# Required Vehicle Documentation

Audit Readiness · https://atsfleetmanagement.com/docs/required-vehicle-documentation/

## Description

Vehicle documentation is a critical component of IFTA compliance and audit readiness. Auditors use vehicle records to verify fleet ownership, registrations, vehicle assignments, operational status, and jurisdiction reporting. Proper vehicle documentation helps support mileage records, fuel reporting, tax filings, and overall compliance management.

Vehicle records provide the foundation for proving that mileage, fuel purchases, and tax calculations are associated with the correct vehicles. Incomplete or inaccurate vehicle records frequently lead to audit findings and reporting discrepancies.

## Why Vehicle Documentation Is Important

Vehicle documentation helps:

- Verify fleet ownership
- Support mileage reporting
- Support fuel reporting
- Validate vehicle assignments
- Support audit compliance
- Reduce reporting discrepancies
- Confirm IRP registration status
- Verify operational history

## Required Vehicle Records

Every carrier should maintain:

✔ Vehicle Registrations

✔ VIN Records

✔ Unit Numbers

✔ Lease Agreements

✔ Ownership Documentation

✔ Vehicle Assignment Records

✔ IRP Registrations

✔ Vehicle Inventory Reports

✔ Vehicle Purchase Records

✔ Vehicle Retirement Records

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## Vehicle Registration Documentation

Vehicle registrations demonstrate that a vehicle was legally registered and operating during the reporting period.

Maintain:

✔ Current Registration Documents

✔ Historical Registration Records

✔ Registration Renewals

✔ Jurisdiction Information

Registrations should be retained even after a vehicle has been removed from service.

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## Vehicle Ownership Documentation

Ownership records help establish responsibility for reporting mileage and fuel activity.

Maintain:

✔ Vehicle Titles

✔ Purchase Agreements

✔ Financing Documents

✔ Ownership Transfers

✔ Sale Documentation

Auditors may request ownership records to verify vehicle reporting.

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## Lease Agreement Documentation

For leased vehicles, maintain:

✔ Lease Agreements

✔ Lease Renewal Records

✔ Vehicle Assignment Information

✔ Contract Terms

Leased vehicles should be documented with the same level of detail as owned vehicles.

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## Vehicle Assignment Records

Vehicle assignment records help auditors verify:

- Which drivers operated specific vehicles
- Assignment dates
- Fleet utilization
- Vehicle activity

Maintain:

✔ Driver Assignment History

✔ Vehicle Change Records

✔ Fleet Assignment Reports

✔ ELD Assignment Records

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## IRP Documentation

Maintain:

✔ IRP Registrations

✔ Apportioned Plates

✔ IRP Renewals

✔ Jurisdiction Allocation Records

IRP documentation often supports both mileage reporting and vehicle registration compliance.

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## Vehicle Inventory Documentation

Maintain a complete inventory of:

✔ Active Vehicles

✔ Inactive Vehicles

✔ Leased Vehicles

✔ Sold Vehicles

✔ Retired Vehicles

✔ Replacement Vehicles

Vehicle inventories should reconcile with fleet operations and reporting records.

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## Vehicle Retirement Documentation

When a vehicle is removed from service, retain:

✔ Sale Records

✔ Transfer Documentation

✔ Retirement Records

✔ Final Mileage Records

✔ Registration Termination Records

These records help explain why vehicles no longer appear in reporting periods.

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## Common Vehicle Documentation Problems

The following issues commonly create audit concerns:

### Missing Registrations

Registration documents cannot be produced.

### Missing Ownership Records

Vehicle ownership cannot be verified.

### Incorrect Vehicle Assignments

Drivers are associated with incorrect vehicles.

### Sold Vehicles Still Reporting

Vehicles removed from service remain active.

### Missing IRP Documentation

Apportioned registration records are unavailable.

### Incomplete Fleet Inventories

Vehicle records do not match actual operations.

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## Vehicle Documentation Best Practices

To maintain audit readiness:

## Review Vehicle Records Quarterly

Verify:

- Registration status
- Vehicle assignments
- Fleet inventory accuracy

## Maintain Historical Records

Retain:

- Registration history
- Assignment records
- Ownership documentation

## Verify Fleet Inventories

Confirm:

- Active vehicles
- Inactive vehicles
- Leased vehicles
- Retired vehicles

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## Warning Signs

The following conditions may indicate documentation issues:

Missing registrations

Missing VIN records

Inactive vehicles showing activity

Sold vehicles appearing in reports

Missing ownership documents

Missing lease agreements

Fleet inventory discrepancies

Missing IRP records

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## Vehicle Documentation Audit Checklist

Before each audit, verify:

✔ Registrations available

✔ VIN records verified

✔ Ownership documents retained

✔ Lease agreements maintained

✔ Vehicle assignments documented

✔ Fleet inventory current

✔ IRP records available

✔ Historical records retained

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## How Advanced IFTA Helps

Advanced IFTA supports vehicle compliance through:

✔ Vehicle Inventory Management

✔ Assignment Tracking

✔ ELD Integration

✔ Mileage Reporting

✔ Exception Reporting

✔ Fleet Compliance Monitoring

✔ Historical Reporting

✔ Audit Readiness Tools

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## Recommended Actions

1. Maintain complete vehicle files.
2. Verify registrations annually.
3. Update vehicle assignments promptly.
4. Review fleet inventory quarterly.
5. Retain ownership documentation.
6. Maintain IRP records.
7. Retain records for at least four years.

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## Related Articles

- Understanding IFTA Audits
- What Auditors Look For
- Audit Readiness Checklist
- Required Mileage Documentation
- Required Filing Documentation

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