Administrator/Executor Transactions

Effective: Immediately

New Policy

Effective immediately, the designated administrator/executor of an estate may perform all actions that the deceased person(s) could have performed regarding vehicle/vessel applications, including, but not limited to, changing an address, registering a vehicle/vessel, and obtaining duplicates and substitutes.

Procedures

Continue to follow current procedures in the Vehicle Industry Registration Procedures Manual and/or Vehicle Industry News memos for the type of application. In addition to the documents normally required for the application, for administrator/executor the applicant must submit:

- A copy of the California or out-of-state court-certified Letters Testamentary, Letters of Administration, or Letters of Administration with Will Annexed naming/appointing the individual as the administrator/executor of the decedent’s will/estate for each deceased registered owner.
- Documents signed by the administrator/executor for the registered owner (e.g., Application for Replacement Plates, Stickers, Documents [REG 156] form, Application for Duplicate or Paperless Title [REG 227] form, Notice of Change of Address [DMV 14] form, etc.). **EXAMPLE:** William Smith, Executor of the Estate of John Doe, Deceased.
- If the registered owner had disabled or special recognition license plates that are subject to mandatory surrender rules, the license plates must be surrendered if the application is presented within the mandatory surrender period (i.e., 60 days or upon the expiration of the vehicle registration, whichever occurs first). **EXCEPTIONS:**
  — A surviving spouse may retain the special recognition license plates referenced below on the vehicle or reassign them to another vehicle registered to the spouse until the spouse is deceased.
  — A surviving spouse or, in the absence (death) of the surviving spouse, an eligible member of the decedent’s family may retain one of the special recognition license plates referenced below (except Pearl Harbor Survivor) as a family heirloom. New license plates must be assigned to the vehicle with the appropriate type license.

Special recognition license plates that may be retained by the surviving spouse:

  — Firefighters
  — Legion of Valor
  — Pearl Harbor Survivor (cannot be retained as an heirloom)
  — Congressional Medal of Honor
  — Purple Heart Recipient
  — Former Prisoner of War (POW)

Background

An administrator/executor has complete power/control over all estate assets, including vehicles/vessels. The Vehicle Industry Registration Procedures Manual will be updated to reflect the new procedures and will include a new section in Chapter 1 for administrator/executor applications.
Distribution
Notification that this memo is available online, at www.dmv.ca.gov under Publications was made via California DMV’s Automated Email Alert System in October 2016.

References

Contact
Call the DMV Customer Communications Section, at (916) 657-6560 for further clarification of this memo. Upon request, this document can be produced in Braille or large print.

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