

VEHICLE OWNERSHIP INFORMATION SHEET

It is sometimes possible to be issued a title for a vehicle you own but for which you did not receive the title at the time you purchased the vehicle. The Court may issue an Order directing the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to issue a certificate of title for your vehicle.

**Before the Court will consider such an Order you must take the following steps:
The vehicle, boat, mobile home, etc. must be in Pinellas County.**

- 1) You must make a diligent search to locate the former owner to transfer title.
- 2) You must provide a bill of sale, canceled check, letter, memorandum or some means of proving your right to ownership of the vehicle.
- 3) If the former owner has moved from the area without leaving a forwarding address you should mail a certified, return receipt requested letter demanding title to the vehicle to the former owner's last known address. File the unopened letter with the Clerk of Circuit Court.
- 4) You must get an affidavit from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, **Auto Theft Division** establishing that the vehicle has not been reported as stolen and giving the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN).
- 5) You will be required to complete an affidavit for Vehicle Title Application and an affidavit of Diligent Search and Inquiry. **Both documents must be notarized.**
- 6) **PROVIDE documentation of the value of the vehicle from a business that has expertise in this type of vehicle. The documentation must be on their business letterhead/invoice. Or, You may provide a copy of a NADA or Kelly Blue Book value sheet.**
- 7) **YOU MUST FILE YOUR COMPLETED PAPERWORK WITH THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT. A FILING FEE IS REQUIRED. IF YOU FEEL THAT YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY IT, ASK FOR AN AFFIDAVIT OF INDIGENCY, TO DETERMINE IF THE FEE CAN BE WAIVED.**
- 8) AFTER YOU FILE YOUR PAPERWORK, YOUR CASE WILL BE REVIEWED BY COURT STAFF, AND FORWARDED TO A COUNTY JUDGE FOR CONSIDERATION. IN MOST INSTANCES, YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO APPEAR IN COURT.
- 9) If the judge signs the order, you will be notified by court staff when a **True Copy** of the order is available. **This process will take approximately 2 weeks from when your completed paperwork is sent to the judge.**
- 10) For further information, **call (727) 464-4932.**
- 11) **Please be advised that you cannot use this process if there is a lien on the motor vehicle. If there was a previous lien, please file a copy of the lien satisfaction.**
- 12) The value must be \$15,000.00 or less for county court jurisdiction.

IN THE COUNTY COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case Number: _____

AFFIDAVIT
VEHICLE TITLE APPLICATION

AFFIANT

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone: _____
I would like the vehicle titled in the name(s) of _____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Year: _____ Make: _____ Model: _____ Doors: _____
Vehicle Title Number: _____
Vehicle Identification Number(VIN): _____
Purchase Price of Vehicle: _____ Dollars Value of Vehicle: _____ Dollars
Date of Purchase: ___ / ___ / ___ Do you owe any money on this vehicle? No Yes
Has this vehicle been reported to law enforcement as being stolen? No Yes

I have attached a letter from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, dated not more than 30 days from today, confirming that the vehicle has not been reported stolen.

PREVIOUS OWNER INFORMATION

I purchased the vehicle from: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Prior to the purchase, did you inquire about the title? No Yes
I did not receive the title at the time of purchase because: _____

I cannot receive the title at this time because: _____

I have conducted a diligent search in accordance with the attached Affidavit of Diligent Search.

Dated: _____

Signature of Affiant

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on

_____ by _____

NOTARY PUBLIC - STATE OF FLORIDA

(Print or stamp commissioned name of notary)

___ Personally Known

___ Produced Identification

Type of identification produced _____

POINTERS FOR COMPLETING A DILIGENT SEARCH

CAUTIONS: These printed suggestions are not intended as complete instructions nor are they intended to substitute for legal advice. They have been prepared only to help avoid some common problems that prevent consideration of your application for vehicle title. It is important that you realize that these pointers will not tell you everything that you must do to ensure your request is granted. **THESE POINTERS ONLY HELP PREVENT A FEW COMMON PROBLEMS.**

The following is a list of actions the Court may find are reasonable for the Affiant to take before filing a sworn statement that a "diligent search and inquiry" has been made.

1. Ask the U. S. Postmaster in cities of Prior Owner's previously known residences for forwarding addresses under the Freedom of Information Act.
2. Search phone directories of the cities and towns of Prior Owner's possible residence.
3. Search public records of the tax collector and assessor.
4. Search records of the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
5. Inquire of persons in the neighborhoods where the Prior Owner formerly lived.
6. Ask at utility companies, including water, sewer, cable, TV, and electric, in areas of likely residence.
7. Contact the last known employer of Prior Owner.
8. Inquire of unions from which the Prior Owner may have worked or which may govern his/her particular trade or craft.
9. Inquire of regulatory agencies, including licensing agencies.
10. Gather names and addresses of Prior Owner's relatives and contacts with those relatives and ask them all for any information that may lead to finding the Prior Owner. Affiant (person swearing to an affidavit) should follow up any leads given, included searching for the Prior Owner in towns or cities to which he is known to have moved. Relatives include, but are not limited to, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, grandparents, great-grandparents, former in-laws, stepparents, and stepchildren.
11. Inquire as to whether or not the Prior Owner may have passed away and, if so, the date and location.
12. Inquire of law enforcement agencies at the last known residential area of Prior Owner including Highway Patrol, State Police, and Department of Corrections.
13. Inquire at hospitals in the area in which the Prior Owner was known to live.
14. Use services of private investigation agencies or similar "skip tracing" services.
15. Search the internet using various sites that search for names or people. If you do not have access to the internet, or are unfamiliar with its use, go to the public library and ask the librarian to help you.

This list is not necessarily complete, because the circumstances of each case may suggest that other actions are also reasonably necessary. The Affiant should follow through on all leads that he or she discovers in making the search and should list in the affidavit all actions taken to try to locate the Prior Owner.

THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE NOT INTENDED TO SUBSTITUTE FOR LEGAL ADVICE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LAW AND SEEK LEGAL ADVICE, YOU MUST CONSULT A LAWYER.

**IN THE COUNTY COURT, SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

IN RE: THE MATTER OF

Case No. _____

_____ /

AFFIDAVIT OF DILIGENT SEARCH AND INQUIRY

I, (full legal name) _____, being sworn, certify that the following information is true:

1. I have made a diligent search and inquiry to discover the name and current residence of _____.

(Specify details of search) Refer to checklist below and identify all actions taken (any additional information included such as the date the action was taken and the person with whom you spoke is helpful) (attach additional sheet if necessary):

(Check **all** actions taken)

___ United States Post Office inquiry through Freedom of Information act for current address or any relocations.

___ Last known employment of Prior Owner, including name and address of employer.

___ Regulatory agencies, including professional or occupational licensing.

___ Names and addresses of relatives and contacts with those relatives, and inquiry as to Prior Owner's last known address. You are to follow any leads of any addresses where Prior Owner may have moved. Relatives include, but are not limited to parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, grandparents, great-grandparents, former in-laws, stepparents, stepchildren.

___ Information about the Prior Owner's possible death, and if dead, the date and location of the death.

___ Telephone listings in the last known locations of Prior Owner's residence.

___ Internet at <http://www.switchboard.com> or other Internet people finder or the library check for me.

___ Law enforcement arrest and/or criminal records in the last known residential area of Prior Owner.

___ Highway Patrol records in the state of Prior Owner's last known address.

___ Department of Motor Vehicle records in the state of Prior Owner's last known address.

___ Department of Corrections records in the state of Prior Owner's last known address.

___ Hospitals in the last known area of Prior Owner's residence.

___ Utility companies, which include water, sewer, cable TV, and electric in the last known area of Prior Owner's residence.
___ Tax Assessor's and Tax Collector's Office in the area where Prior Owner last resided.
___ Other: (explain) _____

2. The age of Prior Owner is (check **one** only) () known (enter age) _____ or () unknown.

3. Prior Owner's current residence (check **one** only)

___ a. Prior Owner's current residence is unknown to me.

___ b. Prior Owner's current residence is in some state or country other than Florida, and Prior Owner's last known address is: _____

I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this affidavit and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.

Dated: _____

Signature of Affiant

(Print Name of Affiant)

(Address of Affiant)

(City, State, Zip)

Telephone Number _____

Fax Number _____

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF _____

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on
_____ by _____

NOTARY PUBLIC

(Print or stamp commissioned name of notary)

___ Personally known
___ Produced identification
___ Type of identification produced _____