How to fill out VR-181 — Bill of Sale

Maryland · written against VR-181 (05-25), issued under Maryland Transportation Article, Section 13-809

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The only document in a Maryland private sale that a notary ever touches, and it is not the title. One sheet that records the vehicle, the mileage, the buyer, the sum received and - the box everyone skips - the reason the vehicle may be purchased for a price less than fair market value. It exists to prove a price to the Administration, and it is worth nothing for that purpose unless it is sworn.

This sheet is not the form. Download the blank VR-181 from the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration at **https://mva.maryland.gov/media/163?f=VR-181.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	**Vehicle Year, Make, Model**	Three boxes across the top of the sheet, copied from the face of the certificate. **Watch out:** From the title, not from the registration card and not from memory. A model written as CX5 where the title says CX-5 is the kind of small mismatch that gets a document handed back.
2	YOU	**Body Style and Vehicle Identification Number**	The second row. The VIN box is wide because it holds seventeen characters. **Watch out:** Read it back against the title one character at a time. Eight and B, zero and D, five and S are the pairs that go wrong.
3	YOU	**Odometer reading**	A box in the middle of the certification sentence, marked no tenths. **Watch out:** This is the third place the same number has to appear - the certificate, this form, and the buyer's application. Write the certificate first and copy from it twice.
4	YOU	**The two exception boxes**	Tick 1 where the mileage is in excess of its mechanical limits, or 2 where the odometer reading is not the actual mileage. **Watch out:** Both empty is a positive statement that the reading is true, not a neutral one. On a car with a replaced cluster, ticking 2 is the honest answer and leaving it is a false certification under the perjury line at the foot.
5	YOU	**Name of buyer(s)**	The rule after the printed words I/We do hereby sell to. **Watch out:** Every buyer who is going on the title goes on this line. If a couple are buying jointly and only one name appears here, the bill of sale no longer matches the certificate.
6	YOU	**for the sum of**	The amount actually received, inside the sentence that certifies it as the mutually agreed upon purchase price. **Watch out:** The same figure as the SELLING PRICE box on the back of the title. This document exists to corroborate that box, so a disagreement between the two destroys its only purpose.
7	YOU	**The reason the vehicle may be purchased for a price less than fair market value**	Two long rules under the sum. Say plainly what is wrong with the car or what the circumstances were. **Watch out:** Write something specific. Hail damage across the roof and bonnet, or a failed transmission, or a sale to a family friend - the Administration is deciding whether to believe a number, and a blank line gives it nothing to believe.
8	YOU	**Seller's Signature and Date**	Left-hand column, first row of the signature grid, with the printed name on the line underneath. **Watch out:** Sign in front of the notary. Everything below this row is a notary certifying that you appeared, and a pre-signed form makes that certificate untrue.
9	YOU	**Co-Seller's Signature and Printed Name**	The row below yours, used where the certificate names a second owner. **Watch out:** If the second owner cannot be there, that is exactly what the form's second notary block is for - the sworn statement can be taken later without redoing the sheet.
10	BUYER	**Buyer's Signature, Date and Printed Name**	The right-hand column, mirroring the seller's side. **Watch out:** The MVA wants a bill of sale signed by all buyers and sellers. A form the buyer has not signed does not establish anything about a price two people agreed.
11	BUYER	**Subscribed and sworn to me**	The day, month and year, then the notary's signature, printed name, commission expiry date and seal. **Watch out:** Maryland banks and shipping shops both do this and often free for customers. Check that the commission expiry date is actually written - an empty expiry line is the commonest defect in an otherwise perfect notary block.

What gets this one rejected

- A signature added before the notary was watching. The words are subscribed and sworn to me, which is a statement about the moment the pen moved.
- The reason line left blank on a vehicle sold well under book value. Without it the Administration has a figure and no explanation for it, which is the situation the box exists to prevent.
- A sum written in figures that does not match the SELLING PRICE box on the reverse of the certificate.
- Only one of the two owners named on the title signing, where the face of the certificate names both.
- A notary block with a signature but no commission expiry date or seal.
- A different odometer reading from the one written on the title, which turns a document meant to settle a question into a document that raises one.

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

MDOT MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION

6601 Ritchie Highway, N.E.
Glen Burnie, Maryland 21062

VR-181 (05-25)

Bill of Sale

If this form is used to establish the purchase price of your vehicle, a notary is required.

Vehicle Year	Make	Model
1 2021	Mazda	CX-5

Body Style	Vehicle Identification Number
2 Utility	JM3KFBCM0M0357418

To the best of my knowledge, the odometer reading is the actual mileage of the vehicle unless one of the following statements is checked:

3 61208

Odometer reading (no tenths)

4 ☐ 1. The mileage is in excess of its mechanical limits. ☐ 2. The odometer reading is not the actual mileage.

`I/We do hereby sell to: *Emmett J. Callahan* 5

Name of buyer(s)

6 for the sum of $ 17,650, which has been received. This sum represents the mutually agreed upon purchase price of the vehicle, both between the buyer(s) and seller(s). The reason the vehicle may be purchased for a price less than fair market value is as follows:

Hail damage to the roof, bonnet and tailgate from the storm of 4 June 2026; 7

unrepaired, and the buyer has been shown the estimate.

Please notarize your sale. A second space is provided for notarizing an additional party to the transaction who may not be present at the initial notarization. It is not necessary to require two notaries if one will suffice for all parties.
I/we certify under penalty of perjury that the statements made are true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge, information and belief. I understand that giving a false statement(s) is a misdemeanor and subject to fines not exceeding $500, imprisonment for not more than 2 months, or both.

8 *Rosalind Purnell* 08/12/2026
Seller's Signature Date

Rosalind T. Purnell
Seller's Printed Name

9
Co-Seller's Signature Date

Co-Seller's Printed Name

Emmett Callahan 08/12/2026 10
Buyer's Signature Date

Emmett J. Callahan
Buyer's Printed Name

Co-Buyer's Signature Date

Co-Buyer's Printed Name

Subscribed and sworn to me:

This 12th day of August year 2026

11 *Delphine Skaggs*
Notary's Signature

Delphine R. Skaggs 05/22/2029
Notary's Printed Name Commission Exp Date

Place Seal Here

Subscribed and sworn to me:

This ________ day of ______________ year ________

Notary's Signature

Notary's Printed Name Commission Exp Date

Place Seal Here