



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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FACT SHEET

National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS)

Established by Federal law in 1992, NMVTIS is a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) system that is operated on behalf of DOJ by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA). NMVTIS is an electronic system that enables users to access and verify key automobile titling information, as well as brand history. Users include State titling agencies, law enforcement officials, consumers, auto recyclers, salvage and junk yards, and insurance carriers.

How it Works

State titling agencies prevent fraudulent title activity by verifying vehicle and title information, brand information ever applied to a vehicle by any State, and whether a vehicle has been reported stolen – all prior to issuing a new title. The VIN is checked against a national pointer file which provides the last jurisdiction that issued the vehicle's title and requests details about the vehicle from that jurisdiction. This data verification reduces the issuance of fraudulent titles and odometer fraud. Once the inquiring jurisdiction receives the information, it can decide whether to issue a title; if a new title is issued, NMVTIS can electronically notify the last titling jurisdiction that another jurisdiction has issued a new title. The former jurisdiction can then inactivate its title record. This process allows jurisdictions to purge inactive titles electronically.

State Participation

Currently, 36 States are involved in NMVTIS (Nearly 75 % of the U.S. vehicle population is represented). To view a map of the various levels of state participation, please see www.nmvtis.gov

Data Available

NMVTIS includes specific data on each titled automobile in the system:

- current and previous state of title data
- title issue date
- latest odometer data
- theft history data (if any)
- any brand given to a vehicle and date applied
- salvage history, including designations as a "total loss" (if any)

Fraud Affects the Economy and Consumer Safety

Vehicles that have incurred sufficient damage to them are considered "junk" or "salvage," and in many cases insurance carriers determine these vehicles to be a "total loss." When these vehicles are presented for sale to consumers without disclosure of their true condition, unsuspecting consumers may be defrauded, paying more than the vehicle is worth and receiving a vehicle that may be unsafe to drive. Certain State titling agencies also brand titles on vehicles that are determined to be junk or salvage. However, some of these

brands are lost or fraudulently removed when the vehicle is re-titled in another State, which may not be aware of or advised of the earlier brand – this is called title washing.

Car Theft is a Profitable Business - \$8 Billion per Year

Car thieves take stolen vehicles across state lines and seek valid titles by presenting fraudulent ownership documentation to the titling agency of another State. Or, the car thief might replace the VIN plate on the stolen vehicle with one from a junked car, and then seek a valid title for the stolen vehicle. These activities are possible because most States do not have an instant, reliable way of verifying the information on the ownership documentation presented prior to issuing a new title. The information available through NMVTIS' will enable States to thwart this kind of criminal activity.

NMVTIS Reduces Titling of Stolen Vehicles and Reduces Fraud

NMVTIS allows State titling agencies to verify ownership documents before they issue new titles. NMVTIS also allows them to check to see if the vehicle has been reported stolen – if so, the States know not to issue the new title. Brands will not be lost when the branded vehicle travels from State to State because NMVTIS keeps a history of all brands ever applied to the vehicle by a participating State.

A pilot study of NMVTIS showed that it could reduce the incidence of insurance payoffs on stolen vehicles by more than \$200 million per year. The pilot also revealed that NMVTIS could prevent title washing of approximately 60,000 brands per year.

NMVTIS Benefits Everyone

NMVTIS is a powerful tool that will:

- allow State titling agencies to instantly and reliably verify a vehicle's title before issuing a new title and facilitate the electronic exchange of information between States to improve titling efficiency and reduce fraud;
- assist law enforcement with its investigations of crimes involving vehicles, including vehicle theft rings, violent crimes, drug crimes, financial crimes, and smuggling; and
- provide consumers with access to information on the vehicle's current title, including brands and odometer data, and about whether the vehicle has been determined to be a junk or salvage vehicle (including those determined to be a total loss), so that the consumer may make a better-informed decision about purchasing the vehicle.

NMVTIS Enabling Legislation

The Anti Car Theft Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-519) and the Anti-Car Theft Improvements Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-152).

NMVTIS Funding

States should consider resources available through the Office of Justice Programs' Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). Specifically:

- Funding through the Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) Program that may be used. For JAG State administering agency contacts, visit <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/saa/>.
- Onsite and remote technical assistance can be used by States to develop and improve connectivity with NMVTIS, and to improve technical business processes related to information sharing with NMVTIS. BJA provides technical assistance through industry experts knowledgeable in information sharing processes and issues. For more information, visit <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/tta/index.html>.

Contact Information

For more information on NMVTIS, please visit www.NMVTIS.gov.