

Three Ways to Transfer Car Title when Owner Dies

When a spouse dies, there is often a need to transfer the title of the car, especially when a license plate is expiring.

With the right documents, a surviving spouse and others can take title to vehicles not disposed of by a Will without going to the Probate Court.

A transfer of title to the surviving spouse is necessary where only the deceased spouse or both spouses are on

the title.

The process for transferring the title is not complicated.

The survivor needs to complete a Surviving Spouse Affidavit and the bottom part of the back of the title. The top part of the title is left blank. Both documents need to be notarized.

If you are going in person to the Title Bureau in your county, someone there

can notarize your signature.

If someone else is handling the title transfer for you, you must make sure that your signatures on the Affidavit and Title have been notarized beforehand.

The Affidavit form which you must complete is available at the county Clerk of Courts Title Office.

The surviving spouse may transfer

two vehicles with a combined value less than \$40,000 by using the Affidavit. The two vehicles may include autos, a boat and its motor or truck if the truck is the only means of transportation.

If the auto title lists both spouse names followed by WROS that means both own it and the survivor automatically gets title to the vehicle. However, the title must be transferred to the name of the survivor.

To do that, the survivor may go to the county Title Bureau with the title and certified copy of the death certificate. Another way vehicles may be titled by way of a Transfer on Death Title.

That means that you designate on the title the name of a person other than spouse who you want to get the vehicle when you die.

You continue to own the car during your lifetime. Upon your death, the beneficiary can go to the Title Bureau with the title, proof of identity and certified copy of the death certificate, have the title transferred into the name of the beneficiary.

In other circumstances, it is necessary to go to the Probate Court.

Reprint — Cleveland Legal Association

Lorain County Office on Aging Members' Birthdays in September

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