



## PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM **ODOMETER FRAUD**

In accordance with federal and state law, it is a felony to alter, disconnect or fail to connect an odometer of a vehicle to reflect a lower mileage than the vehicle has actually been driven. It is also illegal to knowingly provide a falsified odometer statement.

Check the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) to view the last recorded odometer reading on the title. If the vehicle is titled in Florida, consumers can conduct a free VIN check on the FLHSMV.gov website. This will also provide information on any brand on the vehicle title, such as salvaged or flooded.

The mileage recorded on the title may be designated as "actually" or "not actual." If the status is "not actual," it indicates that the odometer may have been repaired or replaced. Florida law requires that repaired or replaced odometers be documented and disclosed on the vehicle title on a written notice attached to the driver side door frame of the vehicle.

There are several online motor vehicle history reports that provide useful information for a fee which can be good resources for consumers.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT



More than **450,000 vehicles** are sold each year with false odometer readings.



This costs U.S. vehicle buyers over **\$1 billion** in increased costs for vehicles with rolled back odometers.

\* Estimates from The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

#### Further loss to the consumer may include:

- Increased sales tax due to the inflated sales price;
- Increased maintenance and repair costs; and
- Decreased vehicle safety.

## TITLE FRAUD

*When a person alters a vehicle title to misrepresent the true condition of a vehicle or when an individual provides false information to obtain a vehicle title, including forgery.*

Before purchasing a vehicle, review the vehicle history and make sure any applicable brands, such as salvage or flood, appear on the title, if they appear on the vehicle history. If the vehicle title is paper, check for signs of tampering or signs that a title may have been washed, meaning the title has been altered to remove information it should normally contain. Consumers should never keep their title in the vehicle.

FLHSMV encourages consumers to maintain their title electronically in order to reduce title fraud and receive faster lien satisfaction notification and to only have a paper copy of their title when making a purchase or insurance claim.

## VEHICLE CLONING

*Vehicle cloning involves stolen vehicle identification numbers (VIN) with counterfeit VIN tags and ownership documents.*

*Follow these tips to avoid purchasing a cloned vehicle:*

- **BEWARE** of a vehicle being sold for substantially less than comparable makes and models.
- **CHECK** the VIN plate on the dashboard for evidence of tampering.
- **VERIFY** the VIN through the FLHSMV Motor Vehicle Information. Check at [flhsmv.gov](http://flhsmv.gov).

# MOTOR VEHICLE FRAUD

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV) is committed to educating consumers on safe vehicle buying practices. Purchasing a vehicle is a major investment and many consumers may not be aware of the several ways they can protect themselves against fraudulent vehicle sales. Consumers should do as much research as possible to protect their investment. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

## THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES OF MOTOR VEHICLE FRAUD:

**ODOMETER FRAUD** consists of changing or altering the mileage reading on a vehicle to falsely reflect lower mileage.

**TITLE FRAUD** occurs when an individual alters a title in a way that misrepresents the true condition of a vehicle or provides false information to obtain a motor vehicle title.

**VEHICLE CLONING** is an elaborate scheme that involves stolen VIN numbers, counterfeit VIN tags and fraudulent ownership documents.



If you feel that you have been the victim of motor vehicle fraud,  
please contact the FLHSMV Motor Vehicle Fraud Unit:

Email: [dmv-enforcement@flhsmv.gov](mailto:dmv-enforcement@flhsmv.gov) • Phone: 850-617-2907

### Motor vehicle fraud is a crime.

If you have information on any operation or incident involving motor vehicle fraud or individuals involved in this crime, please contact local law enforcement or the FHP Bureau of Investigations and Intelligence (BCII).

You may remain anonymous and your information kept confidential.

FHP North Florida: 850-617-2302 • FHP South Florida: 305-513-3458

For more information, visit: [flhsmv.gov/fhp](http://flhsmv.gov/fhp)

# PREVENTING MOTOR VEHICLE FRAUD

**FLHSMV**  
FLORIDA HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

