

§754. Examination and impoundment of vehicle

1. Examination of identification numbers. A State Police officer or a motor vehicle detective may examine the vehicle identification numbers of a vehicle or vehicle part. Failure to allow the examination is a Class E crime.

[PL 2017, c. 229, §16 (AMD).]

2. Impoundment. When a State Police officer or an investigator has reasonable grounds to believe that a vehicle identification number is fictitious, removed or altered, or that a violation of law involving a vehicle or vehicle part has taken place, the police officer or investigator may impound the vehicle or vehicle part and hold the vehicle or part until the violation is cleared.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

3. Vehicle identification numbers. A manufacturer or assembler of a vehicle shall provide that vehicle with a vehicle identification number and on request shall supply the Secretary of State and the Chief of the State Police with all available information concerning the location of vehicle identification numbers and other identifying numbers on that vehicle.

The Secretary of State may refuse to register or issue a certificate of title for a vehicle made by a manufacturer or assembler who fails to comply with this section.

The vehicle identification number for a motor vehicle must conform with the requirements of the Federal Government.

[PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. B, §5 (AFF).]

4. Vehicle or vehicle part disposal. Impounded vehicles and vehicle parts that are unclaimed, recovered after theft or unidentifiable become the property of the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State shall dispose of those vehicles and vehicle parts in the following manner.

A. Within 10 days after impoundment, the Secretary of State shall notify by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, the last known owner and all lienholders of record. The notice must describe the year, make, model and vehicle identification number, if known. The notice must state that failure of the owner or lienholder to exercise the owner's or the lienholder's right to reclaim the vehicle or vehicle part within 30 days from receipt of notice means the vehicle or vehicle part is abandoned and becomes the property of the Secretary of State. An owner or lienholder claiming ownership under this paragraph must take possession of the vehicle or vehicle part within 30 days from receipt of notice to reclaim the vehicle or vehicle part. [PL 2025, c. 119, §5 (AMD).]

B. [PL 2025, c. 119, §5 (RP).]

C. The Secretary of State may dispose of the vehicle or vehicle part in a manner considered appropriate by the Secretary of State, including, but not limited to, selling the vehicle or vehicle part. Any proceeds from a sale of a vehicle or vehicle part under this paragraph must be deposited in the Motor Vehicle Services Fund established under section 159. [PL 2025, c. 119, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2025, c. 119, §5 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 683, §A2 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 683, §B5 (AFF). PL 1997, c. 508, §A3 (AFF). PL 1997, c. 508, §B7 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 229, §16 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 498, §18 (AMD). PL 2025, c. 119, §5 (AMD).

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