

CHAPTER 134
HB 1549 - FINAL VERSION

19Feb2026... 0625h

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

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill limits the requirement to present ownership and identification documents to the initial registration or transfer of a vehicle 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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

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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:

1 134:1 Purpose. The general court finds that:

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

5 II. Related provisions of RSA 261, including RSA 261:10 through RSA 261:14, require proof of
6 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 these
8 requirements to initial registration or transfer, causing potential ambiguity inconsistent with the chapter's
9 structure and purpose.

10 IV. The purpose of RSA 261:148 is to establish ownership upon first registration and to prevent
11 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 clarify
13 requirements for clerks, residents, and law enforcement.

14 134:2 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 controlled
16 by a resident of this state shall be registered under the provisions of this chapter until the owner or person
17 controlling the same has obtained a permit for registration from the city or town wherein he resides. ***The***
18 ***documentation requirements of paragraphs I through III shall apply only at the time of initial registration of***
19 ***a vehicle in this state or upon transfer of ownership.*** This section shall not apply to vehicles which
20 constitute stock in trade of a manufacturer or of a bona fide dealer. The town or city clerk shall issue such
21 permits to vehicles exempted from registration fees under RSA 261:92 at no charge. If the town or city
22 has adopted the provisions of RSA 231:130-a, no such permit shall be issued unless the town or city
23 clerk's records reveal no outstanding parking violations in this state. No such permit shall be issued
24 unless the owner or person controlling the vehicle presents to the town or city clerk:

25 I. A current, government-issued photo identification card and a certificate of title, if required by
26 the provisions of this chapter, or application for such certificate of title; or

27 II. In the case of a vehicle exempted from the title requirements of this chapter, a current,
28 government-issued photo identification card and:

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

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

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

- 3 (a) The date of the sale;
- 4 (b) A description of the vehicle including:
- 5 (1) Make;
- 6 (2) Model;
- 7 (3) Vehicle identification number;
- 8 (4) Model year;
- 9 (5) Year of manufacture;
- 10 (6) Type of body; and
- 11 (7) Number of cylinders.
- 12 (c) Name and address of purchaser; and
- 13 (d) Signature and address of seller.

14 IV. In the case of any vehicle, a certificate of registration to the same owner for a current or
15 previous registration period. The clerk may waive the requirement for a physical copy of the certificate of
16 registration if the clerk has access to the electronic system of record and can verify the information for the
17 current or previous registration period.

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

134:3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

Approved: June 12, 2026
Effective Date: August 11, 2026