

**PERMANENT TRAILER IDENTIFICATION  
(PTI)  
VEHICLE INDUSTRY REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

**14**

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## *Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI)*

### 14.000 Introduction

Under the Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) program, most trailers are issued a PTI plate and a permanent identification card rather than a regular trailer plate and registration card.

- No year sticker is issued on a PTI license plate.
- They are subject to a maintenance service fee every five years rather than annual renewal and **may** be placed on non-operation.

**NOTE:** Tow dollies, converter gears, and auxiliary dollies may be included in the PTI program, but it is not required.

#### **Additional Information:**

- Partial Year Registration (PYR) is **not** available for trailers.
- Permanent Fleet Registration (PFR) is **not** available for trailers.
- Trailers **cannot** be registered under the International Registration Plan (IRP).
  - During the conversion from regular trailer to PTI, many IRP trailer plates were converted to PTI, and the IRP plate was retained.
  - However, replacement PTI license plates **must** be issued as transactions occur, to convert the IRP trailer plates to PTI plates.
  - Transactions with an IRP PTI plate must be handled as an **original** and a new plate issued due to limitations in the system.
- The department will issue a (new) PTI plate, if requested, if an owner originally retained their existing trailer or commercial trailer plate during the conversion to the PTI program and just placed a PTI sticker on the plate.
  - Conversion to PTI began with trailer registrations that expired 12/31/2001.
- PTI owners may assign or retain their personalized or special interest plates on the trailer.

### 14.005 Trailer Definitions

The following trailers are registered under the Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Program.

#### **Auxiliary Dolly (CVC §225)**

An *auxiliary dolly* is a vehicle, **not** designed for carrying persons or property on its own structure, which is so constructed and used in conjunction with a semi-trailer as to support a portion of the weight of the semi-trailer and any load thereon.

- It is **not** permanently attached to the semi-trailer, although a part of the weight of such dolly may rest on another vehicle.
- An auxiliary dolly may be registered under the PTI program, but it is not required.

**14.005 Trailer Definitions, *continued*****B-Train Assembly (CVC §230.5)**

A *B-train assembly* is a rigid frame extension attached to the rear frame of a semi-trailer which allows for a fifth wheel connection point for a second semi-trailer.

**Camp Trailer (CVC §242)**

A *camp trailer* is a vehicle other than a motor vehicle:

- designed to be towed on the highway,
- capable of human habitation for camping or recreational purposes,
- that **does not exceed 16** feet in overall length from the foremost point of the trailer hitch to the rear extremity of the trailer body and **96** inches in width.

Where a trailer telescopes for travel, the size shall apply to the trailer as fully extended.

**NOTE:** Any tent trailer is a camp trailer. A camp trailer **shall not** be considered to be a trailer coach.

**Carrier**

A *carrier* is a trailer designed to carry a specific load on its own structure, drawn by a motor vehicle, and so constructed that no part of its weight rests upon any other vehicle.

**Example:** boat trailer, horse trailer, car carrier, etc.

**Fifth-Wheel Travel Trailer (CVC §324)**

A *fifth-wheel travel trailer* is a vehicle designed for recreational purposes to carry persons or property on its own structure and so constructed as to be drawn by a motor vehicle by means of a kingpin connecting device.

**NOTE:** Fifth-wheel travel trailers that exceed the maximum length(16') and/or width (8') requirements for a camp trailer (CVC §242) are trailer coaches (CCH-CVC §635) and **cannot** be registered under the PTI Program.

**House Dollies**

*House dollies* that are equipped with drawbars are subject to registration as trailers. Dollies for moving houses, other than those with drawbars for direct towing, are not subject to registration.

**14.005 Trailer Definitions, *continued*****Jeep Trailer**

A *jeep trailer* is a vehicle with one axle, two or four wheels, and a fifth-wheel.

- It connects onto the fifth wheel of a truck-tractor.
- Its fifth wheel supports and distributes the weight of the front end of a semi-trailer between the truck- tractor and the jeep.
- A jeep trailer is registered in the same manner as any other semi-trailer.

**Converter Gear**

A *converter gear or dolly* is a coupling device of one or two axles and a fifth-wheel by which a semitrailer can be coupled to the rear of a tractor-trailer combination forming a double bottom rig.

An auxiliary dolly may be registered under the PTI program, but it is not required.

**Logging Dollies (CVC §378)**

A *logging dolly* is a vehicle:

- designed for carrying logs, having one or more axles, which if there is more than one axle, are not more than 54 inches apart, and
- used in connection with a motor truck solely for the purpose of transporting logs and securely connected with the towing vehicle both by a reach and by the load.

**Modular Mobile Equipment Trailers**

*Modular mobile equipment trailers* are trailers and semi-trailers modified by the addition of permanently attached equipment requiring manual operation by a person, and includes mobile medical service trailers and television remote studios.

Modular mobile equipment trailers are assigned a body type of “MMETLR.”

**Motorized Semi-Trailer**

A *Motorized Semi-Trailer* is the same as a semi-trailer. The cost of the motor is included in the vehicle value/cost.

**Other Miscellaneous Trailers**

Unusual types of trailers, such as collapsible trailers which easily fit a car trunk when not in use, and boats with wheels on the bow and hitches on the stern to enable them to be used as one-wheel trailers, are subject to registration so long as they fit the definition of a trailer or semi-trailer when in use.

Manufacturers and sellers of these vehicles (even if sold in kit form) **must** apply for special plates and certificates as required by CVC §11701.

**14.005 Trailer Definitions, *continued*****Semi-Trailer (CVC §550)**

A *semi-trailer* is a vehicle designed for carrying persons or property used in conjunction with a motor vehicle, and so constructed that some part of its weight and that of its load rests upon, or is carried by, another vehicle.

**Tow Dolly (CVC §617)**

A *tow dolly* is a vehicle:

- towed by a motor vehicle,
  - designed and used exclusively to transport another motor vehicle, *and*
  - upon which the front or rear wheels of the towed motor vehicle are mounted, while the other wheels of the towed motor vehicle remain in contact with the ground.
- A tow dolly is **not required** to be registered, but may be registered under the PTI Program.
- Tow dolly operators who plan to operate their tow dollies in other states are encouraged to apply for PTI, as other states may require indicia on these specialized trailers.

**NOTE:** Tow dolly does **not** include a portable or collapsible dolly used as specified in CVC §40119.

**Trailer (CVC §630)**

A *trailer* is a vehicle designed for carrying persons or property on its own structure and for being drawn by a motor vehicle, and so constructed that no part of its weight rests on any other vehicle.

**Travel Trailer**

A *travel trailer* is a portable unit mounted on wheels, of such a size and weight as not to require special highway movement permits when drawn by a motor vehicle and for human habitation for recreational or emergency occupancy (*Civil Code* §799.24).

**NOTE:** Travel trailers that exceed the maximum length of 16 feet and/or width of 96 inches are trailer coaches (CCH) (CVC §635) and **cannot** be registered under the PTI Program.

**14.005 Trailer Definitions, *continued*****Utility Trailer**

- *Utility trailer* is any trailer or semi-trailer used for the transportation of property.
- A utility trailer includes any trailer or semi-trailer designed and used for the transportation of equine (horses), not on a for hire basis, which **does not** exceed a gross weight (the weight of the trailer **and** the horses) of 10,000 pounds.

**NOTE:** The addition of living quarters to a trailer **does not** permanently alter that vehicle for human habitation. The living quarters are secondary or incidental to the primary function of the vehicle, which is transporting property.

**14.010 Trailers *Excluded* from the Permanent Trailer Identification Program**

The following trailers are excluded from the Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Program and are subject to annual registration as usual.

**Travel trailers and/or fifth-wheel travel trailers**

Travel trailers and/or fifth-wheel travel trailers that exceed the maximum length (16 feet) and/or width (96 inches) for a camp trailer are trailer coaches (body type CCH) and cannot be registered under the PTI Program. (CVC §§242 and 636)

**Park Trailers (H&SC §18009) (body type CCHPT)**

A park trailer is defined as a trailer:

- designed for human habitation for recreational or seasonal use only;
- that contains 400 square feet or less of gross floor area; excluding loft area space if that loft area space meets the requirements of H&SC §18009.3 (b) and H&SC §18033;
- is built on a single chassis; and
- may only be transported upon the public highways with a permit issued by the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) pursuant to CVC §35780.

**Park Trailer Boats (body type CCHPTBT)**

A park trailer boat is a park trailer with a hull and it may be registered as a vehicle/vessel (dual registration).

**14.010 Trailers Excluded from the Permanent Trailer Identification Program, continued****Trailer Coaches (CVC §635) (body type CCH)**

- A trailer coach is a vehicle, other than a motor vehicle, designed for human occupancy or human habitation for industrial, professional, or commercial purposes, for carrying persons and property on its own structure, and for being drawn by a motor vehicle.
- A trailer coach **cannot** exceed 8 1/2 feet (102 inches) in width **or** 40 feet (480 inches) in length.

**Coach Boat Trailers (body type CCHBT)**

A *coach boat trailer* is a trailer coach with a hull and it may be registered as a vehicle/vessel (dual registration).

**14.015 PTI Maintenance Service Fee or PNO Requirement Every Five Years**

- Trailers registered under the Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Program are not subject to annual registration. However, the owner of a PTI plate **must** either:
  - pay the maintenance service fee five years after the original registration and every five years thereafter, **or**
  - file a *Certificate of Planned Non-Operation* (PNO–REG 102) in order to retain the PTI record on file with the department.
- A computer-generated billing notice for the service fee is mailed approximately 75 days prior to the due date. After payment, a PTI Service Fee Payment receipt is issued reflecting the PTI “expiration” date.
  - The receipt does not need to be kept with the trailer. A new PTI identification card will **not** be issued.
  - A Planned Non-Operation (PNO) may be filed instead of paying the service fee.

**14.020 PTI Titling Options**

A Certificate of Title is not automatically issued to PTI trailers, unless there is a legal owner/lien holder or the owner requests that a title be issued.

- The department issues a Permanent Trailer Identification Card and maintains an electronic record of ownership.
- A *sole* owner of a PTI trailer may request the issuance of a title by submitting a completed and signed *Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Certification* (REG 4017, side A) **and** a Paper Title fee.
  - This form may be submitted at the time the original registration or transfer documents are submitted, or any time a *sole owner* wishes to obtain a paper title when none was previously issued.
- Although an ELT lien holder will not receive a paper title, the Paper Title fee is collected since a paper title will be eventually issued

**14.025 Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Certification (REG 4017)**

The *Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Certification* (REG 4017) is a two-sided form used for trailers registered in the PTI Program.

- **Side A** is completed and signed by **sole owners** requesting a paper title, whether a paper title was previously issued or not.
- **Side B** is completed for the following PTI transactions when **no paper title (or ELT paperless title) has been issued**:
  - Transfer of ownership.
  - Legal owner/lien holder addition.

**IMPORTANT:** If a California paper title or ELT title was:

- **not issued**, Side B of the REG 4017 must be completed.
- **issued**, an *Application for Duplicate Title* (REG 227) **must** be used.

**14.030 Original Permanent Trailer Identification Requirements**

All document requirements for **original** registration are the same **except**:

- A weight certificate is **not** required.
  - The vehicle owner, lessee, or the dealer selling the trailer may certify to the trailer's unladen weight on the *Application for Registration of New Vehicle* (REG 397) or a *Statement of Facts* (REG 256).
- A completed *Permanent Trailer Identification Certification* (REG 4017, Side A) is required if a title is requested, and no lienholder is present.
- The nonresident service fee **is not** collected to register a nonresident trailer.
- Submit original PTI fee, plus the PTI Title fee, if a title is being requested.
  - Although there is no penalty on the PTI registration fee, fees must be paid within 20 days to avoid use tax penalty, if use tax is being collected, and to avoid dealer ASF fees.

See Chapter 6, New Vehicles Sold by California Dealers and Chapter 7, Miscellaneous Originals for all original registration requirements.

**14.035 Transfer of PTI Ownership**

Before transferring a PTI trailer, determine if a paper title (including an ELT paperless title) was issued, or if only an electronic record was created.

**Trailers with an electronic record of ownership only (no paper or ELT paperless title issued)**

- A completed and signed *Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Certification* (REG 4017, Side B).
- If sold by a dealer, a *Report of Sale–Used Vehicle* (REG 51).
- REG 4017, Side A, if paper **title** is requested by the owner and there is no lienholder on the application. (Presence of a lien holder will automatically issue a paper title).



**14.035 Transfer of PTI Ownership, *continued*****Trailers with an electronic record of ownership only (*no paper or ELT paperless title issued*), *continued***

- PTI transfer fee and use tax, if applicable.
  - Although there is no penalty on the transfer fee, fees must be paid within 30 days to avoid use tax penalty, if use tax is being collected, and to avoid dealer ASF fees.
- Paper Title fee, if title requested.

**Trailers with a paper (or ELT paperless) Certificate of Title**

- The properly endorsed Certificate of Title **or** a completed and signed *Application for Duplicate Title* (REG 227). The REG 4017 Side **B** should **not** be completed.
- If sold by a dealer, a *Report of Sale–Used Vehicle* (REG 51).
- REG 4017, Side **A**, if paper **title** is requested by the owner and there is no lien holder on the application.

**NOTE:** Surrender of a current California paper title will not automatically issue a new paper title unless a lienholder is present.

- PTI transfer fee and use tax, if applicable.
  - Although there is no penalty on the transfer fee, fees must be paid within 30 days to avoid use tax penalty, if use tax is being collected, and to avoid dealer ASF fees.
- Paper Title fee, if title requested.

**Transfer of Ownership with an Application for Duplicate Title**

If the original PTI title is lost, stolen, or mutilated, or was received by ELT lienholder, an *Application for Duplicate Title* (REG 227) is used to transfer ownership. In addition to the usual transfer requirements and fees:

- The REG 227 **must be** properly completed and endorsed for transfer.
- If the legal owner/lienholder of record is releasing interest, the signature **must be** notarized. A mutilated or illegible title must be surrendered.
- A duplicate title fee is due in addition to all other fees due.

**NOTE:** An *Application for Duplicate Title* (REG 227) cannot be submitted if no paper title (or ELT paperless title) was issued on a PTI. The REG 4017, Side B must be completed instead.

**14.040 Application for Substitute Plate**

The *Application for Replacement Plates, Stickers, Documents* (REG 156) must be submitted to the department for replacement of a lost, stolen, mutilated, or illegible PTI plate.

- The dealer may complete the REG 156 when a replacement is requested in conjunction with a dealer transfer transaction. Otherwise, the REG 156 **must be** completed by the vehicle owner.
- A dealer **cannot** apply for a replacement **after** ownership is transferred to the buyer. The owner of record must complete the application.

**NOTE:** Substitute license plates may only be issued directly to a registration service or a dealer agent when the:

- application also contains a dealer report of sale, *and*
- the person presenting the application provides proof of his/her own identity.

Otherwise the license plate must be sent to the registered owner.

**14.045 Duplicate Certificate of Title (CVC §§4459, 4466, and 5752)**

- If a paper title was issued on a PTI, and the original is lost, stolen, mutilated, or illegible, a duplicate title may be issued.
- An *Application for Duplicate Title* (REG 227) must be completed by the legal owner/lien holder of record or by the registered owner when there is no legal owner/lien holder on record, and submitted with the duplicate title fee.

**NOTE:** An *Application for Duplicate Title* (REG 227) cannot be submitted if **no** paper title (or ELT paperless title) was issued on a PTI.

A *Permanent Trailer Identification (PTI) Certification* (REG 4017), Side A, completed and signed by the owner, plus the PTI Paper Title fee are required if no PTI title was issued and the owner requests a title.

**14.050 Dealer Posting of PTI Fees**

- The PTI fee may be posted for any PTI trailer entering this state that is not licensed, registered, titled, or issued identification which will be placed in dealer inventory to be sold.
- A *Laden Commercial Trailer One Trip Permit* (REG 43) may also be purchased.

**NOTE:** Posting the PTI fee or purchasing a trip permit allows the trailer to enter the state without the dealer obtaining PTI registration in the dealer's name.

PTI registration in the dealer's name would prevent sale of the trailer as a new trailer.

**14.055 PTI Fleets**

- PTI fleet owners may submit PTI service fee notices for bulk processing in bundles of 250 or less. A separate check is required for each bundle.
- The original notice is required for each trailer; photocopies or listings are not acceptable.