

321.126 Refunds of annual registration fees.

1. Refunds of unexpired annual vehicle registration fees shall be allowed in accordance with [this section](#), except that no refund shall be allowed and paid if the unused portion of the fee is less than ten dollars. Paragraphs “a” and “b” do not apply to vehicles registered by the county treasurer. The refunds shall be made as follows:

a. If the vehicle is destroyed by fire or accident, or junked and its identity as a vehicle entirely eliminated, the owner in whose name the vehicle was registered at the time of destruction or dismantling shall return the plates to the department and within thirty days thereafter make a statement of such destruction or dismantling and make claim for refund. With reference to the destruction or dismantling of a vehicle, no refund shall be allowed unless a junking certificate has been issued, as provided in [section 321.52](#).

b. If the vehicle is stolen, the owner shall give notice of the theft to the department within five days. If the vehicle is not recovered by the owner thirty days prior to the end of the current registration year, the owner shall make a statement of the theft and make claim for refund.

c. If the vehicle is placed in storage by the owner upon the owner’s entry into the military service of the United States, the owner shall return the plates to the county treasurer or the department and make a statement regarding the storage and military service and make claim for refund. Whenever the owner of a vehicle so placed in storage desires to again register the vehicle, the county treasurer or department shall compute and collect the fees for registration for the registration year commencing in the month the vehicle is removed from storage.

d. If the vehicle is registered by the county treasurer during the current registration year and the owner or lessee registers the vehicle for apportioned registration under [chapter 326](#), the owner of the registered vehicle shall surrender the registration plates to the county treasurer and may file a claim for refund. In lieu of a refund, a credit for the annual registration fees paid to the county treasurer may be applied by the department to the owner or lessee’s apportioned registration fees upon the surrender of the county plates and registration.

e. A refund for trailers and semitrailers issued a permanent registration plate pursuant to [chapter 326](#) shall be paid by the department upon application.

f. If a vehicle is sold or junked, the owner in whose name the vehicle was registered may make claim to the county treasurer or department for a refund of the sold or junked vehicle’s annual registration fee. Also if the owner of a vehicle receives a vehicle registration fee credit under [section 321.46, subsection 3](#), and the credit allowed exceeds the amount of the annual registration fee for the vehicle acquired, the owner may claim a refund for the balance of the credit. The refund is subject to the following limitations:

(1) If a vehicle registration fee credit has not been received by the owner of the vehicle under [section 321.46, subsection 3](#), the refund shall be computed on the basis of the number of unexpired months remaining in the registration year at the time the vehicle was sold or junked. The refund shall be rounded to the nearest whole dollar. [Section 321.127, subsection 1](#), does not apply.

(2) The refund shall only be allowed if the owner makes claim for the refund within six months after the date of the vehicle’s sale, trade, or junking.

(3) This paragraph “f” does not apply to vehicles registered under [chapter 326](#).

g. If the vehicle was leased and an affidavit was filed by the lessor or the lessee as provided in [section 321.46](#), the lessor or the lessee, as applicable, may make a claim for a refund with the county treasurer of the county where the vehicle was registered within six months of the vehicle’s surrender to the lessor. The refund shall be paid to either the lessor or the lessee, as specified on the application for title and initial registration pursuant to [section 321.20](#).

h. If the owner of the vehicle moves out of state, the owner may make a claim for a refund by returning the Iowa registration plates, along with evidence of the vehicle’s registration in another jurisdiction, to the county treasurer of the county in which the vehicle was registered within six months of the out-of-state registration. For purposes of [section 321.127](#), the unexpired months remaining in the registration year shall be calculated on the basis of the effective date of the out-of-state registration. However, for the purpose of timely issuance of

the refund, the claim for a refund under this paragraph is considered to be filed on the date the registration documents are received by the county treasurer.

2. Notwithstanding any provision of [this section](#) to the contrary, there shall be no refund of apportioned registration fees unless the state which issued the base plate for the vehicle allows such refund. If an owner subject to apportioned registration leases the vehicle for which the refund is sought, the claim shall be filed in the names of both the lessee and the lessor and the refund payment made payable to both the lessor and the lessee. The term “owner” for purposes of [this section](#) shall include a person in whom is vested right of possession or control of a vehicle which is subject to a lease, contract, or other legal arrangement vesting right of possession or control in addition to the term as defined in [section 321.1, subsection 49](#).

[C24, 27, 31, 35, §4924; C39, §**5008.22**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §321.126] 82 Acts, ch 1062, §22, 23, 38; 85 Acts, ch 87, §4, 5; 87 Acts, ch 108, §7; 90 Acts, ch 1154, §6 – 11; 92 Acts, ch 1073, §3; 95 Acts, ch 118, §19, 40; 2004 Acts, ch 1013, §21, 35; 2005 Acts, ch 133, §1; 2006 Acts, ch 1068, §18; 2006 Acts, ch 1070, §10, 11, 31; 2008 Acts, ch 1113, §97; 2010 Acts, ch 1069, §91; 2012 Acts, ch 1093, §10, 11; 2024 Acts, ch 1145, §24, 26

Referred to in [§321.46](#), [321.128](#), [326.15](#), [331.557](#)

2024 amendment to subsection 1, paragraph g effective January 1, 2025; 2024 Acts, ch 1145, §26

Subsection 1, paragraph g amended