

**186A.115 Inspection of motor vehicles and documents by certified inspector -- Fee for certification of inspection -- Special inspectors -- Reciprocity between counties -- Modifications of military surplus vehicles -- Administrative regulations -- Exceptions -- Inspection of historic vehicles.**

- (1)
  - (a) Except as otherwise provided in this section, the owner of every vehicle brought into this state and required to be titled in this state shall, before submitting his or her application for title to the county clerk, have the vehicle together with his or her application for title and its supporting documents inspected by a certified inspector in the county in which the application for title is to be submitted to the county clerk.
  - (b) An owner of a military surplus vehicle seeking title in this state shall, before submitting his or her application for title to the county clerk, have the vehicle together with his or her application for title and its supporting documents inspected by a certified inspector in the county in which the application for title is to be submitted to the county clerk.
  - (c) An owner of a street-legal special purpose vehicle, as defined in KRS 186.077, seeking to register under KRS 186.020 shall, before submitting his or her application for title to the county clerk, have the special purpose vehicle inspected by a certified inspector. There shall be a twenty-five dollar (\$25) fee for the certification of a special purpose vehicle, payable to the sheriff's office.
- (2) For inspections under this section:
  - (a) The certified inspector shall be certified through the Department of Vehicle Regulation following requirements set forth by the department by regulation and shall be designated by the county sheriff if the inspector is a current member of his or her office or a special inspector appointed pursuant to KRS 70.030. The certified inspector will be held responsible for all certifications required pursuant to this chapter and will be liable for any and all penalties prescribed in this chapter, and shall be available during regular office hours at any and all offices and branches that issue applications for titles;
  - (b) There shall be a fee for this certification, payable to the sheriff's office, and the fee shall be retained by the sheriff's office for official expenses of the office upon completion of certification, in the amount of:
    1. Thirty dollars (\$30) for a motor vehicle dealer that qualifies to have an employee appointed as a special inspector under paragraph (d) of this subsection;
    2. Fifteen dollars (\$15) for a motor vehicle dealer that does not qualify to have an employee appointed as a special inspector under paragraph (d) of this subsection; or
    3. Fifteen dollars (\$15) for an individual person;
  - (c) There shall be an additional fee of twenty dollars (\$20) per trip when it becomes necessary for the certified inspector to travel to the site of the vehicle rather than bringing the vehicle to the sheriff's inspection area;
  - (d) A sheriff may appoint up to two (2) employees of a motor vehicle dealer that

is licensed under KRS Chapter 190 and doing business in the sheriff's county as special inspectors if the motor vehicle dealer is:

1. A new motor vehicle dealer; or
  2. A used motor vehicle dealer that has sold an average of one hundred (100) or more motor vehicles per month in the preceding twelve (12) months;
- (e) A special inspector appointed under paragraph (d) of this subsection is only authorized to perform motor vehicle inspections and complete certified inspection forms under this section for vehicles purchased by that dealership for resale and shall have his or her special inspector status revoked if he or she is no longer an active employee of that dealership; and
- (f) An inspection conducted in one (1) county within the Commonwealth of Kentucky under this subsection, and the fees paid for that inspection under this subsection, shall be honored by the certified inspector, sheriff, and county clerk in all other counties within this state. A second inspection shall not be required and additional fees shall not be required.
- (3) The Transportation Cabinet may require that modifications be made to a military surplus vehicle. Any modifications required by the cabinet under this section shall be made to the military surplus vehicle prior to its inspection.
- (4) The Transportation Cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations pursuant to KRS Chapter 13A to implement the provisions of subsections (1)(b) and (3) of this section, including but not limited to vehicle modification requirements and the creation of a separate electronic inspection form. The Transportation Cabinet shall note that military vehicles were originally manufactured under the federally mandated requirements set forth in 49 C.F.R. sec. 571.7 and shall only require these vehicles to meet applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards.
- (5) The following vehicles are excluded from the requirement of inspection by a certified inspector prior to titling in this state:
- (a) New motor vehicles sold by a dealer licensed in this state;
  - (b) Vehicles required to be registered in this state by reason of lack of a reciprocity agreement with another state and for which a nonnegotiable registration document is to be issued;
  - (c) Motor vehicles operated by a motor carrier under a nonnegotiable certificate or permit issued by the Department of Vehicle Regulation;
  - (d) Motor vehicles owned by servicemen or servicewomen who are residents of Kentucky stationed outside of Kentucky may be inspected by the post provost or similar officer of the camp, post, or station. The post provost or similar officer shall submit an affidavit stating the name of the owner, the identification or serial number, the make, body style, current license or title number, if any, and state in which currently registered or titled, if any, of the motor vehicle;
  - (e) Motor vehicles purchased in another state by persons who are residents of Kentucky but are temporarily residing out of state for at least thirty (30) days, but not longer than nine (9) months, may after the purchase of the vehicle be

inspected by the state police, a local law enforcement agency, or the vehicle inspection program of another state. If an inspector in another state examines a vehicle under this paragraph, the purchaser may request the inspector to complete an affidavit stating the name of the owner, the vehicle identification number, the vehicle make and body style, the current state of registration, if any, and the current vehicle license or title number, if any. The Transportation Cabinet shall create an affidavit form containing at a minimum this information and shall post the form on the cabinet's internet website. A person using an inspector in another state under this paragraph shall comply with all requirements of that state's inspection program, including payment of fees charged in that state. A person registering a motor vehicle for the first time in Kentucky under this paragraph shall transmit the application for registration, all supporting documentation, and payment for registration and usage tax to the county clerk of the county in which the person resides, and upon receipt of the appropriate documentation, the county clerk shall register the vehicle; and

- (f) Motor vehicles no longer located in Kentucky but which require inspection in order to issue a corrected Kentucky title due to error in vehicle identification or serial number may be inspected by an inspector authorized to inspect vehicle identification or serial number by the laws of the state or foreign country where application for a new title has been submitted.
- (6) When presented to a certified inspector for inspection and to a county clerk for processing, the owner's application for a first certificate of registration or title in his or her name shall be accompanied by a current operator's license from Kentucky or another state and one (1) of the following documents as applicable:
- (a) If the vehicle is a new vehicle not previously registered in this state, the properly assigned manufacturer's statement of origin for the vehicle for which registration or title is sought;
  - (b) If the vehicle was last registered in this state, and is a vehicle for which a title is not required in this state, a certificate of registration, or if the vehicle is one for which a certificate of title is required in this state, a properly assigned certificate of title;
  - (c) If the vehicle was last previously titled in another state, a properly assigned certificate of title;
  - (d) If the application refers to a vehicle previously registered in another country, the documents of that country establishing ownership of the vehicle;
  - (e) If the application refers to a vehicle last previously registered in another country by a person on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, the county clerk may accept on behalf of the Department of Vehicle Regulation evidence of ownership provided the applicant by the United States Department of Defense; and
  - (f) Except as provided in KRS 186A.072(2)(c) governing custom-built motorcycles, if the application relates to a vehicle which has been specially constructed or reconstructed, that fact shall be stated in the application, and the application shall be accompanied by the documents specified by administrative regulations of the Department of Vehicle Regulation.

- (7) When requested to inspect a vehicle pursuant to this section, the certified inspector shall personally and physically inspect the vehicle, when registration or title is sought in this state, on the following points:
  - (a) He or she shall compare the vehicle identification number as appearing on both the vehicle identification number plate, and the federal safety standards label of the vehicle which is sought to be registered or titled, with the corresponding number inscribed on the application, and its supporting documentation, and ensure that the vehicle identification number appearing at each described location appears legitimate and that they are consistent with each other;
  - (b) He or she shall examine the primary odometer of the vehicle and electronically record the reading in the space provided in the inspection section of the application;
  - (c) After exercising due diligence in inspecting the vehicle and its supporting documentation, and finding that they appear to be in order, the certified inspector shall execute the electronic certificate of inspection according to its terms by electronically inputting in the spaces provided his or her first name, middle initial, and last name, certified inspector number, his or her title; the name of the county in which he or she serves; and the telephone number including the telephone area code of his or her agency, and enter the month, day, and year in which his or her inspection was made, certifying under penalty of forgery in the second degree the character, accuracy, and date of his or her inspection; and
  - (d) A certified inspector number shall not be subject to an open records request under KRS 61.870 to 61.884 unless otherwise required by a court order.
- (8) The certified inspector shall refrain from executing the certificate of inspection if:
  - (a) He or she has not personally and physically inspected the vehicle in accordance with this section;
  - (b) He or she has reason to believe that the vehicle displays an unlawfully altered vehicle identification number;
  - (c) The application and any of its copies are illegible or otherwise improperly executed, or contain information reasonably believed to be inaccurate or fraudulent;
  - (d) The documentation required in support of any application is not present, or not consistent with the vehicle and the owner's application or appears fraudulent; or
  - (e) He or she has probable cause to believe the vehicle is stolen.
- (9)
  - (a) Inspections on motor vehicles that meet the definition of a "historic vehicle" under KRS 186.043(2) and are brought into this state shall be limited to verification of the vehicle identification number with supporting documentation for purposes of titling.
  - (b) Inspections on motor vehicles that meet the definition of a classic motor vehicle project as set forth in KRS 186A.510 shall be limited to verification of the vehicle identification number with supporting documentation for purposes

of issuing a classic motor vehicle project certificate of title under KRS 186A.535(1).

- (10) The electronic certificate of inspection shall not be handled by any person or persons other than those designated individuals within the offices of the sheriff, county clerk, or other state office.
- (11) The Transportation Cabinet shall promulgate administrative regulations pursuant to KRS Chapter 13A to implement the provisions of this section, including but not limited to special inspectors classified as dealer inspectors only and the creation of an electronic certified vehicle inspection form and receipt.

**Effective:** June 27, 2025

**History:** Amended 2025 Ky. Acts ch. 89, sec. 5, effective June 27, 2025; and ch. 95, sec. 2, effective June 27, 2025. -- Amended 2024 Ky. Acts ch. 103, sec. 1, effective July 15, 2024. -- Amended 2017 Ky. Acts ch. 55, sec. 2, effective June 29, 2017. -- Amended 2008 Ky. Acts ch. 157, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2008. -- Amended 2007 Ky. Acts ch. 135, sec. 2, effective June 26, 2007. -- Amended 2003 Ky. Acts ch. 97, sec. 1, effective June 24, 2003. -- Amended 2002 Ky. Acts ch. 298, sec. 3, effective July 15, 2002. -- Amended 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 35, sec. 2, effective July 15, 1996; and ch. 248, sec. 4, effective July 15, 1996. -- Amended 1994 Ky. Acts ch. 504, sec. 3, effective July 15, 1994. -- Amended 1986 Ky. Acts ch. 319, sec. 1, effective July 15, 1986. -- Created 1982 Ky. Acts ch. 164, sec. 20, effective July 15, 1982.

**Legislative Research Commission Note (6/27/2025).** This statute was amended by 2025 Ky. Acts chs. 89 and 95, which do not appear to be in conflict and have been codified together.