

HB 1549 - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2795

06/08

HOUSE BILL **1549**

AN ACT establishing that titles, bills of sale, and identification documents are required only at initial registration or transfer of ownership.

SPONSORS: Rep. McFarlane, Graf. 18; Rep. Giasson, Hills. 29; Rep. Granger, Straf. 2

COMMITTEE: Transportation

---

ANALYSIS

This bill limits the requirement to present ownership and identification documents to the initial registration or transfer of a vehicle, allows personal recognizance by the town or city clerk as a form of identification, and affirms that prior registration is sufficient for renewal.

-----

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.  
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~  
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six*

AN ACT                    establishing that titles, bills of sale, and identification documents are required only at initial registration or transfer of ownership.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1            1 Purpose. The general court finds that:

2            I. The current text of RSA 261:148 has resulted in uncertainty as to whether proof of  
3 ownership and identification documents must be presented at each annual vehicle registration,  
4 rather than only at initial registration or transfer of ownership.

5            II. Related provisions of RSA 261, including RSA 261:10 through RSA 261:14, require proof  
6 of title only at initial registration or ownership transfer.

7            III. Paragraphs II and III of RSA 261:148 (regarding bills of sale) do not explicitly limit  
8 these requirements to initial registration or transfer, causing potential ambiguity inconsistent with  
9 the chapter's structure and purpose.

10           IV. The purpose of RSA 261:148 is to establish ownership upon first registration and to  
11 prevent fraud, not to require repeated documentation at each renewal.

12           V. It is in the public interest to align statutory language with established practice and  
13 clarify requirements for clerks, residents, and law enforcement.

14           2 Permit Required. Amend RSA 261:148 to read as follows:

15           261:148 Permit Required. No vehicle, except an OHRV, snowmobile or moped, owned or  
16 controlled by a resident of this state shall be registered under the provisions of this chapter until the  
17 owner or person controlling the same has obtained a permit for registration from the city or town  
18 wherein he resides. ***Except as provided in paragraph V, the documentation requirements of***  
19 ***paragraphs I through III shall apply only at the time of initial registration of a vehicle in***  
20 ***this state or upon transfer of ownership.*** This section shall not apply to vehicles which  
21 constitute stock in trade of a manufacturer or of a bona fide dealer. The town or city clerk shall  
22 issue such permits to vehicles exempted from registration fees under RSA 261:92 at no charge. If  
23 the town or city has adopted the provisions of RSA 231:130-a, no such permit shall be issued unless  
24 the town or city clerk's records reveal no outstanding parking violations in this state. No such  
25 permit shall be issued unless the owner or person controlling the vehicle presents to the town or city  
26 clerk:

27           I. ***At the time of initial registration or transfer of ownership, the owner or person***  
28 ***controlling the vehicle shall present either:***

29                    (a) A current, government-issued photo identification card; ***or***

30                    (b) ***Personal recognizance by the town or city clerk; and***

1 (c) ~~[and a certificate of title, if]~~ ***If*** required by the provisions of this chapter, ***a***  
2 ***certificate of title*** or application for such certificate ~~[of title; or]~~ ***shall be presented.***

3 II. ~~[In the case of a vehicle exempted from the title requirements of this chapter, a current,~~  
4 ~~government-issued photo identification card and]~~ ***For vehicles exempt from the title***  
5 ***requirements of this chapter, the documentation in paragraph I shall be presented only at***  
6 ***initial registration or transfer of ownership, along with one of the following:***

7 (a) A bill of sale from such previous owner; or

8 (b) If the previous owner was a dealer in vehicles, a temporary registration certificate or  
9 an application for a certificate of title.

10 III. The bill of sale required by the provisions of paragraph II shall contain the following  
11 information:

12 (a) The date of the sale;

13 (b) A description of the vehicle including:

14 (1) Make;

15 (2) Model;

16 (3) Vehicle identification number;

17 (4) Model year;

18 (5) Year of manufacture;

19 (6) Type of body; and

20 (7) Number of cylinders.

21 (c) Name and address of purchaser; and

22 (d) Signature and address of seller.

23 IV. ~~[In the case of any vehicle]~~ ***For annual registration renewals,*** a certificate of  
24 registration to the same owner for a current or previous registration period ***shall be sufficient to***  
25 ***establish ownership.*** The clerk may waive the requirement for a physical copy of the certificate of  
26 registration if the clerk has access to the electronic system of record and can verify the information  
27 ~~[for the current or previous registration period].~~

28 V. ***Nothing in this section shall be construed to require presentation of a certificate***  
29 ***of title, bill of sale, or identification documents at annual registration renewal, except***  
30 ***where ownership has changed or the vehicle is being registered in the state for the first***  
31 ***time.***

32 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.