



Texas Department of Transportation

VEHICLE TITLES AND REGISTRATION DIVISION • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78779-0001 • (512) 465-7611

June 20, 2001

Registration and Title Bulletin # 070-01

TO: All County Tax Assessor-Collectors

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 817

PURPOSE:

To provide you with a copy of Senate Bill 817, enacted by the 77th Texas Legislature. Senate Bill 817 becomes effective September 1, 2001.

DETAILS:

Senate Bill 817 amends Transportation Code, §721.003, by changing the name of Banking Department of Texas to Texas Department of Banking and adding Texas Lottery Commission to the list of state agencies. The Texas Lottery Commission may adopt rules, which may provide exemption from inscription requirements of §721.002 for motor vehicles only used exclusively for surveillance purposes. Currently, these vehicles are issued standard exempt license plates. The passage of this bill provides the issuance of regular exempt license plates (Lone Star State plates) to these vehicles.

DEPARTMENT ACTION:

Attached is a copy of the bill for your reference. Revisions for the Registration Manual are forthcoming.

VTR CONTACT PERSON(S)

If you have any questions concerning this bulletin, please contact your local Vehicle Titles and Registration Division Regional Office or the Customer Help Desk at (512) 465-7611.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

for Jerry L. Dike, Director
Vehicle Titles and
Registration Division

JLD:VJ

Attachments

cc: VTR Administration

FOR RELEASE, June 21, 2001

Thousands of flood-damaged vehicles headed for the market

As southeast Texas begins to dry out from flooding, citizens throughout the state and adjoining regions should beware of a new flood of damaged vehicles already appearing on the market. Estimates coming from Houston and surrounding communities indicate as many as 50,000 vehicles could have suffered some degree of damage.

"There are certain safeguards in place to protect people when purchasing vehicles," said (County Tax Assessor-Collector, of County, Texas), "But, citizens should be aware that many flood-damaged vehicles will be on the market and sold without the damage being disclosed. As in most cases, it is buyer beware."

There are several steps buyers can take to protect themselves before purchasing a used vehicle, especially if it was registered in Harris County or surrounding counties.

1. Have a reputable mechanic perform a pre-purchase inspection. Most flood damage can be discovered by a careful, knowledgeable inspection.
2. Purchase from a known person or reputable dealer offering a warranty or buy-back provision.
3. Be cautious of "great deals" on newer model vehicles, manufactured within the last five years, with new carpeting or upholstery. Look under the mat in the trunk and underneath the dashboard. Mud or debris in these areas could indicate flood damage.
4. Examine the title before you buy. Many vehicles are not yet identified as flood-damaged by the state computer system however, always ask to see the title. If the vehicle has been totaled by an insurance company, the title may carry an annotation in the Remarks section.
5. Use one of the private services that document vehicle histories. These services can research insurance claims on vehicles that have been damaged.

Citizens needing information about vehicle titles and registration should check with their local tax assessor-collector's office or call the TxDOT help line at (512) 465-7611.