



Ohio Revised Code

Section 1548.06 Application for certificate of title.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

(A)(1) Application for a certificate of title for a watercraft or outboard motor shall be made upon a form prescribed by the chief of the division of parks and watercraft and shall be sworn to before a notary public or other officer empowered to administer oaths. The application shall be filed with the clerk of any court of common pleas. An application for a certificate of title may be filed electronically by any electronic means approved by the chief in any county with the clerk of the court of common pleas of that county. The application shall be accompanied by the fee prescribed in section 1548.10 of the Revised Code. The fee shall be retained by the clerk who issues the certificate of title and shall be distributed in accordance with that section. If a clerk of a court of common pleas, other than the clerk of the court of common pleas of an applicant's county of residence, issues a certificate of title to the applicant, the clerk shall transmit data related to the transaction to the automated title processing system.

(2) If a certificate of title previously has been issued for the watercraft or outboard motor, the application for a certificate of title also shall be accompanied by the certificate of title duly assigned unless otherwise provided in this chapter. If a certificate of title previously has not been issued for the watercraft or outboard motor in this state, the application, unless otherwise provided in this chapter, shall be accompanied by a manufacturer's or importer's certificate; by a sworn statement of ownership if the watercraft or outboard motor was purchased by the applicant on or before October 9, 1963, or if the watercraft is less than fourteen feet long with a permanently affixed mechanical means of propulsion and was purchased by the applicant on or before January 1, 2000; or by a certificate of title, bill of sale, or other evidence of ownership required by the law of another state from which the watercraft or outboard motor was brought into this state. Evidence of ownership of a watercraft or outboard motor for which an Ohio certificate of title previously has not been issued and which watercraft or outboard motor does not have permanently affixed to it a manufacturer's serial number shall be accompanied by the certificate of assignment of a hull identification number assigned by the chief as provided in section 1548.07 of the Revised Code.

(3) The clerk shall retain the evidence of title presented by the applicant and on which the certificate



of title is issued, except that, if an application for a certificate of title is filed electronically, by a vendor on behalf of a purchaser of a watercraft or outboard motor, the clerk shall retain the completed electronic record to which the vendor converted the certificate of title application and other required documents. The chief, after consultation with the attorney general, shall adopt rules that govern the location at which, and the manner in which, are stored the actual application and all other documents relating to the sale of a watercraft or outboard motor when a vendor files the application for a certificate of title electronically on behalf of a purchaser.

(B) The clerk shall use reasonable diligence in ascertaining whether the facts in the application are true by checking the application and documents accompanying it or the electronic record to which a vendor converted the application and accompanying documents with the records of watercraft and outboard motors in the clerk's office. If the clerk is satisfied that the applicant is the owner of the watercraft or outboard motor and that the application is in the proper form, the clerk shall issue a physical certificate of title over the clerk's signature and sealed with the clerk's seal unless the applicant specifically requests the clerk not to issue a physical certificate of title and instead to issue an electronic certificate of title. However, if the evidence indicates and an investigation shows that one or more Ohio titles already exist for the watercraft or outboard motor, the chief may cause the redundant title or titles to be canceled.

(C) In the case of the sale of a watercraft or outboard motor by a vendor to a general purchaser or user, the certificate of title shall be obtained in the name of the purchaser by the vendor upon application signed by the purchaser. In all other cases, the certificate shall be obtained by the purchaser. In all cases of transfer of watercraft or outboard motors, the application for certificate of title shall be filed within thirty days after the later of the date of purchase or assignment of ownership of the watercraft or outboard motor. If the application for certificate of title is not filed within thirty days after the later of the date of purchase or assignment of ownership of the watercraft or outboard motor, the clerk shall charge a late penalty fee of five dollars in addition to the fee prescribed by section 1548.10 of the Revised Code. The clerk shall retain the entire amount of each late penalty fee.

(D) The clerk shall refuse to accept an application for certificate of title unless the applicant either tenders with the application payment of all taxes levied by or pursuant to Chapter 5739. or 5741. of the Revised Code based on the applicant's county of residence less, in the case of a sale by a vendor,



any discount to which the vendor is entitled under section 5739.12 of the Revised Code, or submits any of the following:

- (1) A receipt issued by the tax commissioner or a clerk of courts showing payment of the tax;
- (2) A copy of the unit certificate of exemption completed by the purchaser at the time of sale as provided in section 5739.03 of the Revised Code;
- (3) An exemption certificate, in a form prescribed by the tax commissioner, that specifies why the purchase is not subject to the tax imposed by Chapter 5739. or 5741. of the Revised Code.

Payment of the tax shall be in accordance with rules issued by the tax commissioner, and the clerk shall issue a receipt in the form prescribed by the tax commissioner to any applicant who tenders payment of the tax with the application for the certificate of title.

(E)(1) For receiving and disbursing the taxes paid to the clerk by a resident of the clerk's county, the clerk may retain a poundage fee of one and one one-hundredth per cent of the taxes collected, which shall be paid into the certificate of title administration fund created by section 325.33 of the Revised Code. The clerk shall not retain a poundage fee from payments of taxes by persons who do not reside in the clerk's county.

(2) A clerk, however, may retain from the taxes paid to the clerk an amount equal to the poundage fees associated with certificates of title issued by other clerks of courts of common pleas to applicants who reside in the first clerk's county. The chief of the division of parks and watercraft, in consultation with the tax commissioner and the clerks of the courts of common pleas, shall develop a report from the automated title processing system that informs each clerk of the amount of the poundage fees that the clerk is permitted to retain from those taxes because of certificates of title issued by the clerks of other counties to applicants who reside in the first clerk's county.

(F) In the case of casual sales of watercraft or outboard motors that are subject to the tax imposed by Chapter 5739. or 5741. of the Revised Code, the purchase price for the purpose of determining the tax shall be the purchase price on an affidavit executed and filed with the clerk by the vendor on a form to be prescribed by the chief, which shall be prima-facie evidence of the price for the



determination of the tax. In addition to the information required by section 1548.08 of the Revised Code, each certificate of title shall contain in bold lettering the following notification and statements: "WARNING TO TRANSFEROR AND TRANSFEREE (SELLER AND BUYER). You are required by law to state the true selling price. A false statement is a violation of section 2921.13 of the Revised Code and is punishable by six months imprisonment or a fine of up to one thousand dollars, or both. All transfers are audited by the department of taxation. The seller and buyer must provide any information requested by the department of taxation. The buyer may be assessed any additional tax found to be due."

(G) Each county clerk of courts shall forward to the registrar of motor vehicles, in a manner prescribed by the tax commissioner, all sales and use tax collections resulting from sales of titled watercraft and outboard motors during a calendar week on or before the Friday following the close of that week. If, on any Friday, the offices of the clerk of courts or the state are not open for business, the tax shall be forwarded to the registrar on or before the next day on which the offices are open. Every remittance of tax under this division shall be accompanied by a remittance report in such form as the commissioner, in consultation with the director of public safety, prescribes. If the tax due for any week is not remitted by a clerk of courts as required under this division, the clerk shall forfeit the poundage fees for the sales made during that week. The commissioner may require the clerks of courts to transmit tax collections and remittance reports electronically.

(H) For purposes of a transfer of a certificate of title, if the clerk is satisfied that a secured party has discharged a lien but has not canceled the lien notation with a clerk, the clerk may cancel the lien notation on the automated title processing system and notify the clerk of the county of origin.

(I) Every clerk shall have the capability to transact by electronic means all procedures and transactions relating to the issuance of watercraft or outboard motor certificates of title that are described in the Revised Code as being accomplished by electronic means.