

RCW 46.12.680 Ownership in doubt—Procedure. (1) The department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director may register a vehicle and withhold issuance of a certificate of title or require a bond as a condition of issuing a certificate of title if the department is not satisfied:

- (a) As to the ownership of the vehicle; or
- (b) That there are no undisclosed security interests in the vehicle.

(2) A person who is unable to provide satisfactory evidence of ownership may:

- (a) Apply for ownership in doubt and receive either a:
 - (i) Registration without a certificate of title for a three-year period; or
 - (ii) A bonded certificate of title with or without registration as described in subsection (3) of this section; or
- (b) Petition any district court or superior court of any county in this state to receive a judgment awarding ownership of the vehicle.

(3) A person who is either required by the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director to file a bond or wants a certificate of title for a vehicle when ownership is in doubt shall file the bond for a three-year period. The bond must:

- (a) Be in the form approved by the department;
- (b) Be in an amount equal to one and one-half times the value of the vehicle as determined by the department;
- (c) Be signed by the applicant and the bonding agent; and
- (d) Offer protection to any previous owner, secured party, future purchaser, or their successors against any expense, loss, or damage, including reasonable attorneys' fees.

(4) A person who has or has held an interest in the vehicle may, during the three-year ownership in doubt period, petition any district court or superior court of any county in this state to receive a judgment either awarding ownership of the vehicle or be compensated for any expense, loss, or damage, including reasonable attorneys' fees. The total claim must not be more than the amount of the bond if a bond has been filed with the department.

(5) A person who has applied for ownership in doubt may apply for a certificate of title at any time during the three-year ownership in doubt period when satisfactory evidence of ownership becomes available. At the end of the three-year ownership in doubt period, the owner must apply to the department, county auditor or other agent, or subagent appointed by the director for a certificate of title. The new certificate of title will not include reference to the bond if a bond was filed with the department.

(6) A person applying for ownership in doubt must have acquired the vehicle by purchase, exchange, gift, lease, or inheritance from the owner of record or interim owner.

(7) Ownership in doubt does not apply to:

- (a) Unauthorized vehicles, as defined in RCW 46.55.010;
- (b) Abandoned vehicles, as defined in RCW 46.55.010;
- (c) Snowmobiles, as defined in RCW 46.04.546; or
- (d) Washington vehicle dealer sales, as defined in RCW 46.70.011.

[2010 c 161 s 314; 1990 c 250 s 30; 1967 c 140 s 9. Formerly RCW 46.12.151.]

Effective date—Intent—Legislation to reconcile chapter 161, Laws of 2010 and other amendments made during the 2010 legislative session—2010 c 161: See notes following RCW 46.04.013.

Effective date—1967 c 140: See note following RCW 46.12.520.