three notations ticked beside it. Watch out: "Exceeds mechanical limits" means the dial has rolled past what it can count, not that the mileage is high. Ticking it because a number looks big is a false odometer statement, and s. 321.71(12) makes that a fraudulent practice.
3	YOU	The transfer or sale date	In the boxed area at the top right of the block. It is the one entry in that area required on every transfer, whatever kind. Watch out: It sets the buyer's thirty days and your six months for the registration refund, so it is the date everything else in this sale is measured from. Get it wrong and undoing it is Form 411219 or a replacement title.
4	YOU	SALE or GIFT, and the purchase price	One tick and one figure. Cents are accepted; the department's own answer is that a price submitted with cents is processed with cents. Watch out: This is the figure the buyer's fee for new registration is worked out from, at ten dollars plus five per cent. If it disagrees with the buyer's application, Iowa treats yours as the official one because you attested to it.
5	YOU	The two damage questions	Whether the vehicle has ever been titled salvage, rebuilt or flood; and if not, whether repairs during your ownership cost more than seventy per cent of what it was worth beforehand. Watch out: Required on any vehicle seven model years old or newer. If the answer to the first is yes and the front of the title does not show it, you owe the buyer a separate Form 411108 as well.
6	YOU	Your signature and your printed name	On the transferor lines, under the sentence beginning I confirm the transfer/sale information listed above to be true. Watch out: The printed name line is new too. Before the redesign Iowa took a signature and left it at that, which is exactly why the department added a place to write the name legibly.
7	BUYER	The buyer signs the same block	Signature and printed name, under a statement that they are aware of the odometer certification you made. Watch out: It is not optional and it is not only about mileage. Iowa DOT's own answer is that both parties sign regardless of whether there is an odometer or damage disclosure and regardless of whether the transfer was a gift or a retail sale.

#	WHO	BOX	WHAT GOES IN IT
8	YOU	Tell them the county and the expiry date	Which county the vehicle was last registered in, and when the plates expire. It goes to the buyer verbally or on the bill of sale, not into a box. Watch out: s. 321.45(3) makes this the owner's duty in the same sentence that requires the assignment itself. Iowa registration runs on the owner's birth month, so the buyer has no way to work it out.
9	YOU	Take the plates off before it leaves	Both of them, in the driveway. They are assigned to you under s. 321.34, not to the vehicle. Watch out: Then choose: onto a replacement vehicle within thirty days, carrying your unused registration across as a credit, or in to any county treasurer with a claim for the balance in cash.

Six rules for the pen on a certificate that now records the money as well as the car

- **Black or blue, and the department says why** — It is a recommendation rather than a rule - Iowa DOT's own answer is that there is no law requiring blue or black ink and another colour may be accepted if it is legible. The reason to follow it anyway is in the same answer: the title is scanned, and the writing has to still be visible afterwards.
- **Write the price you were actually paid** — The purchase price has its own box now and it is the number the buyer's fee for new registration is calculated on. Rounding it down as a favour is the thing the department's investigators list as tax fraud, in those words.
- **Never write in the buyer's half of the block** — The prompts along the top line were added because sellers kept putting themselves there. A name in the transferee line that is not the transferee is a notarised affidavit to undo.
- **Fill in the date before you hand it over** — It is required on every transfer, it starts the buyer's thirty days and your six months, and it is the entry Form 411219 has a dedicated tick box for - which tells you how often it goes wrong.
- **Leave the odometer boxes alone on a 2010 or older** — Exempt means empty. Writing a reading into a box the rule does not ask for creates a disclosure you did not have to make and gives a counter clerk a reason to read the rest of the block harder.
- **Photograph the completed block** — Iowa's own suggestion for proof of sale is to retain a copy of the back of the title showing assignment to the buyer. That copy, or a receipt from the buyer, is what you will want if the car keeps getting tickets.

ASSIGNMENT OF TITLE				
The undersigned hereby certifies that the motor vehicle described in this title has been transferred to the following printed name and address:				
Name of Transferee/Buyer		Street	City	State Zip Code
I further certify that the odometer reading is _____ and that to the best of my knowledge the odometer mileage is:		TRANSFER/SALE DATE SALE ☐ OR GIFT ☐ PURCHASE PRICE \$ _____		
☐ actual mileage ☐ not actual mileage - WARNING ODOMETER DISCREPANCY ☐ exceeds mechanical limits of odometer				
DISCLOSURE	1. I have knowledge the motor vehicle is now or was previously titled as salvage, rebuilt or flood in this state or any other state: ☐ Yes ☐ No If Yes, and the front of this title does not indicate that the vehicle was previously titled as salvage, rebuilt or flood, you must complete a separate damage disclosure statement and give to the buyer.			
	2. If you answered "No" to question #1, complete the following: I have knowledge that, prior to or during the time I owned the motor vehicle, it sustained damage for which the cost of repair exceeded 70% of the fair market value before it became damaged. ☐ Yes ☐ No			
	"I confirm the transfer/sale information listed above to be true." Signature(s) of Transferor(s)/Seller(s) _____ Printed Name(s) _____ "I am aware of the above odometer certification made by the seller. I confirm the transfer/sale information listed above to be true." Signature(s) of Transferee(s)/Buyer(s) _____ Printed Name(s) _____			

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State

Zip Code

TRANSFER/SALE DATE _____

SALE ☐

OR GIFT ☐

PURCHASE PRICE \$ _____

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Every rule here is transcribed from Iowa DOT, Changes to the Vehicle Title Certificate and the Iowa Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicle Division's own pages. Plain-language help with a form, not legal advice — where our wording and the agency's differ, theirs governs.