

Title Transfer – Vessel

To transfer the title of a vessel in California, both the buyer and seller must complete specific steps within a strict timeframe to avoid penalties and liability.

Steps for the Seller

- Sign the Title:** You must sign the "Release of Ownership" line (usually line 1) on the original **California Certificate of Ownership** (pink slip). If there is a lienholder, they must also sign to release their interest.
- Provide a Bill of Sale:** Although not strictly required if the title is present, a Bill of Sale (REG 135) is highly recommended to document the purchase price and date.
- Notify the DMV:** Within **5 days** of the sale, you must submit a [Notice of Transfer and Release of Liability \(REG 138\)](#) online or by mail to protect yourself from future liability.

Steps for the Buyer

- Complete the Title:** Once you have the signed title, write your name and address on the back.
- Complete the Application:** Fill out an Application for Vessel Certificate of Number (BOAT 101).
- Pay Fees and Taxes:** You must submit the transfer documents and pay fees within **30 days** of the purchase to avoid penalties.
 - Transfer Fee:** Typically, **\$15**.
 - Use Tax:** Based on the purchase price and your local tax rate (usually between 7.5% and 10%).

1. Submit to DMV

Visit a local DMV field office in person or mail to:

DMV
PO Box 942869
Sacramento, CA 94269

Special Circumstances

- **Lost Title:** If the seller cannot find the original title, they must complete an [Application for Replacement or Transfer Title \(REG 227\)](#).
- **Trailers:** Boat trailers are registered separately from the vessel. Ensure you get a separate title or [Permanent Trailer Identification \(PTI\)](#) paperwork for the trailer.