Processing Non-Resident Title/Registration Transactions

Vehicle Information Partners

Audience: County and MVD vehicle services staff

Overview: This guide explains the steps and answers frequently asked questions about processing non-resident title and registration transactions.

Nonresident Title or Registration Processing

When a nonresident wishes to title a vehicle or register a trailer in Iowa, they may need to be added to the ARTS system if they do not have an Iowa Driver's License or Iowa ID. To be eligible, the customer must own property in Iowa. Renting property for nonresidents does not qualify them for titling/registering a vehicle or trailer in Iowa. If they are a nonresident renter, they must obtain an Iowa driver's license or Iowa ID.

What Do I Look For?

Take a copy of the out-of-state driver's license, get the social security number, and enter the customer's full legal name, birth date, social security number and address.

a) Bona fide residence is the homestead address out of state.
b) Mailing address is the customers' primary address where they receive mail.

Acceptable proof of Iowa property ownership that must be scanned with transfer paperwork:

a) Copy of property deed with file-stamped dated from the issuing recorder's office.
b) Copy of mortgage agreement for the Iowa property with signatures of all parties to the agreement
c) Copy of an installment purchase agreement for the Iowa property with signatures of all parties to the agreement.
d) Verification of the Iowa property ownership conducted by the county treasurer's office. (This is what we most often use)
e) Iowa Land Records (Iowa Treasurer, Beacon, GIS) showing ownership are also valid forms of verification.

How Do I Review Documents?

Process the transaction as normal, the same title/registration requirements apply to nonresidents. You will enter the nonresident as Owner #1, and other owners as applicable up to 3 owners on the application for title and registration. Only 1 of the non-resident owners is required to own property in Iowa, but the additional owners are also required to provide a copy of their out of state drivers license and social security number to be added to arts. The vehicle/trailer will renew future registrations in county of property ownership.

Do I Need to Make Notes on the VIN?

The Iowa DOT does not recommend putting notes on the VIN. We will look into creating a checkbox in the new CORE system to indicate if customer is a nonresident with real property ownership. Rather than making a note on a VIN, it would be more appropriate to make the exception case management on the customer record when a transaction is denied. This will help to communicate with other counties.

Any Special Instructions to Tell the Customer?

If a nonresident wishes to title/register a vehicle in Iowa, it is their responsibility to provide the required documentation to do so including their proof of property ownership. The alternative would be for them to continue titling/registering in their primary state of residence.

Required Documents for Non-Residents

Under new law, Iowa Code 321.20(1)(f)(2) states that the customer must provide one of the following:

a) Out-of-state (OOS) driver's license
b) Out-of-state Non-operator ID

The customer is not required to provide the social security card for the transaction. They may provide the SSN on the title application without needing a copy of the physical card.
Driver's license and social security card images submitted through ERT are not considered copies. The dealer has made a copy of the originals and submitted them through a secure portal. This practice is acceptable.

When adding a non-resident customer into ARTS, collect and enter their social security number because they don't have an Iowa driver's license or Iowa ID to identify them in the system.
Make a copy of their out-of-state driver's license (OOS DL) so you can type their name correctly and enter their date of birth accurately. Use the social security number to create the ARTS record and not the out of state DL/ID number.

Address Requirements

a) Bona fide address is the owner's primary physical address.
b) Customers may choose to use a different mailing address for notices or may use the same address.
c) If the property has no physical address, use the customer's primary OOS address plus their chosen mailing address.

Social Security Verification Restrictions

a) The SSN affidavit cannot be used.
b) Offices must not run SSOLV for vehicle transactions, as it is strictly a DL function.

Verification of Ownership

a) Iowa Land Records (Iowa Treasurer, Beacon, GIS) showing ownership are also valid forms of verification.
b) Copy of a property deed with file-stamped date from the issuing recorder's office.
c) Copy of a mortgage agreement for the Iowa property with signatures of all parties to the agreement.
d) Copy of an installment purchase agreement for the Iowa property with signatures of all parties to the agreement.
e) Verification of Iowa property ownership conducted by the county treasurer's office, including review of online property ownership records or other confirmation obtained from a county recorder's office.

Document Validity

Expired DLs or IDs cannot be used to create a customer record or issue an Iowa title.