

Sec. 9. 23 V.S.A. § 2091 is amended to read:

§ 2091. SALVAGE CERTIFICATES OF TITLE; FORWARDING OF PLATES AND TITLES OF CRUSHED VEHICLES

(a) Except for vehicles for which no certificate of title is required pursuant to section 2012 of this title and for vehicles that are more than 15 years old, any person who purchases or in any manner acquires a vehicle as salvage; any person who scraps, dismantles, or destroys a motor vehicle; or any insurance company or representative thereof who declares a motor vehicle to be a total loss, shall apply to the Commissioner for a salvage certificate of title within 15 days of the time the vehicle is purchased or otherwise acquired as salvage; is scrapped, dismantled, or destroyed; or is declared a total loss. However, an insurance company or representative thereof proceeding under subsection (c) of this section may apply outside this 15-day window to the extent necessary to comply with the requirements of that subsection.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the application shall be accompanied by:

(1) any certificate of title **for the vehicle**; and

(2) any other information or documents that the Commissioner may reasonably require to establish ownership of the vehicle and the existence or nonexistence of any security interest in the vehicle.

(c)(1) An insurer required to obtain a salvage certificate of title under this section for a vehicle declared a total loss, or a representative of the insurer, may obtain the title without satisfying the requirements of subsection (b) of this section if the application for the salvage certificate of title is accompanied by:

(A) the required fee;

(B) evidence that the insurer has made payment for the total loss of the vehicle, and evidence that the payment was made to any lienholder identified in the records of certificates of title of the Department and to the vehicle owner, if applicable; and

(C) a copy of the insurer's written request for the certificate of title sent at least 30 days prior to the application to the vehicle owner and to any lienholder identified in the records of certificates of title of the Department, proof that the request was sent by certified mail or was delivered by a courier service that provides proof of delivery, and copies of any responses from the vehicle owner or lienholder.

(D) (2)(A) Supporting documents used to transfer ownership of a vehicle to an insurer following payment of damages:

(i) shall not require a notarized signature;

(ii) may be signed electronically; and

(iii) may be printed on hard copy.

(B) As used in this subdivision (c)(1):

(i) "Signed electronically" means that a person, with the intent to sign the record, uses an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person. For purposes of this subdivision (c)(1), an electronic signature on a supporting document shall utilize a secure authentication system that identifies the signatory with a degree of certainty equivalent to or greater than level 2 as described in the National Institute of Standards and Technology's June 2017 Digital Identity Guidelines, NIST Special Publication 800-63-3, Revision 3.

(ii) "Supporting documents" include bills of sale, title documents, odometer disclosure forms, and powers of attorney.

(E) An insurer shall indemnify and hold harmless the Department for any claims arising from the issuance of a certificate of title pursuant to this section **subdivision (c)(1)**.

(2) If the Commissioner issues a salvage certificate of title to an eligible person under this subsection, the title shall be issued free and clear of all liens.

(d) Except for vehicles for which no certificate of title is required under this chapter, when a vehicle is destroyed by crushing for scrap, the person causing the destruction shall immediately mail or deliver to the Commissioner the certificate of title endorsed "crushed" and signed by the person, accompanied by the original plate showing the original vehicle identification number. The plate shall not be removed until such time as the vehicle is crushed.

(e) This section shall not apply to, and salvage certificates of title shall not be required for, unrecovered stolen vehicles or vehicles stolen and recovered in an undamaged condition, provided that the original vehicle identification number plate has not been removed, altered, or destroyed and the number thereon is identical with that on the original title certificate.