AUTO BODY BULLETIN NUMBER 2021-1

Consumers and Salvaged Vehicles

This Bulletin is applicable to all Auto Body and Salvage Rebuilder licensees, licensed by the Department of Business Regulation (“Department”) pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-38-1 et seq. and 230-RICR-30-05-02, the Motor Vehicle Body and Salvage Vehicle Repair regulation, and their consumers.

Many motorists are confused by the process of rebuilding a total loss vehicle. This document is intended to be informational and to assist your decision-making process. Once your vehicle is deemed a total loss by the insurance company and you have settled on its value, you may either keep or not keep your total loss vehicle.

If you...

(1) **Do not want** to keep your vehicle:
   a. Remove any/all personal belongings from the vehicle including the registration plates; and

   b. Be sure to return the registration plates to the Department of Motor Vehicles (“DMV”) to avoid any penalties and tax implications unless you are utilizing them on a replacement vehicle.

(2) **Want** to keep your vehicle and complete the salvage process:

   a. The registered owner MUST surrender the vehicle’s title to the DMV and apply for a red salvage certificate for proof of ownership. This is NOT the same as registration.

      ● Any/all liens must be satisfied at the time of title surrender.

   b. **ALL** repairs on the insurance appraisal MUST be performed and by a licensed Salvage Rebuilder.

      ● You **may not** pick and choose which repairs are fixed.
Check for a shop’s license on the Department’s website: https://elicensing.ri.gov/Lookup/LicenseLookup.aspx.

c. Once all repairs have been made, the vehicle must pass a RI State Safety and Emissions inspection.

d. Once the vehicle passes the RI State Safety and Emissions inspection, you can schedule a salvage inspection with the DMV.

Prior to the salvage inspection, you will need to provide the DMV Enforcement Office the required documents (available at the DMV’s website: http://www.dmv.ri.gov/inspections/salvage/),

At the salvage inspection, in addition to the above list, you will need to provide the DMV Enforcement Office the required documents (available at the DMV’s website: http://www.dmv.ri.gov/inspections/salvage/),

e. Once the vehicle passes the salvage inspection, you will be given an approved red salvage certificate (TR-5).

Other than the process of rebuilding a total loss vehicle, you may want to consider the following: (1) not all insurance companies will provide coverage for a rebuilt total loss vehicle; (2) not all financial institutions will finance a rebuilt total loss vehicle; (3) the value of a rebuilt total loss vehicle may be less once its rebuilt; (4) the time frame for rebuilding a total loss vehicle, including the necessary receipt of a salvage title, may approximate five months; (5) the rebuilt vehicle’s ultimate title will be branded as “Reconstructed/Rebuilt”; and (6) if the vehicle does not complete the salvage rebuilding process or fails the salvage inspection, the vehicle cannot be sold except to a salvage yard, and only by the owner of the vehicle at the time of total loss who is listed on that title.

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