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Jesse White Warns Consumers to Beware of Flood Damaged Cars Caused by Hurricane Harvey

To protect consumers White says titles for potential flood vehicles will be closely scrutinized

Secretary of State Jesse White is warning consumers looking to purchase used vehicles to beware of flood damaged cars resulting from flooding caused by Hurricane Harvey. In an effort to protect Illinois consumers, White has instructed his office to closely monitor title applications involving potential flood vehicles from the hurricane.

The Secretary of State's office will screen title applications from areas impacted by the flooding to determine if vehicles are registered in a flood county. White is requiring the applicants for those titles to submit a Hurricane Disclosure Statement to obtain a clean Illinois title. The statement must be signed by the registered owner of the vehicle and the insurance agent must verify that no flood claim was filed for the vehicle at the time of the hurricane. Any applicant unable or unwilling to supply the signed form will receive an Illinois Flood title only.

"We are taking every step possible to ensure that flood damaged vehicles from Hurricane Harvey do not receive clean titles in Illinois," White said. "In addition to the extra scrutiny these vehicles receive from my office, we are providing a link on our website at www.cyberdriveillinois.com to the National Insurance Crime Bureau's database of known hurricane damaged vehicles that consumers may check themselves."

Media reports indicate that as many as 500,000 vehicles may be affected by the hurricane's flood waters. This compares to 325,000 vehicles that were damaged by Hurricane Katrina, according to the National Insurance Crime Bureau.

White urged consumers to actively research as much as possible about a vehicle before making a purchase. Consumers may want to consult companies that provide additional information about the history of vehicles. In addition, it is always a good idea to have a mechanic inspect a vehicle before making a purchase.

"While my office will do everything it can to protect Illinoisans, it is always important that consumers also take active steps to protect themselves from purchasing damaged vehicles."