



American Association of
Motor Vehicle Administrators

NMVTIS BEST PRACTICES FOR TITLE AND REGISTRATION PROGRAM MANAGERS

EDITION 3



VEHICLE STANDING COMMITTEE
NMVTIS BUSINESS RULES WORKING GROUP

This best practices document was developed to provide DMV title and registration program managers with a resource to assist them in ensuring NMVTIS is the best tool available for preventing title fraud, ensuring vehicle brands are carried forward, and ensuring a comprehensive vehicle history is established, which ultimately will improve customer protection and public safety.

Introduction

As the number of jurisdictions using NMVTIS in their day-to-day titling activities grows, questions are raised continuously about the business procedures and practices used by jurisdictions to report and interpret vehicle title, history, and brand information consistently. This document addresses a number of issues identified as critical to ensuring jurisdictions are developing business policies and practices in a consistent manner and working effectively with each other and NMVTIS. Refer to the full document for detailed procedural best practices and examples illustrating the importance of each.

These best practices will continue to evolve, so please make sure you are reviewing a document no older than a year. All current versions are available at AAMVA.org.

The Working Group encourages jurisdictions to use the new tools added to this best practice document as they can be helpful in planning and tracking their implementation of each best practice.

Duplicate Titles

At times, two jurisdictions unknowingly issue titles for the same vehicle, creating the potential for fraudulent activities.

Best Practice: Every jurisdiction should perform a NMVTIS inquiry before issuing any duplicate titles to verify that it is the current state of record.

Fraudulent or Recalled Title Transactions

Fraudulent or recalled titles occur when false ownership is represented by a title, requiring steps to identify the activity in the jurisdiction's internal system and in NMVTIS.

Best Practice: NMVTIS does not have a way to track fraudulent titles, so jurisdictions must keep a thorough history of fraudulent and recalled title transactions and remove them from NMVTIS.

NMVTIS Best Practices for Title and Registration Program Managers, Edition 3 offers self-evaluations throughout to assist jurisdictions with assessing their current status and opportunities for improvement regarding certain best practices.

Accurate reporting and title issuance reduces customer service issues, complaints, and fraud.

Issue Title or Delay Issuance of Title Based on NMVTIS Reports

Jurisdictions should consider all the information available in NMVTIS when making decisions to issue a title.

Best Practice: Before issuing a title, jurisdictions should review the VIN, jurisdiction of title, title number, and title issue date on the paper ownership document and in NMVTIS. Additionally, brand history must be reviewed in NMVTIS, applicable jurisdiction brands should be carried forward and the NMVTIS theft file must not be flagged.

Surrendered Titles for Vehicles Exempt from NMVTIS

Exempt vehicles are not consistently reported during Change State of Title (CSOT) transactions and most jurisdictions have stopped sending the paper surrender reports.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions must be notified when any vehicle moves jurisdictions, at minimum via monthly reports to all jurisdictions that are not online or batch; online and batch jurisdictions should only report exempt vehicles.

Title Issue Date

Accurate issue dates are necessary to maintain the chronological order of issued titles in NMVTIS.

Best Practice: Systems should be designed to ensure the date of issuance sent to NMVTIS is the date the title is generated.

Unclaimed Titles

There are a variety of ways jurisdictions handle unclaimed titles from the United States Postal Service.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should change the title issue date, title number, or both when issuing a duplicate title.

When jurisdictions implement best practices, follow procedures, and confirm data when entering and updating in NMVTIS, the number of calls to the AAMVA Helpdesk is reduced.

Resolving Vehicles with the Same VIN and Cloned Vehicles

Find detailed guidelines on when and how to update Title Transaction Types in NMVTIS in NMVTIS Best Practices for Title and Registration Program Managers, Edition 3, p. 16.

It is possible for two vehicles to share the same vehicle record in NMVTIS as a result of cloning or a simple data entry error.

Best Practice: Both vehicles should be visually inspected for the hidden VIN to ensure accurate identification and adjust the records accordingly.

Title Transaction Type

It is important for jurisdictions to have a mutual understanding in terms of title transaction types, as they need to know when to send information to NMVTIS.

Best Practice: NMVTIS transactions should be reported using consistent terminology and best practices guidelines.

Dealer Reassignments

Sometimes jurisdictions inaccurately enter a reassignment document number as the title number in NMVTIS.

Best Practice: Reassignments should accompany the title when a title transfer transaction occurs, but the title number field in NMVTIS should always be the title number, not a reassignment document number.

Vehicles Previously Titled by Non-state Organizations

Some vehicles are titled by non-state organizations, such as the U.S. Department of State, General Services Administration, Native American tribes, and the military services.

Best Practice: When a jurisdiction titles a vehicle based on an ownership document from a nonstate entity, the NMVTIS process is the same as titling a vehicle from a nonparticipating state.

Detailed descriptions of best practices for handling titles issued by non-state organizations can be found in NMVTIS Best Practices for Title and Registration Program Managers, Edition 3, p. 21.

Inquiring on New Vehicles

NMVTIS does not yet include a Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin (MCO) module. A vehicle title record should not be available in NMVTIS for a transaction supported by an MCO.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should perform a NMVTIS inquiry on all VINs before issuing an ownership document, including those from transactions supported by MCOs.

Brand Modifications

Jurisdictions may need to modify a previously applied brand in NMVTIS as a result of jurisdictional mandates or errors.

Best Practice: Brand corrections must be controlled by the jurisdiction that applied them. There needs to be a clear audit trail indicating why the correction was made, and the current jurisdiction needs to be informed of any modifications.

Keeping an accurate brand history ultimately protects the consumer because brand designations can have a heavy impact on the safety and value of a vehicle.

Non-repairable Vehicles

Some jurisdictions allow vehicles branded non-repairable by another jurisdiction to be titled and registered in its state, and some do not.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should apply the junk brand when a vehicle is not repairable, and if a state brands a vehicle junk or non-repairable, it should not be allowed to be titled or registered in any another.

Brands on Non-titled Vehicles

It is important to ensure the brands are carried over from a non-titled vehicle's registration when issuing a title in a new jurisdiction that requires a title for these vehicles.

Best Practice: Any jurisdiction with non-titled vehicles should brand the VIN record as if it was titled. Any state accepting a registration as proof of ownership in its titling process should carry brands forward to paper titles. Every jurisdiction should perform a NMVTIS inquiry before issuing any title.

Laws pertaining to vehicle brands vary from state to state. Changing the definition of a brand or title type may require legislative action or a regulation change.

Recovered Stolen Vehicles

NMVTIS records must accurately identify when stolen vehicles are recovered and the investigation is complete.

Best Practice: Recovering law enforcement agencies should report the vehicle recovery to the appropriate entities, including the NCIC, the NICB and the titling and registration division of the presiding jurisdiction, which should brand the vehicle appropriately.

Branding a Vehicle with the Same Brand Twice Because of Two Similar Events

If a brand already exists in the Brand File, the same brand should be applied when the vehicle sustains a new occurrence of the same event that would result in the application of the applicable brand.

Best Practice: The LSV classification can be passed between jurisdictions during an online inquiry that includes the body style of a vehicle.

Detailed examples of situations requiring the application of best practices can be found throughout NMVTIS Best Practices for Title and Registration Program Managers, Edition 3.

Reporting Brands

There are circumstances that require jurisdictions to apply brands that did not occur in that jurisdiction.

Best Practice: All incidents that require branding inside the titling jurisdiction should be reported to NMVTIS; the brand noted on a surrendered title from a nonparticipating state should also be applied using the receiving jurisdiction as the branding jurisdiction and the title issue date as the branding date. The surrendered title is justification for adding the brand to NMVTIS.

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Decoder

When a VIN or vehicle fields are entered incorrectly, the complete vehicle history may not be reflected accurately in NMVTIS. Duplicate records may be created in error and it is time consuming to correct records.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should use VIN Decoder technology to ensure accuracy.

When a VIN or vehicle fields are not entered accurately, the complete vehicle history may not be reflected accurately in NMVTIS.

Vehicle Make Codes

Inconsistency in the use of vehicle make codes can cause errors, confusion, and the duplication of vehicle records.

Best Practice: All jurisdictions should use the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) vehicle data codes.

AAMVA's model legislation for LSVs can be found at aamva.org under the Solutions and Best Practices tab.

Low-Speed Vehicles

Low-speed vehicles (LSVs) are not identified in NMVTIS and not all jurisdictions indicate it on documentation, but some may need to know if a low-speed vehicle has moved in to its jurisdiction.

Best Practice: The LSV indicator can be passed between jurisdictions during an online inquiry.

Undercover Law Enforcement Vehicles

Jurisdictions should use care in determining if and when to send a vehicle used in undercover operations to NMVTIS since consumers now have access to NMVTIS.

Best Practice: Each jurisdiction should discuss with law enforcement agencies what and how the general public can view undercover vehicle data.

Vehicles Manufactured in Multiple Stages

Motorhomes and other types of vehicles may be manufactured in a multi-stage process, with each manufacturer providing a MCO that may indicate a different make, model year or VIN, which may result in duplicate VIN pointers.

Best Practice: The motor vehicle agency's registration and title files submitted to NMVTIS should reflect only the VIN associated with the first-stage manufacturer's MCO. Records should reflect the make and year used to describe the vehicle's final stage.

Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Corrections

Vehicles may be titled with an incorrect VIN, creating incorrect reporting in NMVTIS.

Best Practice: When a VIN error is discovered, the jurisdiction's records and NMVTIS records must be corrected. If another vehicle is correctly titled with the first vehicle's incorrect VIN, it should be verified.

A description of the process used to accurately identify and record multi-stage vehicles can be found on the AAMVA website at aamva.org, click on Government Affairs and then AAMVA Policy Positions to find the vehicle policy entitled Motor Homes and Multi-Stage Vehicles.

Online States: Identifying Duplicate VINs

Duplicate VINs often occur when a jurisdiction uses the wrong NMVTIS transaction type when issuing a title, resulting in duplication notices to both updating jurisdictions and to jurisdictions with duplicate VINs.

Best Practice: Follow the procedures outlined in the NMVTIS Procedures Manual. Jurisdictions should work together to resolve duplicates, regardless of which jurisdiction created the duplicate.

Contact with AAMVA and other states may be required to piece together the correct history of a VIN.

Batch States: Identifying Duplicate VINs

As part of the batch update process, the VIN Pointer file checks and notifies up to six associated jurisdictions that participate in online or partial online modes about duplicate VINs. Jurisdictions that participate only in batch mode do not receive notification at this time.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions must work together to resolve duplicates, regardless of which jurisdiction created the duplicate. Batch jurisdictions can contact the AAMVA Helpdesk to determine if duplicate records represent the same vehicle.

Summary Error and Warning Report (SEW Messages)

Jurisdictions should address specific error and warning messages from NMVTIS in a standard way.

Best Practice: Use the resolutions outlined in the NMVTIS State Procedures Manual to ensure consistency nationwide.

Batch System Error and Warning (SEW) Messages

The high volume of SEW messages makes it difficult to prioritize researching and resolving issues.

Best Practice: It is critical to understand the difference between warnings and errors.

Keeping Contact Information (Helpdesk) Up to Date

All jurisdictions should keep contact information up to date so that inquiries made to the NMVTIS Helpdesk can be resolved efficiently.

Best Practice: Implement a group phone number, voicemail account and group email account to establish NMVTIS Helpdesk support.

The latest NMVTIS State Procedures Manuals for jurisdictions using both batch and online modes can be found at aamva.org.

Stolen Blank Title Documents

It is important that jurisdictions share information related to stolen bank title documents to limit fraudulent activities.

When jurisdictions discover missing or stolen title stock, they should report it to AAMVA. AAMVA will disseminate the information to all jurisdictions.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions may be able to detect stolen title stock by performing a NMVTIS inquiry before issuing a title.

Jurisdiction System Data Purge

Jurisdictions that perform a system full or partial purge need to consider the impact it will have on the information they submit to NMVTIS.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should wait until after they have submitted their initial load to NMVTIS before purging records, not submit purged or partially purged records, and follow the batch purge process outlined in the NMVTIS Batch System Specification.

Communication Between Jurisdictions

When a jurisdiction receives assistance from another jurisdiction regarding a NMVTIS record, it may need to wait for the updates to be made in NMVTIS before proceeding with a customer transaction.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should provide information to other jurisdictions in writing within two business days from the initial contact. When a jurisdiction asks for information or corrections to be made in NMVTIS, it should proceed with its transaction after receiving it. Requested corrections or updates should be made as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 30 days after the resolution.

Vehicles with a Model Year Prior to 1981

Vehicles with a model year before 1981 were manufactured before the 17-character VIN standard, which can cause confusion and often results in duplicate VINs and VIN Pointer files.

It is important to consider how effectively jurisdictions communicate with each other when it comes to the customer's experience, but it is also important to create positive jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction interactions.

Best Practice: Jurisdictions should omit vehicles from their initial load with model years before 1981 that do not have an active title and registration. Following the initial load, title activity for vehicles with a model year prior to 1981 should be sent to NMVTIS if the registration becomes active.

Raising and Resolving Issues

NMVTIS relies on coordination and harmony of data and processes, so all vehicle and title data must accurately reflect the status, history and conditions of each vehicle.

Best Practice: As issues arise regarding data or procedures, jurisdictions may:

- Address them to a specific jurisdiction using the contact list maintained and updated monthly by the AAMVA. It can be accessed online at aamva.org/NMVTIS or by contacting the AAMVA's Helpdesk at helpdesk@aamva.org.
- Address issues involving more than two jurisdictions by contacting the AAMVA's Helpdesk at helpdesk@aamva.org who will disseminate the information appropriately, including to the group within AAMVA responsible for resolving the issue.
- Daily operational and technical issues are directed to the AAMVA's Helpdesk at helpdesk@aamva.org or 888-226-8280.

Procedures for reporting issues related to NMVTIS can be found at aamva.org/AAMVA-Support.

Conclusion

If all jurisdictions implement the best practices provided in this document, they will help ensure NMVTIS is the best tool available for preventing title fraud, ensuring vehicle brands are carried forward, and ensuring a comprehensive vehicle history is established. Ultimately, they will improve accuracy, efficiency, consumer protection and public safety.

About AAMVA's NMVTIS Business Rules Working Group

The NMVTIS Business Rules Working Group was established in 2012 after the AAMVA identified the need for a group focused on business processes and procedures as related to the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS), which is now being used by a majority of jurisdictions. The working group consists of representatives from jurisdictions in all four of AAMVA's regions and using various modes of participation in NMVTIS—fully integrated online, batch or a combination of the two.

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safe vehicles
secure identities
saving lives!**



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