

§ 20-57. Division to issue certificate of title and registration card.

(a) The Division upon registering a vehicle shall issue a registration card and a certificate of title as separate documents.

(b) The registration card shall be delivered to the owner and shall contain upon the face thereof the name and address of the owner, the registration number assigned to the vehicle, and a description of the vehicle as determined by the Commissioner, provided that if there are more than two owners the Division may show only two owners on the registration card and indicate that additional owners exist by placing after the names listed "et al." An owner may obtain a copy of a registration card issued in the owner's name by applying to the Division for a copy and paying the fee set in G.S. 20-85.

(c) Every such registration card shall at all times be carried in the vehicle to which it refers or in the vehicle to which transfer is being effected, as provided by G.S. 20-64 at the time of its operation, and such registration card shall be displayed upon demand of any peace officer or any officer of the Division: Provided, however, any person charged with failing to so carry such registration card shall not be convicted if he produces in court a registration card theretofore issued to him and valid at the time of his arrest: Provided further, that in case of a transfer of a license plate from one vehicle to another under the provisions of G.S. 20-72, evidence of application for transfer shall be carried in the vehicle in lieu of the registration card.

(d) The certificate of title shall contain upon the face thereof the identical information required upon the face of the registration card except the abbreviation "et al." if such appears and in addition thereto the name of all owners, the date of issuance and all liens or encumbrances disclosed in the application for title. All such liens or encumbrances shall be shown in the order of their priority, according to the information contained in such application.

(e) The certificate of title shall contain upon the reverse side an assignment of title or interest and warranty by registered owner or registered dealer. The purchaser's application for North Carolina certificate of title shall be made on a form prescribed by the Commissioner and shall include a space for notation of liens and encumbrances on the vehicle at the time of transfer.

(f) Certificates of title upon which liens or encumbrances are shown shall be delivered or mailed by the Division to the holder of the first lien or encumbrance.

(g) Certificates of title shall bear thereon the seal of the Division.

(h) Certificates of title need not be renewed annually, but shall remain valid until canceled by the Division for cause or upon a transfer of any interest shown therein. (1937, c. 407, s. 21; 1943, c. 715; 1961, c. 360, s. 2; c. 835, s. 5; 1963, c. 552, s. 2; 1973, c. 72; c. 764, ss. 1-3; c. 1118; 1975, c. 716, s. 5; 1979, c. 139; 1981, c. 690, s. 20; 1983, c. 252; 1991, c. 193, s. 7; 2016-90, s. 12(a); 2019-227, s. 2.)