

Motor Vehicle Procedure Manual
Vessel Title
Vessel Titling Exemptions

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Legal Authority

[Section 328.03\(1\), Florida Statutes](#), provides that each vessel that is operated, used or stored on the waters of this state must be titled by this state unless it is exempt.

[Section 328.03\(2\), Florida Statutes](#), provides that a person shall not operate, use or store a vessel for which a certificate of title is required unless the owner has received from the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles a valid certificate of title for such vessel. However, such vessel may be operated, used or stored for a period of up to 180 days after the date of application for a certificate of title while the application is pending.

Description and Use

This procedure provides information and instructions to assist employees of the Tax Collector, License Plate Agent and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles for vessel titling exemptions.

Titling Exemptions

- A. A vessel operated, used or stored exclusively on private lakes and ponds.
- B. A vessel owned by the United States Government.
- C. A non-motor-powered vessel less than 16 feet in length.
- D. A federally documented vessel.

- E. A vessel already covered by a registration number in full force and effect which was awarded to it pursuant to a federally approved numbering system of another state or by the United States Coast Guard in a state without a federally approved numbering system, if the vessel is not located in this state for more than 90 consecutive days.
- F. A vessel from a country other than the United States temporarily used, operated or stored on the waters of this state for a period that is not more than 90 days.
- G. An amphibious vessel for which a vehicle title is issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.
- H. A vessel used solely for demonstration, testing or sales promotional purposes by the manufacturer or dealer.
- I. A vessel owned and operated by the state or a political subdivision thereof.

Revision(s) to Procedure

Statutory review. Added links to statutes.

04/14/14: Added Exhibit A.

01/12/10: Updated adding applicable statute including the terms “used, operated, and or stored” in sections I and II.

02/27/01: Updated section II, H.

Exhibit A Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Is a floating structure or houseboat required to be titled and registered?

Houseboats or floating structures are not normally required to be titled or registered. According to [section 327.02, Florida Statutes](#), the definitions for both preclude the use of the vessel as a means of transportation. However, if a houseboat is ever used as a means of transportation on the waters; it must be titled and registered. A floating structure is allowed incidental movement on the water, but must also be titled and registered if the structure is ever used as a means of transportation on the waters or is used to move things (such as dirt, etc.) from place to place.

The definitions for a houseboat and floating structure are in:

[Section 327.02\(14\), Florida Statutes](#), defines floating structure as a floating entity, with or without accommodations built thereon, which is not primarily used as a means of transportation on water, but which serves purposes or provides services typically associated with a structure or other improvement to real property. The term "floating structure" includes, but is not limited to, each entity used as a residence, place of business or office with public access, hotel or motel, restaurant or lounge, clubhouse, meeting facility, storage or parking facility, mining platform, dredge, dragline or similar facility or entity represented as such. Floating structures are expressly excluded from the definition of the term "vessel" provided in this section. Incidental movement upon water or resting partially or entirely on the bottom shall not, in and of itself, preclude an entity from classification as a floating structure.

[Section 327.02\(17\), Florida Statutes](#), Houseboat means any vessel which is used primarily as a residence for a minimum of 21 days during any 30-day period, in a county of this state, and this residential use of the vessel is to the preclusion of the use of the vessel as a means of transportation on water.