



April 16, 2020

## **Registration and Title Bulletin # 009-20 Policy and Procedure**

**TO:** All County Tax Assessor-Collectors and Dealers

**SUBJECT:** Application for Title During County Closure

### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidance on processing title applications during county closures.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) works closely with an affected county to provide support during a declared disaster or other event that necessitates a county tax assessor-collector's office to close. The TxDMV website contains a list of county closures based on information provided by county tax assessor-collectors to assist customers in determining what services, if any, the county is providing during a given closure. The information provided by the county tax-assessor collectors includes whether they are closed to applicants who are unable to have their title applications processed.

### **DETAILS**

Transportation Code, §501.023, allows a title application to be submitted to any county willing to accept the application if the purchaser's county of residence is closed. If the purchaser's county of residence is not closed, the application *must* continue to be submitted in the purchaser's county of residence or the county where the vehicle is purchased or encumbered if they are open.

A purchaser who buys a vehicle from a licensed Texas dealer must designate the county where a title application will be filed. The attached *County of Title Issuance* (Form VTR-136) has been revised to accommodate the purchaser's county of residence being closed and the dealer's statement to that fact. Form VTR-136 must be submitted with the title application when the purchaser selected their county of residence and it is closed.

If the purchaser completed a prior version of Form VTR-136 before their county of residence closed, a new designation must be made to acknowledge the title application may be submitted to any willing county. If the purchaser designated the dealer's or lienholder's county and that county is closed, a new designation must be made and can only be the purchaser's county of residence or the county of the dealer or lienholder, whichever remains open. The purchaser is not required to return to the dealership and make the new designation in person. The purchaser may electronically complete and submit Form VTR-136 or provide their designation via email. The dealer must retain this updated information with their records.

Transportation Code, §520.006, allocates the processing and handling fee to the processing county, but requires all other fees collected to be remitted to the purchaser's county of residence.

A checkbox has been added to the Owner Entry TTL007 screen in the Registration and Title System (RTS) to identify transactions processed on behalf of a closed county and facilitate the funds distribution. Guidance on processing these transactions will be provided in the release notes for RTS Release 9.6.1, scheduled to go live April 20; however, the TxDMV can enable the functionality upon confirming a county is closed.

### **DEALER ACTION**

Please ensure purchasers are completing Form VTR-136 to designate the county in which the title application must be filed. Submit Form VTR-136 with the title application to any county willing to accept the application if the purchaser designated their county of residence as the processing county, but it is closed. Ensure willing purchasers are completing a new Form VTR-136 if the seller's or lienholder's county was designated as the processing county, but is closed. If the purchaser does not wish to designate a new county, hold the title application and file it in the designated county once it opens.

### **COUNTY ACTION**

Please ensure the purchaser's county of residence is closed when processing a title application and your county is not the purchaser's, seller's, or lienholder's county. Ensure any title application submitted for a dealer transaction is accompanied by Form VTR-136 with the dealer's statement completed when the purchaser's county of residence is closed.

### **CONTACT**

If you have any questions, please contact your local Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Regional Service Center.

Sincerely,



Jeremiah Kuntz, Director  
Vehicle Titles and Registration Division

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Attachment