

Alaska is notably strict, but it is **not the only state** where imported vehicles over 25 years old face registration hurdles that differ from the federal "rolling" standard.

While [49 U.S.C. § 30112\(b\)\(9\)](#) allows vehicles at least 25 years old to be legally imported into the U.S. without meeting Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), this federal law governs **importation**, not **state-level registration**. States maintain the authority to set their own standards for titling and road use.

The Alaska Conflict

In Alaska, the [Division of Motor Vehicles \(DMV\)](#) currently enforces a static date rather than a rolling one. Under **2 AAC 92.020(a)(2)(A–B)**, any vehicle manufactured in **1981 or newer** must have a permanently affixed FMVSS certification label to be titled or registered for roadway use.

- **Federal Rule:** 25 years old (Rolling).
- **Alaska Rule:** Pre-1981 (Static).
- **Result:** A 1995 vehicle is federally legal to import but technically ineligible for a standard Alaska title/registration because it is "newer than 1981" and lacks the U.S. safety sticker.

Other "Difficult" States

Alaska is part of a small group of states that impose additional requirements that effectively bypass or complicate the 25-year federal exemption:

- **California:** This is the most prominent example. While a vehicle might be federally legal at 25 years old, California requires any gasoline-powered vehicle manufactured in **1976 or newer** to meet strict California Air Resources Board (CARB) emissions standards. For many imported "classics" (like the Nissan Skyline), the cost of bringing them into compliance with CARB is often prohibitively expensive, effectively creating a static 1975 cutoff for easy registration.
- **Hawaii:** Has historically had strict inspection and titling processes for "non-conforming" vehicles that can make the 25-year exemption difficult to navigate compared to more lenient states.
- **Rhode Island:** Recently gained notoriety for actively revoking registrations for certain imported "Kei" trucks and micro-cars, even if they were over 25 years old, citing safety concerns and a lack of FMVSS compliance.

Comparison Table: 25-Year Exemption Implementation

Jurisdiction	Standard Type	Key Restriction
Federal (NHTSA)	Rolling (25 Years)	Exemption from FMVSS for entry into the U.S.
Alaska	Static (1981)	Requires FMVSS sticker for all vehicles 1981 or newer.
California	Static (1975)	1976+ vehicles must pass modern emissions (CARB) testing.
Most States	Rolling (25 Years)	Generally follow federal age for "Antique" or "Classic" tags.