NMVTIS REPORT GUIDE

How to get an **NMVTIS report**: what the federal **NMVTIS vehicle history report** shows and leaves out, who reports into it, how to pick from the approved NMVTIS data providers, **NMVTIS vs Carfax**, and how to catch title washing before you buy.

51	680M+	$14.99
jurisdictions in NMVTIS: every state plus D.C.	current title records in the system (FY2024)	full report with NMVTIS title records

CarCheckerVIN

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NMVTIS VIN check · Title brand history · Vehicle history reports

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ABOUT THIS NMVTIS REPORT GUIDE

An **NMVTIS report** is a short vehicle history report drawn from the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System, the U.S. Department of Justice database that every state, insurer and junk or salvage yard has to feed. This guide explains what an **NMVTIS vehicle history report** can prove, what it can't, and where to buy one without overpaying.

It is published by **CarCheckerVIN (carcheckervin.com)**, which runs a free VIN lookup and sells full vehicle history reports that include NMVTIS title records. The legal details come from the primary texts: the Anti Car Theft Act of 1992, 49 U.S.C. Chapter 305 and the NMVTIS regulation at 28 CFR Part 25, Subpart B. Program facts come from the Justice Department's NMVTIS website and its FY2024 annual report.

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FREE PREVIEW

Check a VIN while you read

Enter any 17-character VIN at **carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check** for a free preview of the vehicle's records, with no card and no sign-up. The full CarCheckerVIN report is $14.99 and includes NMVTIS title records, state title brands, odometer readings, insurance total-loss records, liens, auction sales with photos and more.

How to use this guide

Buying a used car

Read Chapters 4, 5, 9 and 11, then run the checklist in Chapter 13 on every car you're serious about.

Comparing reports

Chapters 6 to 8 cover approved providers, prices, and how NMVTIS stacks up against Carfax, AutoCheck and NICB.

Dealer or owner

Chapter 10 covers dealer access and California's display rule; Chapter 12 covers wrong records and disputes.

BUYER'S SHORTCUT

WHERE TO BUY AN NMVTIS REPORT

The Justice Department doesn't sell NMVTIS reports itself. It sends buyers to approved data providers, and some of the best-known names in vehicle history can't sell you one at all. Here's how the options compare.

OUR PICK

CarCheckerVIN · www.carcheckervin.com

- **Free history preview** for any VIN, no credit card
- **Full report: $14.99**, no subscription
- **Packs:** 3 for $35.99, 5 for $54.99, 10 for $89.99 ($9 a report)
- Search by VIN, by U.S. license plate, or paste a list of VINs
- **NMVTIS title records** plus state title brands
- Odometer readings, owner count, insurance total-loss records
- Lien and impound records, auction sales with photos
- Service records, open recalls, factory specs and market value

Run an NMVTIS VIN check at carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check →

Your options for NMVTIS title data

Where	Cost	What you get
CarCheckerVIN	Preview free; report $14.99	NMVTIS title records inside a full history report with odometer, total-loss, lien, auction, service and recall data
A DOJ-approved provider	Set by each provider	A basic NMVTIS report covers five indicators (Chapter 4); many providers bundle more data at a higher price
Your state DMV's title-check page	Varies	Some states, such as Texas, link to approved providers; Texas says prices begin at a couple of dollars
NICB VINCheck	Free	Theft and insurer total-loss records from participating insurers; not NMVTIS and not a full report
Carfax or AutoCheck	Carfax widely quoted at $44.99	Their own reports; the DOJ says consumers can't receive NMVTIS reports from Carfax or Experian

How to choose in 30 seconds

- ☐ **Only need title brands and total-loss flags?** A basic NMVTIS report from a provider on the DOJ list covers that.
- ☐ **About to hand over money?** Get a report that adds odometer history, liens, auction photos and service records to the NMVTIS data, such as CarCheckerVIN's $14.99 report.
- ☐ **Comparing several cars?** Preview all of them free, then buy reports only for the shortlist; a 5-pack works out at $11 a report.
- ☐ **Dealer or fleet?** Wholesale pricing, bulk API access and white-label reports are at **carcheckervin.com/dealers**.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS NMVTIS?

NMVTIS, the National Motor Vehicle Title Information System, is a national database of vehicle title and brand history. In the Justice Department's own words, it is designed to protect consumers from fraud and unsafe vehicles and to keep stolen vehicles from being resold.

The short answer to “what is NMVTIS?”

Every state keeps its own title records. NMVTIS links them by VIN. When a state titles a vehicle, brands it, or records its odometer reading, that information reaches one national system. When an insurer writes off a car, or a junk or salvage yard takes one in, that goes into the same system. Anyone buying the vehicle later can see the result in an **NMVTIS report**.

Question	Answer
Who is responsible?	The U.S. Department of Justice, through its Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)
Who runs it day to day?	The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA), the operator since 1992
Who pays for it?	User fees. Federal law says the system should be self-sufficient, and the operator may not keep more than its operating costs
Who feeds it?	State titling agencies, insurance carriers, and junk yards, salvage yards and auto recyclers
How do consumers see it?	By buying a report from an approved NMVTIS data provider listed at vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov

Why NMVTIS exists

The NMVTIS regulation, 28 CFR 25.51, sets out four purposes:

- **Stop stolen vehicles** from being introduced, or reintroduced, into interstate commerce
- **Protect states and consumers**, individual and commercial, from fraud
- **Cut off criminal use** of stolen vehicles, including fundraising for criminal enterprises
- **Protect consumers** from unsafe vehicles

What makes it different from a private database

The DOJ calls NMVTIS the only publicly available system in the United States that all insurance carriers, auto recyclers, junk yards and salvage yards are *required by federal law* to report to on a regular basis. Private history companies collect data by agreement; NMVTIS collects it by mandate.

The trade-off is scope. NMVTIS is about titles, brands, odometer readings at titling, total losses and salvage. The DOJ notes that private providers add things NMVTIS was never meant to hold, such as repair histories, recall information and maintenance data.

NMVTIS VIN CHECK

See whether a VIN has title brands, total-loss or salvage records before you pay anything: free preview at **carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check**. More background at **carcheckervin.com/vin-lookup/nmvtis**.

NMVTIS BY THE NUMBERS & WHO CAN SEE THE DATA

Is the database big enough to be worth checking? The figures below come from the NMVTIS FY2024 Annual Report, covering the federal fiscal year that ended on 30 September 2024, and from the DOJ's live participation map.

680M+
current title records in the system

1B+
title history records

15.9M
brand records added in FY2024

16.9M
junk, salvage & insurance records reported in FY2024

269M+
state transactions: inquiries, title and brand updates

26M
billed consumer-access transactions in FY2024, up 38%

Source: NMVTIS FY2024 Annual Report (AAMVA for the U.S. Department of Justice, published August 2025). Current title records grew nearly 14%, from 594 million in FY2020 to 680 million in FY2024. States earned over $3.4 million in credits from providers' report sales.

Coverage: every state and D.C.

The DOJ's participation map now lists **51 participating jurisdictions** (the states plus the District of Columbia) that provide data and check the system before issuing new titles, and says that 100% of U.S. DMV data is represented, based on 2026 Federal Highway Administration figures. The FY2024 report had put that share at 99%. Under the NMVTIS rules, state compliance means three things: sending title data, making title inquiries, and paying user fees.

Who can see NMVTIS data, by law

User (49 U.S.C. 30502(e))	What the operator may release
Participating states	Information about any automobile in the system
Law enforcement	Information about a particular automobile, junk yard or salvage yard; no fees for law enforcement inquiries
Prospective purchasers	Information about the vehicle they're buying; this includes auction companies and businesses that buy used cars
Insurers	Information about a vehicle they insure or may insure

Privacy is built in

The operator may not collect Social Security numbers or let users obtain anyone's address, and may not release personal details such as an owner's name or address to an individual buyer (28 CFR 25.53(c)). Who sold a car to a salvage yard, or who holds the title, is reported for law enforcement and state agencies only.

CHAPTER 2

THE LAW BEHIND NMVTIS

NMVTIS rests on one federal statute and one regulation. Every field on an NMVTIS report traces back to a specific duty in them.



1992: the Anti Car Theft Act

The **Anti Car Theft Act of 1992** (Public Law 102-519, signed October 25, 1992) set out to "prevent and deter auto theft". Its Title II, on automobile title fraud, created the system in section 202. In 1994 the rules were recodified into 49 U.S.C. Chapter 305.

1996: renamed and moved to Justice

The 1994 recodification had called it the "National Automobile Title Information System". The **Anti-Car Theft Improvements Act of 1996** (Public Law 104-152) restored the NMVTIS name, moved it from the Secretary of Transportation to the Attorney General, and added immunity for good-faith reporters.

2009: the NMVTIS regulation

The Justice Department published the NMVTIS final rule in the Federal Register on January 30, 2009. It lives at **28 CFR Part 25, Subpart B** (sections 25.51 to 25.57). It required insurers and junk and salvage yards to start reporting, and the operator to open access to buyers, by March 31, 2009, and gave every state until January 1, 2010 to comply fully.

Penalties

49 U.S.C. 30505 sets a civil penalty of up to $1,000 per violation; DOJ's inflation adjustment (28 CFR 85.5) now puts it at **$2,111**.

The statute, section by section

Section	Topic	What it does
30501	Definitions	Junk and salvage automobile, junk and salvage yard, insurance carrier, title
30502	The system	Creates NMVTIS, funds it by user fees, lists what it must reveal and who may see it
30503	State duties	States share title data and check NMVTIS before titling a car bought from another state
30504	Reporting	Monthly reports from junk yards, salvage yards and insurance carriers
30505	Penalties	Civil penalties, imposed and collected by the Attorney General

Federal words, state brands

A federal **salvage automobile** is one so damaged that its salvage value plus repair cost would exceed its pre-damage market value; the rule adds every total loss. But neither the Act nor the rule makes states change how they brand titles, so brand names differ by state (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 3

WHO REPORTS INTO NMVTIS

Three groups are required by federal law to feed NMVTIS. Each reports different facts on a different schedule, and those differences explain most of what you'll see, or not see, on an NMVTIS report.

Reporter	How often	What they report	Rule
State titling agencies	At least once every 24 hours; some in real time	VIN; the title's description, including every brand; odometer reading at titling and later readings the state notes; owner name (states and police only); junk, salvage and insurer data the state collects	49 U.S.C. 30503; 28 CFR 25.54
Insurance carriers	Monthly	Vehicles of the current model year or the four prior model years that the insurer took possession of and decided were junk or salvage, including total losses	49 U.S.C. 30504(b); 28 CFR 25.55
Junk yards, salvage yards & auto recyclers	Monthly	Every junk or salvage vehicle taken into inventory: VIN, date, source (police only), whether it was crushed or offered for sale, and whether it's bound for export	49 U.S.C. 30504(a); 28 CFR 25.56

States: the title verification check

Before a state issues a title for a vehicle bought from someone in another state, it must run an instant check through NMVTIS. The check is meant to confirm that the old title document is valid, to find out whether the car has been junk or salvage or reported as such, to compare the odometer reading with earlier ones, and to verify other details such as lien status. The receiving state's own law still decides how the new title is branded; NMVTIS gives it the history to make that decision.

The DOJ goes further than the minimum. It encourages states to use NMVTIS for in-state transfers, dealer reassignments and corrections too, and, when a car arrives on a clean title but NMVTIS shows it was once in an insurer's hands, to verify the vehicle's true history before issuing a new title.

Insurers: the total-loss rule

Federal rules treat every total loss as a salvage automobile, whether the insurer takes title or the owner keeps the car. A total loss under state law, or under the insurer's own policy, triggers the monthly report. Insurers are strongly encouraged to add the reason, such as flood, fire, collision, or theft and recovery.

Because insurers report on their own definitions, the DOJ's consumer disclaimer warns that an insurer may report a “total loss” even when the state never branded the car salvage or junk. So an NMVTIS report can show a total-loss record next to a clean title, and both can be true.

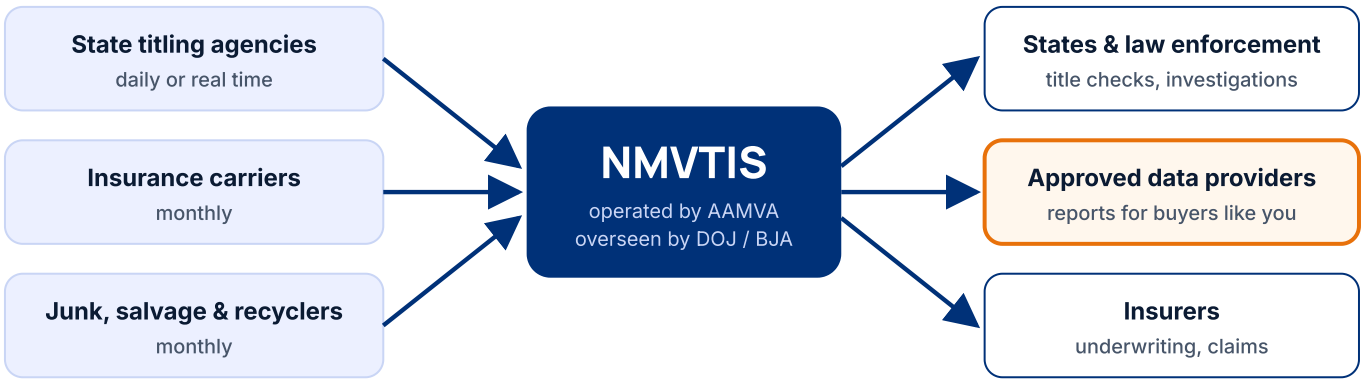
The five-model-year window

The law requires insurers to report only vehicles of the current model year and the four before it. The DOJ strongly encourages reports on older cars but can't require them. On an older vehicle, a state brand or a salvage-yard record may be the only trace of a write-off, so don't read a missing insurer record on a ten-year-old car as proof it was never totaled.

CHAPTER 3 CONT.

JUNK YARDS, SALVAGE YARDS & AUTO RECYCLERS

The junk and salvage records in NMVTIS are what make it hard to give a wrecked car's VIN a second life. Here's who counts as a reporter, what they file, and how it all reaches you.



Who counts as a junk or salvage yard

The statute covers any business that acquires junk or salvage automobiles to resell whole or as parts, or to rebuild, restore or crush them. The regulation spells out that this includes vehicle remarketers and recyclers, scrap shredders and metal processors, pull- and pick-apart yards, salvage pools, salvage auctions and other auctions that handle salvage, junk or total-loss vehicles.

What goes in the monthly report

- The reporter's name, address and contact details
- The VIN and the date the vehicle was obtained
- Who it came from (law enforcement and government only)
- Whether it was crushed or disposed of, sold, or used otherwise, and to whom
- Whether it's intended for export

Exceptions

- Businesses handling **fewer than five** salvage, junk or total-loss vehicles a year
- A vehicle that a qualified, independent appraiser finds isn't salvage or junk
- Yards that already report to a state that forwards the data
- Scrap processors receiving cars whose VINs can't be read, if the source already reported them

Updates at disposal

Yards can hold a car for months before it's crushed, sold or rebuilt. When the outcome wasn't known at first, or changes, they may have to file a supplemental report; the DOJ points to the time of disposition or within 30 days of it.

Check a reporter yourself

The DOJ's NMVTIS site has a public tool to confirm the last date a reporting entity reported. If you're buying from a salvage auction or recycler, it's a quick way to see whether it actually reports.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT AN NMVTIS REPORT SHOWS

The Justice Department says an **NMVTIS vehicle history report** is meant to cover only five key indicators tied to preventing auto fraud and theft. Here's each one, what it looks like and what to do with it.

INDICATOR 1

Current state of title and last title date

Which state holds the current title and when it was issued. **Use it to:** confirm the seller's title came from that state and isn't older than the latest one on record.

INDICATOR 2

Brand history

Brands are labels states put on titles, such as “junk”, “salvage” and “flood”. NMVTIS keeps every brand any state has applied, so a brand doesn't vanish when the car is retitled somewhere else. **Use it to:** compare against the paper title. This is your main **title brand history** check.

INDICATOR 3

Odometer reading

The odometer disclosure recorded when the title was issued, plus later readings if the state noted them. **Use it to:** make sure the dash shows more miles than the last recorded reading, never fewer.

INDICATOR 4

Total loss history

Whether an insurer declared the vehicle a total loss. In the DOJ's words, a total loss generally means severe damage. **Use it to:** ask for repair records and get an inspection focused on the damage area.

INDICATOR 5

Salvage history

Records from **junk and salvage** yards and recyclers that took the vehicle in, with what happened to it next. **Use it to:** spot cars that were sold for parts or reported crushed and somehow came back.

“A clean report is a good thing”

That's the DOJ's own phrasing. An NMVTIS report is meant to be short, usually shorter than other history reports. If the car has no brands, total-loss or salvage history, there's simply little to print.

Which vehicles are covered

The DOJ's consumer disclaimer lists automobiles, buses, trucks, motorcycles, recreational vehicles, motor homes and truck tractors, from participating state titling agencies. Commercial vehicles may be missing where a state keeps them outside its main title database.

WHAT AN NMVTIS REPORT DOESN'T SHOW

The DOJ's Consumer Access Product Disclaimer is unusually frank about the gaps. Read these four limits before you treat a clean NMVTIS report as a clean car.

1. **It isn't a repair or service record.** NMVTIS is meant to be a reliable source of title and brand history, but the DOJ says it doesn't contain detailed information about a vehicle's repair history.
2. **Damage can be missing.** Significant damage may not be in the system if no insurer (or other appropriate entity) declared the car a total loss and no state branded it. A car repaired out of pocket after a big crash can show nothing.
3. **Some vehicles aren't covered.** Commercial vehicles may be missing where a state manages them in a separate agency's database.
4. **It doesn't replace an inspection.** The disclaimer says it plainly: a vehicle history report is not a substitute for an independent vehicle inspection.

Where to find what NMVTIS leaves out

You want to know…	On an NMVTIS report?	Where to look instead
Crash damage that wasn't a total loss	Often not	Independent inspection; repair invoices from the seller
Service and maintenance history	No	Seller's records; reports with service data, such as CarCheckerVIN's or Carfax
Open safety recalls	No	nhtsa.gov/recalls (free); recalls are in the CarCheckerVIN report
Stolen status	Not one of the five indicators	NICB VINCheck, free at nicb.org/vincheck
Liens and impounds	Not one of the five indicators	Your state's title record; lien history in a full report
Owner count, auction sales and photos	No	A full report such as CarCheckerVIN's (**vehicle history report**)
Owner names and addresses	Never released to buyers	Not available to the public (Driver's Privacy Protection Act)

How fresh is the data?

The disclaimer says states report on different schedules: some update in real time as title transactions happen, others once every 24 hours or within a period of days. Insurers and salvage yards report monthly. A write-off from last week may not appear yet, so recheck right before you pay if a deal drags on.

Providers can add more

The disclaimer also notes that approved providers can include vehicle condition data from sources other than NMVTIS. So ask what's in a report before you pay.

CHAPTER 5

READING TITLE BRANDS ON AN NMVTIS REPORT

A brand is the most important line on an NMVTIS report. Definitions vary by state, but NMVTIS groups brands into a common set. The categories below follow the Texas DMV's guide to the brands its NMVTIS title check returns.

Brand category	What it means	What to do
Clear	No brands were reported for the vehicle when the report was run	Good start; still inspect and check for unbranded total losses
Junk	Can't be operated safely on public roads and is worth only parts or scrap, or the owner has permanently designated it as parts. Texas says such a vehicle shall never be titled or registered	Don't buy it as a car. A road-going vehicle with this VIN is a major red flag
Salvage	Damaged so that repair cost exceeds a state-set percentage of its value; it can be rebuilt	Expect a long repair history; budget for inspection and lower resale
Rebuilt	A former salvage vehicle that passed the state's anti-theft and safety inspections or other procedures; also called prior salvage	Ask for repair and inspection paperwork; price it well below clean-title cars
Water damage / flood	Damaged by flood water	Inspect for corrosion and electrical faults; many buyers walk away
Manufacturer buyback	Returned to, or bought back by, the maker under warranty or a lemon law	Get the repair records for the defect that caused the buyback
Odometer	The mileage is reported as true or not true, for example “not actual mileage” or “exceeds mechanical limits”	Value the car as if the true mileage is unknown and higher
Custom / replica	Altered from the original design or built with a non-original body: reconstructed, replica, street rod	Check the build documentation and how your state registers it
Gray market	Built for use outside the U.S., brought in, and not compliant with federal standards; Texas won't title or register it	Avoid unless you've confirmed it can be legally titled where you live
VIN replaced	The original VIN was replaced by a new state-assigned VIN; not necessarily a problem	Research the correct VIN with the state that reported it

Definitions paraphrased from the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles' “Title Brands & What They Mean” (txdmv.gov). Other states use different wording and thresholds.

Brands that should stop you

Junk · Salvage · Flood · Not actual mileage — The car's value, safety or legal status is in question.

Brands that need a closer look

Rebuilt · Buyback · Replica · VIN replaced — Can be fine if disclosed and documented.

Learn more at **what does a branded title mean**, **types of car titles**, **junk title**, **flood check**, **lemon check** and **not actual mileage title**.

STATE BRANDS VS NMVTIS BRAND CODES

Each state writes its own brand names, and NMVTIS translates them into standard numbered codes. The Texas DMV publishes its translation table, which shows how much detail a state brand can carry, and how much the standard code can drop.

Texas code or brand	NMVTIS code	NMVTIS brand
Flood Damage	01	Flood Damage
Abandoned Motor Vehicle; Certificate of Authority (COA); Export Only	08	Junk
Nonrepairable Title, issued on or after 9/1/2003	08	Junk
Rebuilt Salvage: Damaged; Loss Unknown; 75–94% Loss; 95%+ Loss	09	Rebuilt
Reconstructed; Legal Restraint – Recond	10	Reconstructed
Salvage or Duplicate Salvage Title	11	Salvage – Damage or Not Specified
Nonrepairable Title, issued before 9/1/2003	11	Salvage – Damage or Not Specified
Evidence Surrendered by Owner or by Salvage Yard; Legal Restraint – Salvage / TRSalvage	11	Salvage – Damage or Not Specified
Replica	30	Replica
Legal Restraint – Owner Retained	32	Owner Retained
Manufacturer Buyback; Legal Restraint – Manufacturer Buyback CR9	47	Manufacturer Buyback
Export Only (also coded)	56	Export Only Vehicle
Not Actual Mileage	69	Not Actual Mileage
Mileage Exceeds Mechanical Limits	72	Exceeds Mechanical Limits

Source: Texas DMV, “Texas to NMVTIS Conversion Chart” (rev. 12/2020), txdmv.gov. Rows with the same NMVTIS code are grouped here; Texas maps “Export Only” to both 08 and 56.

Three lessons from one state’s table

Detail gets lost

Texas records how badly a rebuilt car was damaged (75–94% or 95%+ loss). All four versions become plain “09 Rebuilt”. Ask the state, or the seller, for the original brand.

Dates matter

A Texas nonrepairable title issued before September 1, 2003 maps to Salvage; one issued on or after that date maps to Junk. The same words can mean different things in different years.

Not every code is damage

“Owner Retained” and “Export Only” describe what happened to the car, not how badly it was hurt. Read the label before you panic, or relax.

CHAPTER 6

HOW TO GET AN NMVTIS REPORT

Getting an **NMVTIS report** takes about five minutes. The only real decisions are which provider to use and how much extra data you want on top of the five NMVTIS indicators.

1. **Copy the VIN from the vehicle.** Read all 17 characters from the dashboard plate through the windshield or the driver's door-jamb label, not from the ad. Listings are where most typos, and some deliberate swaps, happen.
2. **Open the DOJ's provider page.** Go to vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov and choose "Purchase a NMVTIS Vehicle History Report". Use the providers in the section for "both Commercial & Public Customers"; the other section is for businesses only.
3. **Pick a provider and check what you're buying.** The DOJ lists providers alphabetically and says the order implies no preference. Compare what each report includes, not just the price.
4. **Run the VIN and save the report.** Download or print the dated report. If you're buying from a dealer, it's useful evidence of what was on record that day.
5. **Read the five indicators against the paperwork.** Compare the title state, brands and odometer reading with the seller's title and the dash. Chapter 11 walks through common results.
6. **Fill the gaps.** Check recalls at nhtsa.gov/recalls, run NICB's free VINCheck, and book an independent inspection. Add a full history report if you want liens, owners, auction photos and service records.

How much does an NMVTIS report cost?

There's no single government price. The DOJ's own used-car buying tips, summarizing FTC advice, tell consumers to expect to pay up to $4 per report. The Texas DMV's title-check page says prices begin at only a couple of dollars and advises shoppers to note what is offered for the price.

In practice, many providers wrap the NMVTIS data into a larger report and charge more for it. A bigger report isn't automatically better; the question is whether the extra sections are ones you need.

Is there a free NMVTIS check?

Not from the government: the DOJ sends consumers to paid providers. You can, however, see whether records *exist* for free. CarCheckerVIN's preview shows what's on file for any VIN before you pay, and NICB's VINCheck shows insurer theft and total-loss records free.

Free preview: carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check

Other ways to see NMVTIS data

Through your state DMV

Some state motor vehicle sites send buyers to approved providers. Texas's "Title Check – Look Before You Buy" page lists several, notes the list isn't complete, and points to the DOJ page for the full one.

From the dealer

In California, a dealer must get an NMVTIS report before offering a used vehicle for retail sale and give buyers a copy on request (Chapter 10). Elsewhere, just ask; many dealers already have one.

CHAPTER 7

APPROVED NMVTIS DATA PROVIDERS

Only companies the Justice Department has approved may sell NMVTIS reports. The list moves: treat this November 2026 snapshot as a guide and check vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov before you buy.

Sell to consumers and businesses

Approved provider	Also owns (sells NMVTIS reports)
Bumper.com	BeenVerified.com
Carsforsale.com	VehicleHistoryReport.com
Carvertical.com	–
Checkthatvin.com	–
Clearvin.com	–
EpicVin.com	VinGurus.com, Vininspect.com
GoodCar.com	InfoTracer, Recordsfinder.com, StateRecords.org
Titlecheck.us	–
Vinaudit.com	VinCheck.Info
Vindata.com	–
VinReport	–
Vinsmart.com	–

12 approved providers in the DOJ's public section. Sites in the right-hand column are owned by the provider on the left; the DOJ lists them under it rather than as separate approvals.

Business customers only

Listed for commercial customers only
OneAIB.com (AutoBureau)
add123.com
CARFAX.com: “offers NMVTIS data to commercial customers in California only”
Vitu.com
Experian.com
Yassi.com

The DOJ’s dealer-only note

The DOJ page states that consumers cannot receive NMVTIS vehicle history reports from Carfax, DMVDesk or Experian, because those entities provide information only to car dealerships.

The FY2024 annual report counted nineteen approved providers with twenty-six websites; the live list changes as providers join or leave.

How to tell you’re dealing with an approved provider

- ☐ **Find it on the DOJ page,** not just on the provider's own site, and follow the DOJ's link to it.
- ☐ **Look for the NMVTIS logo.** The DOJ's consumer disclaimer tells buyers to look for it on approved providers' reports.
- ☐ **Expect the disclaimer.** Look for the DOJ's Consumer Access Product Disclaimer; California law defines an NMVTIS report as including the operator's required disclaimer.
- ☐ **Don't rely on state lists alone.** Texas's own list names some sites the DOJ files under a parent company and leaves others out, and says it isn't complete.

WHERE CARCHECKERVIN FITS

CarCheckerVIN isn't one of the providers on the DOJ list. Its full $14.99 report includes NMVTIS title records along with odometer, total-loss, lien, auction, service and recall data. Compare providers at **carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-approved-providers**.

CHAPTER 8

NMVTIS VS CARFAX: WHICH REPORT DO YOU NEED?

"Does a Carfax include NMVTIS?" is the most common question about **NMVTIS vs Carfax**. Carfax does handle NMVTIS data, but the Justice Department says a consumer can't get an NMVTIS report from it.

What the DOJ actually says about Carfax

Carfax is on the DOJ's provider page in the "Commercial Customers Only" section, noted as offering NMVTIS data to commercial customers in California only. The same page says consumers cannot receive NMVTIS vehicle history reports from Carfax, DMVDesk or Experian, which provide information only to car dealerships. A Carfax you buy yourself is Carfax's own product, not an NMVTIS report. That doesn't mean Carfax lacks title data, only that you can't buy the federal report through it.

	Basic NMVTIS report	Carfax report	CarCheckerVIN report
Price	Set by provider; DOJ tips say up to $4	Widely quoted at $44.99	$14.99; from $9 in packs
NMVTIS data for consumers	Yes, by definition	No, per the DOJ	Includes NMVTIS title records
Title brand history	Yes	Yes	Yes, plus state title brands
Service records	No	Its main strength	Yes
Other records	Odometer at titling, total loss, salvage	See Carfax's sample report	Odometer, owners, liens, total loss, auction photos, recalls
Guarantee	–	Buyback Guarantee (limits below)	–
Free option	–	Often free on dealer listings	Free preview for any VIN

Carfax's real strengths

Carfax, Inc. (founded 1984 in Virginia, part of S&P Global Mobility) is known for service records, and many dealers include a free Carfax on listings. AAA Premier members get one free Carfax a year by phone; Classic and Plus get a discount that varies by club.

The Carfax Buyback Guarantee

Carfax will pay if its report missed a DMV-issued title brand. It doesn't cover accidents, it has deadlines, and the payout is capped. Details at **carcheckervin.com/carfax-buyback-guarantee**.

A simple rule for choosing

1. **Screening several cars?** Use the free preview, then a $14.99 report with NMVTIS title records for each car on your shortlist.
2. **Dealer offers a free Carfax?** Take it for the service history, and still run an NMVTIS-based check.

Compare further: **Carfax VIN check**, **Carfax title check**, **how much is a Carfax report**, **VIN check vs Carfax**.

NMVTIS VS AUTOCHECK, NICB & FULL REPORTS

NMVTIS is one tool among several, each with different sources. Together they cover far more than any one alone.

EXPERIAN

AutoCheck

Experian's AutoCheck is known for auction data and the AutoCheck Score. On NMVTIS, the rule is the same as for Carfax: Experian.com is on the DOJ's list for commercial customers only, and the DOJ says consumers can't receive NMVTIS reports from Experian, which supplies that data to dealerships. See **AutoCheck vs Carfax**.

FREE · INSURER DATA

NICB VINCheck

NICB's VINCheck at nicb.org/vincheck is free, allows five searches per 24 hours per IP address, and shows stolen-not-recovered records and salvage or flood total-loss records reported by participating insurers, which account for 92.49% of earned U.S. premium. NICB says it isn't a full history report, but it covers theft, which NMVTIS's five indicators don't.

FREE · NHTSA

NHTSA recall lookup

Search by VIN or plate at nhtsa.gov/recalls; it skips recalls over 15 years old (unless the maker offers more) and some small makers. Recall repairs are free at franchised dealers.

What each check covers

Record	Basic NMVTIS report	NICB VINCheck	CarCheckerVIN report
State title brand history	✓	–	✓
Insurance total-loss records	✓	participating insurers	✓
Odometer readings	at titling	–	✓
Stolen-not-recovered	–	✓	–
Liens, impounds, auction photos	–	–	✓
Service records, open recalls	–	–	✓
Price	set by provider	free	$14.99

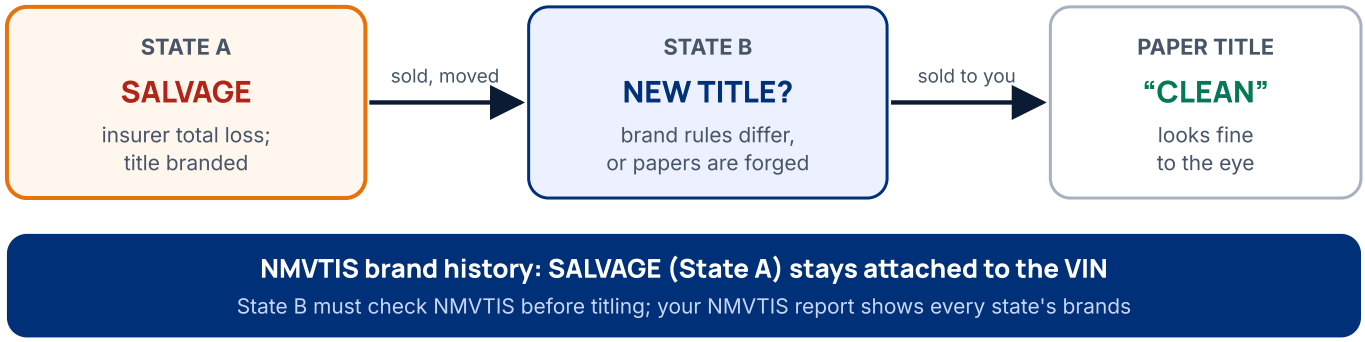
The combination that covers the most

NICB for theft, NHTSA for recalls, a report with NMVTIS title records for brands, total losses and mileage, then an independent mechanic. See also **which vehicle history report is most accurate**.

CHAPTER 9

TITLE WASHING: HOW NMVTIS CATCHES IT

Title washing is getting a clean title for a car that should carry a brand. The car doesn't change; the paperwork does. NMVTIS was built in large part to make that trick fail.



How washing happens

Rule shopping

States define "salvage" and other brands differently, and a later state isn't required to adopt an earlier state's brand. Moving a car to a state with milder rules can produce a milder brand, or a clean title, and that may be perfectly legal. The buyer still deserves to know.

Fraud

Forged or altered title documents, a lost-title application in a new state, or a title that "jumps" past owners who never registered the car (see **what is a title jump**). These are crimes, and they're exactly what the state's NMVTIS check is meant to stop.

Why NMVTIS makes washing hard

1. **The brand history follows the VIN.** NMVTIS keeps every brand any state applied, so the old brand shows up on your report even if today's title is clean.
2. **States must check before titling.** 49 U.S.C. 30503 requires a check through NMVTIS before titling a car bought from another state. The DOJ notes the system stops many kinds of fraud beyond simple "brand washing".
3. **Salvage reports can't be erased.** To prevent fraud, the operator may not allow anyone to delete a prior junk or salvage report (28 CFR 25.57(b)).

Red flags for a washed title

A recent title from a state with no link to the seller or the car's registration history · several title states in a short period · a seller who can't explain where the car came from · signs of flood or crash repair on a "clean" title · a price far below market. More at **carcheckervin.com/title-washing** and **how to spot title washing**.

VIN CLONING & ODOMETER FRAUD

Washing changes a car's paperwork. Cloning changes its identity, and rollbacks change its mileage. NMVTIS gives you a tool against both, if you know what to look for.

VIN cloning and destroyed-vehicle VINs

The DOJ explains why salvage-yard reporting matters: thieves like VINs from destroyed vehicles because the real car will never appear on the road again, and because a report to a single state may never flag or retire the record. Because yard reporting into NMVTIS is mandatory and the data is open to states and consumers, it's much easier to catch a destroyed car's VIN being reused.

So when an NMVTIS report shows a junk or salvage yard took a car in and reported it **crushed** or sold for parts, and the same VIN is now on a car for sale, stop. Either the record is wrong (Chapter 12) or the VIN plate on that car came from somewhere else. A state VIN inspection or police VIN verification will tell you which.

Four checks against a cloned VIN

- The dashboard VIN, door-jamb label and title VIN all match exactly
- The VIN decodes to the same year, model and engine as the car (**free VIN decoder**)
- No salvage-yard “crushed” or export record on an NMVTIS report
- The title state and date make sense for the seller's story

Odometer fraud

NHTSA estimates that more than 450,000 vehicles are sold each year with false odometer readings. The odometer reading is one of the five NMVTIS indicators: the statute requires NMVTIS to show the mileage disclosed when the title was issued and any later readings the state noted. If the dash shows fewer miles than the last reading on record, the odometer has been rolled back, replaced, or misreported.

What you see	What it can mean
Dash reading below the last titling reading	Rollback or replaced instrument cluster; walk away or demand documentation
“Not actual mileage” brand	The recorded mileage is known to be wrong; true mileage is unknown
“Exceeds mechanical limits” brand	The odometer has rolled past its maximum (for example, a five-digit odometer past 99,999)
Big gaps between readings	Not proof of fraud; ask for service records to fill the gaps

The federal odometer law

Federal odometer law is 49 U.S.C. Chapter 327. When intent to defraud is proven, the civil remedy is three times actual damages or $10,000, whichever is greater, plus attorney's fees.

The disclosure gap

Vehicles 20 years old or older, or of model year 2010 or older, are exempt from odometer disclosure, so older cars may have few recorded readings. See **odometer fraud** and **odometer check**.

CHAPTER 10

NMVTIS FOR DEALERS

Dealers sit on both sides of NMVTIS: they buy reports before stocking and selling cars, and some of them handle enough salvage vehicles to report into the system. Here's what applies, and where one state goes further.

Dealer access to NMVTIS

The regulation's definition of "purchaser" includes dealers, auction companies, businesses that buy used cars, and lenders financing a purchase, so **NMVTIS for dealers** is part of the system's design. Dealers can buy from any approved provider in the DOJ's public section, and also from providers listed for commercial customers only: OneAIB, add123, CARFAX (California only, per the DOJ), Vitu, Experian and Yassi.

California: a report before every retail used car

California Vehicle Code § 11713.26 bars a dealer from displaying or offering a used vehicle for retail sale until it has obtained an NMVTIS vehicle history report for that VIN from an NMVTIS data provider.

If the report shows the vehicle is or was junk or salvage, was reported as such by a junk yard, salvage yard or insurer, or has a title brand, the dealer must:

- Post a disclosure headed "WARNING" on the car while it's displayed, in bold black type on a red background of at least 4 × 5.5 inches, close to the FTC Buyers Guide
- Give the retail buyer a copy of the NMVTIS report on request before the sale

What the California rule doesn't do

- It doesn't apply where NMVTIS has no record for the vehicle, as long as the dealer tried to get a report.
- It doesn't make the dealer liable for errors or omissions in the report, or for data added after the report was pulled.
- It allows providers to add data from sources other than NMVTIS to the report.

This rule explains the DOJ's note that Carfax offers NMVTIS data to commercial customers in California only. California writes this requirement into statute; check your own state's dealer rules.

When a dealer must report into NMVTIS

The monthly salvage reporting duty falls on businesses that acquire junk or salvage automobiles, and the regulation names salvage pools and auctions handling total-loss vehicles. It exempts anyone handling fewer than five salvage, junk or total-loss vehicles a year (28 CFR 25.56(g)). A dealer that regularly buys insurance write-offs to repair and resell should check whether it counts as a salvage yard; the DOJ's reporting page lists approved third-party consolidators that file reports.

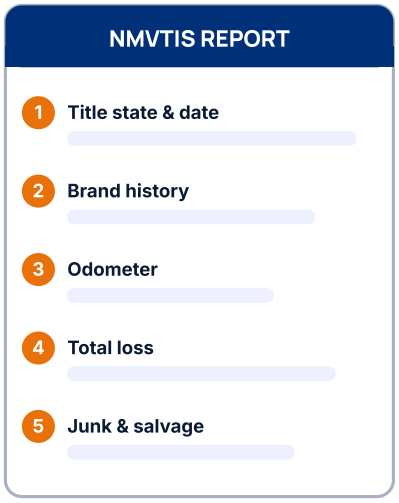
FOR DEALERS

CarCheckerVIN offers wholesale report pricing, bulk API access and white-label reports at **carcheckervin.com/dealers**, and you can paste a list of VINs to preview several cars at once. Compare other dealer options at **Carfax for dealers** and **AutoCheck for dealers**.

CHAPTER 11

READING YOUR RESULTS: 8 COMMON SCENARIOS

An NMVTIS report is short, but each line can mean several things. Here's how to read the most common results.



The five sections, in the order you'll read them

Layouts differ by provider, but every NMVTIS report covers the same five indicators. Read the title state and date first, because they frame everything else; then brands, the odometer, and total-loss and salvage records.

The schematic is illustrative only: it shows the sections, not any real vehicle's data.

Tip: keep the paper title next to the report. Most of the scenarios below come down to one question: does the paperwork agree with the federal record?

#	What the report shows	What it likely means → what to do
1	No brands, no total loss, no salvage records	The best result NMVTIS can give. Unreported crash damage is still possible: inspect.
2	"No record found"	Recheck the VIN for typos first. Some commercial vehicles may not be in a state's main title database. Ask for the title and verify the VIN on the car.
3	Insurer total loss, but no state brand	Possible: insurers can report a total loss the state never branded. Ask for repair records; inspect the damage area.
4	Salvage brand in one state, clean title from a later state	Classic title-washing pattern. Price as salvage, or walk away.
5	Junk-yard record says "crushed", but the car is for sale	Possible cloned VIN or a reporting error. Get a state VIN inspection before any money changes hands.
6	Rebuilt brand	A former salvage car that passed state inspection. Repair quality varies; get the rebuild paperwork and an inspection.
7	Last recorded mileage higher than the dash	Rollback or replaced cluster. Walk away unless there's documentation.
8	Manufacturer buyback brand	A lemon-law or warranty buyback. Ask what the defect was and whether it was fixed.

Two results at once?

Check they tell one story. Total loss, then salvage, then rebuilt is a normal sequence. A "crushed" record, or a salvage brand, followed by a clean title is not.

Write the timeline down

List every state, date, brand and mileage in order. Long gaps, quick moves across states or falling mileage need an explanation.

CHAPTER 12

ERRORS, DISPUTES & WHAT TO DO NEXT

Mistakes happen: a mistyped VIN at a salvage yard can tag the wrong car. The system's answer isn't deletion; it's documentation.

If a junk or salvage record is wrong

The regulation speaks to this directly. Where a vehicle is wrongly reported as salvage or junk and destroyed, 28 CFR 25.57 encourages the owner of the real vehicle to get an inspection in the current state of title, where officials can confirm its identity from hidden VINs, to file that inspection report with the state, and to keep a copy, so the vehicle's true history is documented. The same section bars the operator from letting anyone delete a prior junk or salvage report.

If another state's brand was applied in error: the Texas example

Texas sends owners a letter when a title brand from another state is applied to their Texas title. Its published process for an owner who thinks the brand is wrong:

1. **Contact the state that reported the brand.** Texas publishes a contact list for out-of-state motor vehicle agencies.
2. **Get a written statement** from that state, issued by an official on the state's letterhead, confirming either that the brand isn't in its records or that it was applied in error.
3. **Mail it to TxDMV** with the Texas title (if you have it) and a request to remove the brand. TxDMV reviews it and tells you whether a new title will be issued without the brand.

Texas only; other states have their own procedures.

Why reporters rarely back down

Federal law gives immunity from civil suits to anyone reporting to NMVTIS in good faith with a reasonable belief they followed the law (49 U.S.C. 30502(f)). Disputes are settled with paperwork, not lawsuits against the reporter.

Before you buy: let the record win

If a report shows a brand or salvage record the seller says is a mistake, the seller can fix it with the state before the sale. Don't buy on a promise that it will be sorted out later.

If you already bought a car with a hidden history

- Keep the ad, messages, bill of sale and your dated report
- Report fraud to police and your state attorney general
- Falsified mileage: see the federal odometer remedy (Chapter 9)
- Ask a consumer-protection attorney about state remedies

KEEP RECORDS

Every CarCheckerVIN report is dated and print-ready, which helps if you ever need to show what the record said on the day you bought. Start at **carcheckervin.com/salvage-title-check** or **title search by VIN**.

CHAPTER 13

YOUR NMVTIS VIN CHECK PLAN

Everything in this guide, reduced to one routine. Run it on every used car you're serious about, before you sign anything or pay a deposit.

Before you see the car

- [ ] Get the full 17-character VIN from the seller and a photo of the dashboard VIN plate
- [ ] Decode it free and confirm the year, model and engine match the ad
- [ ] Run a free preview at carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check
- [ ] Check open recalls at nhtsa.gov/recalls
- [ ] Run NICB's free VINCheck for theft and insurer total-loss records

At the car

- [ ] Match the VIN on the dash, the door jamb and the title, character for character
- [ ] Read the title for brands and the state it was issued in
- [ ] Note the odometer reading and photograph it
- [ ] Look for flood or crash repair signs: silt, rust in odd places, mismatched paint

Before you pay

- [ ] Buy a report that includes NMVTIS title records
- [ ] Compare every title state and brand with the paper title
- [ ] Check the dash mileage is above the last recorded reading
- [ ] Look for total-loss, junk and salvage records, and ask about each one
- [ ] Check lien records, and get a lien release if the title shows a lender
- [ ] Book an independent pre-purchase inspection
- [ ] Save the dated report with your purchase papers

Walk away if…
the VINs don't match, a junk or “crushed” record exists, mileage went backwards, or the seller won't let you run a report or inspect the car.

ONE REPORT, EVERYTHING ABOVE

CarCheckerVIN: the NMVTIS VIN check plus the rest

- Free preview for any VIN, no credit card
- Full report $14.99; 3 for $35.99, 5 for $54.99, 10 for $89.99
- Ready in under a minute and print-ready
- NMVTIS title records and state title brands
- Odometer readings, owners, total-loss and lien records
- Auction photos, service records, recalls, market value

Start at **carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check** · prices at **carcheckervin.com/pricing** · refer a friend for a free report at **carcheckervin.com/refer**

Shopping several cars?

Preview every VIN free, drop the ones with problems, and buy full reports only for the finalists. Paste a whole list of VINs on the **carcheckervin.com** homepage, or search by U.S. license plate at **carcheckervin.com/license-plate-lookup** when you don't have the VIN yet.

REFERENCE

NMVTIS GLOSSARY

AAMVA
American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators: the nonprofit that has operated NMVTIS since 1992.

Anti Car Theft Act of 1992
Public Law 102-519. Its Title II created the national title information system that became NMVTIS.

Approved NMVTIS Data Provider
A company approved by the DOJ to sell NMVTIS vehicle history reports; listed at vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov.

BJA
Bureau of Justice Assistance, the part of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for NMVTIS.

Brand
A label a state applies to a title to describe a vehicle's status, such as junk, salvage or flood.

Brand history
Every brand any state has applied to a VIN, kept by NMVTIS even after retitling.

Certificate of title
A state-issued document showing ownership of a vehicle.

Consumer Access Product Disclaimer
The DOJ notice that explains what NMVTIS data includes and excludes; linked from the DOJ's provider page.

Exceeds mechanical limits
An odometer brand: the odometer has rolled past the highest number it can show.

Insurance carrier
A business underwriting auto insurance; must report junk and salvage vehicles monthly.

JSI
Junk, salvage and insurance: the shorthand for records reported by yards, recyclers and insurers.

Junk automobile
Federal term: can't operate on public roads and has no value except as parts or scrap.

Junk yard
A business acquiring junk automobiles to resell, rebuild, restore or crush.

Manufacturer buyback
A brand for a vehicle returned to or bought back by its maker under warranty or a lemon law.

NMVTIS
National Motor Vehicle Title Information System: the federal title and brand history database.

NMVTIS report
A consumer report on five indicators: title state and date, brand history, odometer, total loss and salvage history.

Not actual mileage
An odometer brand: the recorded mileage isn't the vehicle's true mileage.

Operator
The entity designated to run NMVTIS under 49 U.S.C. 30502(b); currently AAMVA.

Rebuilt
A former salvage vehicle that passed a state's inspections; also called prior salvage.

Salvage automobile
Federal term: damage so severe that salvage value plus repair cost exceeds its pre-damage market value; includes total losses.

Salvage pool
A business that gathers junk and salvage vehicles from many sources for resale at one point of sale.

Salvage yard
A business acquiring salvage automobiles; includes recyclers, shredders, salvage pools and salvage auctions.

Title verification check
The NMVTIS check a state must run before titling a vehicle bought from another state.

Title washing
Obtaining a clean or milder title for a vehicle that carried a brand elsewhere.

Total loss
When repair costs and related losses exceed the vehicle's pre-accident value minus its salvage proceeds.

VIN cloning
Putting a real vehicle's VIN, often from a destroyed car, on a different, usually stolen, vehicle.

ANSWERS

NMVTIS REPORT FAQ

What is an NMVTIS report?

A vehicle history report from the federal NMVTIS database covering five indicators: current title state and date, brand history, odometer reading, total-loss history and salvage history.

How much does an NMVTIS report cost?

Providers set prices. DOJ tips say up to $4; Texas says from a couple of dollars. CarCheckerVIN's full report with NMVTIS title records is $14.99.

Is there a free NMVTIS check?

The government doesn't offer one. CarCheckerVIN's free preview shows whether records exist for a VIN, and NICB's VINCheck is free for theft and insurer total-loss records.

Can I get an NMVTIS report from Carfax?

No. The DOJ says consumers can't receive NMVTIS reports from Carfax, DMVDesk or Experian; they supply dealers only.

Does an NMVTIS report show accidents?

Only indirectly. It shows total losses, salvage records and brands. Damage that never led to a total loss or a brand may not appear.

Is NMVTIS better than Carfax?

They do different jobs: NMVTIS is the mandated title and salvage record; Carfax is strong on service history.

What does “no record found” mean?

Check the VIN for typos first. Some commercial vehicles aren't in state title databases. Verify the title in person.

Do dealers have to run an NMVTIS report?

In California, yes, before offering a used car for retail sale (Vehicle Code § 11713.26). Check your state's rules elsewhere.

Does NMVTIS stop title washing?

It makes it hard: brand history follows the VIN, and states must check NMVTIS before titling out-of-state cars.

How do I know a provider is approved?

Find it on vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov and follow the link from there. Look for the NMVTIS logo and the DOJ's disclaimer on the report.

Does NMVTIS show the owner’s name?

No. Owner names and addresses are never released to individual buyers.

How current is NMVTIS data?

States report at least every 24 hours, some in real time; insurers and salvage yards report monthly.

Does NMVTIS cover motorcycles and RVs?

Yes, plus buses, trucks, motor homes and truck tractors. Some commercial vehicles may be missing.

Can a salvage record be removed?

No. The operator can't let anyone delete a prior junk or salvage report. Owners document errors with a state inspection instead.

Who runs NMVTIS?

The U.S. Department of Justice oversees it through BJA; AAMVA operates it.

Does NMVTIS show odometer rollbacks?

It shows the mileage at titling and later state readings. A dash reading below the last record is a rollback red flag.

Does CarCheckerVIN include NMVTIS data?

Yes. The $14.99 report includes NMVTIS title records with odometer, total-loss, lien, auction and service data.

What is an NMVTIS VIN check?

Running a VIN against NMVTIS records. Preview free at carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check.

NMVTIS VIN CHECK

Check the title before you buy.

Free preview for any VIN. The full $14.99 report includes NMVTIS title records, title brands, odometer readings, total-loss and lien records.

carcheckervin.com/nmvtis-vin-check →

Scan to check a VIN

Sources

- Anti Car Theft Act of 1992, Pub. L. 102-519 (govinfo.gov)
- Anti-Car Theft Improvements Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-152 (govinfo.gov)
- 49 U.S.C. §§ 30501–30505 (law.cornell.edu)
- 28 CFR Part 25, Subpart B; 28 CFR 85.5 (ecfr.gov)
- U.S. DOJ / BJA, NMVTIS: providers, report contents, states, insurers, recyclers, history, glossary (vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov)
- NMVTIS Consumer Access Product Disclaimer, rev. Sept. 2022 (vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov)
- NMVTIS FY2024 Annual Report (vehiclehistory.bja.ojp.gov)
- Texas DMV, Title Check and Texas to NMVTIS Conversion Chart (txdmv.gov)
- California Vehicle Code § 11713.26
- NHTSA odometer fraud and recalls (nhtsa.gov); NICB VINCheck (nicb.org)
- Carfax price: independent pricing listings, 2026
- CarCheckerVIN prices: carcheckervin.com/pricing, Nov 2026

How we made this guide: written by CarCheckerVIN with AI assistance, from the public sources listed above; figures, prices and links checked November 2026.

More free tools at carcheckervin.com

VIN lookup
Free VIN check
License plate lookup
Recall check
Salvage title check
Title washing
NMVTIS approved providers
Carfax VIN check
Vehicle history report

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