

How many dealers do business in Wisconsin?

Statewide, WisDOT licenses and regulates approximately 800 new and 2,300 used car retail dealers; 2,000 other businesses, including vehicle manufacturers and wholesale and salvage dealers licensees; more than 20,000 salespeople; and nearly 10,000 Salvage Buyer Identification Card holders and Licensed Vehicle Buyers. WisDOT issues specialized license plates for dealers, manufacturers and other businesses, as well. The total number of licensed dealerships in Wisconsin fluctuates little from year to year. The number of new dealers entering the business annually and the number leaving the business are roughly equal.

Why are dealers inspected?

WisDOT performs more than 1,100 on-site dealership inspections annually to provide education; evaluate compliance with trade practice, record-keeping and business facility laws; and to resolve consumer complaints. WisDOT also performs approximately 200 on-site audits of third party agents that issue titles and plates to their customers on behalf of DMV.

What do inspections accomplish?

If infractions are identified during the inspection the dealer is given 15 days to correct those deficiencies. If the inspection yields no infractions the dealer is given an “all OK” rating. Occasionally a dealer may be granted a conditional license or denied a license based on inspection findings.

How much do they cost?

There is no fee for inspection.

What’s new?

On July 31, 2012 Wisconsin became a title-to-lien holder state. DMV will electronically deliver the majority of titles to financial institutions and receive electronic notification of release of liens. This means big changes for Wisconsin residents and businesses alike, but it is the first step to meet the larger electronic title goal.

For more information contact:

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