

The Vehicle Information Report (VIR) is an important information source when buying or selling a previously owned vehicle.

When you buy a previously owned vehicle in Alberta, how do you learn its history? Where and when was it registered in Alberta? Has it been declared salvage? Was it registered for commercial use? Are there any current liens recorded in Alberta against the vehicle? The VIR has the answers to these questions.

Both buyers and sellers of previously owned vehicles find the VIR beneficial. As a buyer, the VIR can help you make an informed decision. It does not replace a mechanical inspection, but it will add to the information you need to assess the value of the vehicle. It is a good idea to get a mechanical inspection on a previously owned vehicle before you make a purchase. As a seller, the VIR will provide more information to interested buyers, showing your intent to sell a vehicle as you've advertised it.

VIR Contents

The Alberta government records major changes in a vehicle's history with the help of registrants, the insurance industry, registry agents, and inspection centres authorized by Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation.

A search of Alberta Registries' records is done using the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to gather valuable information about a vehicle's history in Alberta. The VIN is the unique serial number assigned to every new vehicle by the manufacturer. It is used to identify a specific vehicle throughout its life and generate the VIR.

The VIR provides:

- the vehicle's description,
- the vehicle's odometer reading if available,
- the vehicle's status
- registration information, and
- the number of current liens registered in Alberta, against the vehicle.

Vehicle Description — The description includes the year, make, model, style, colour and fuel type. This information should match the vehicle you are considering. For example, if the colour does not match, you may want to

check with the owner to find out why there is a difference.

Odometer Reading — Since December 2002 the public have been encouraged to **voluntarily** provide Alberta Registries with the odometer reading on their vehicle at the time of registering or renewing a vehicle registration. These odometer readings have been added to the vehicle description area of this report. You should compare the most recent odometer reading and date on this report to the current reading on the vehicle. If there is a discrepancy, you may want to have the odometer reading investigated. If it is determined that the odometer reading is not correct and you suspect your vehicle odometer was tampered with, please contact the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) at 1-877-979-81 00. If it has been determined that the odometer reading is not correct, a *Reason Code* will be added to the Alberta Motor Vehicle system. The codes that could appear are:

- M – if the odometer is broken or not working properly.
- R – if the odometer has been rolled back.
- N – if the odometer has been replaced.

If the VIR does not have an odometer reading, it may be because the previous owner declined to provide it, the last transaction was an Internet vehicle renewal, or a transaction has not taken place since December 2002.

Vehicle Status — The vehicle status shows the current designation in the Alberta Motor Vehicle system. It is an indication of the vehicle's suitability for registration and the registration history.

Note:

- Any status beginning with oop (out-of-province) means the vehicle is not registered in Alberta.
- All out-of-province vehicles must pass a safety inspection before they can be registered in Alberta.
- Prior to January 1997, it was not mandatory to report a written-off vehicle to Alberta Registries. Therefore, this report may not include all written-off occurrences.

A vehicle will have one of the following status descriptions:

active or oop-active: A vehicle with this status can be registered.

salvage or oop-salvage: A vehicle that requires repairs to the extent that it is written-off and branded as a salvage vehicle must be inspected and certified prior to registration. Vehicles with a status of salvage must pass an inspection, and can only be registered with a status of *rebuilt*.

nonrepairable or oop-nonrepairable: A vehicle that can be sold for scrap and dismantled for parts only. A vehicle with this status cannot be registered.

unsafe or oop-unsafe: A vehicle that is deemed unfit for continued road use. A vehicle with this status must be inspected and certified before it can be registered.

rebuilt or oop-rebuilt: A vehicle that was written-off and given a salvage status (that is, it has damage in excess of its value), then repaired and subsequently certified by an authorized inspector. A vehicle with a rebuilt status can be registered.

oop-unknown: The vehicle is from out-of-province. The status information is not available. Usually this vehicle has been imported from outside Canada and will also require a Transport Canada Vehicle Import Form (Form 1).

oop-stolen: The vehicle has been reported as stolen in another jurisdiction.

unsafe-r: A vehicle that was once repaired, and in a separate instance is deemed to be unfit for continued road use. A vehicle with this status must be inspected and certified before it can be registered.

Associated with each status is the date the status was entered into Alberta Registries records. This date is reported in all instances except where there is *active* or *oop-active* status.

Vehicle registration — Registration information contains the date Alberta Registries first entered the vehicle's data in its records, the vehicle's current licence plate classification and registration history. This information is useful if

you want to know about previous registrations or if the vehicle is from out-of-province (that is, the vehicle registration history in Alberta does not match the age of the vehicle).

The licence plate classification indicates the type of registration, such as passenger, commercial, farm, or rental.

The registration history is a list of municipalities where the previous registrants resided at the time of registration, and the dates of registration.

Registration data is available from December 1993 onward, to a maximum of seven registrations.

Lien information — it is worthwhile checking further on a vehicle that shows liens registered against it. This report provides the number of liens and other related instruments, which are registered in the province of Alberta and associated with the serial number. Detailed information, such as the secured party and the party to whom the money is owed, can be determined by purchasing a separate Personal Property Registry lien search. The amount owing may be determined by contacting the secured party.

Additional Sources of Information

Additional sources of information on buying a previously owned vehicle can be found by contacting the following websites:

- Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) www.amvic.org for consumer issues related to buying a previously owned vehicle.
- National Police Services (NPS) www.nps.ca/english (click on Search) for stolen vehicle information.