

The information below replaces the information we have provided before.

1 Why we introduced the register

In January 2003 the Register of Number Plate Suppliers (RNPS) scheme was introduced in England and Wales to control the supply of number plates. This scheme is part of Government strategy to reduce vehicle crime.

The scheme is designed to stop motorists using fake number plates to avoid fines and penalties, and to make it more difficult for thieves who put false number plates on stolen vehicles to make the vehicle look legitimate. It is now more difficult for criminals to get number plates because they need to provide proof of their ID and proof that they are entitled to the number plate. The police continue to support this scheme.

The registration scheme regulates the supply of number plates in England and Wales. The Road Safety Act 2006 extended the scheme to include Scotland and Northern Ireland and will apply from 1 August 2008. From 1 November 2008 it will be an offence to supply number plates that do not keep to the Road Vehicles (Display of Registration Marks) Regulations 2001 and the British Standard BS AU 145d.

2 People considered to be number plate suppliers

You are a number plate supplier if your business involves supplying number plates (that is, finished plates that include the registration number of a vehicle registered with us or the DVA). Manufacturers, distributors, assemblers, motor factors (suppliers of spare parts for cars), motor dealers and retail outlets, including online retailers, could fall within the scope of the scheme if they supply the finished number plate.

3 People who do not have to register

The following people do not have to register as a number plate supplier:

- Suppliers who only supply plates for vehicles being registered in the UK for the first time
- Suppliers outside the United Kingdom
- Manufacturers of parts of number plates who do not sell complete plates
- People who make plates for their own use, rather than for sale (for example, a fleet operator who assembles plates and fits them to his fleet.)

Motor traders who fit new plates to used vehicles to sell on must register because the plates are supplied along with the vehicle.

4 Sales records

You must provide records of sales to help the police, DVLA/DVA Enforcement Officers and Trading Standards to detect crime.

You will need to keep records of the following information:

- The registration number of the plate being sold
- The customer's name and address and their entitlement to the number plate

- A number which we can use to trace the customer and is taken from **original documents**, the number would be:
 - a driver licence number and the document reference number shown in section 1 of the Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C/V5C(NI));
 - if only the V5C/2/V5C/2(NI) is available, the reference number is in the bottom left-hand corner of that document; or
 - in the case of plates fitted by a repairer an insurer has appointed, the insurer's reference and policy number.

(A sample template is provided on the last page of this form, but you can provide the information in whatever format you choose.)

You must keep sales records for three years and allow them to be inspected at any reasonable time.

V948 (Number Plate Authorisation Certificate)

This document is issued by us, the DVA or VOSA. It gives the holder authority to get number plates. When we, the DVA or VOSA issue the certificate it is given an official stamp of authenticity, which incorporates the date and individual numbers which can be traced back to the office it was issued from. You need to record these details as confirmation that you have seen a V948 to get number plates. The V948 is issued in limited circumstances and is valid for 30 working days from the date it is issued. It is a temporary authorisation to buy number plates. It allows the keeper to buy plates and use the vehicle before receiving the V5C/V5C(NI), which might take a couple of weeks to arrive.

In some circumstances, the police issue a V948 if number plates have been stolen. The police should provide traceable numbers on the form (for example, a crime reference number).

Acceptable documents

You must check and record document reference numbers, from **original documents**, to confirm the customer's identity, address and entitlement to the registration number. You must check and record details from at least one document from each list below. You should make sure the documents can confirm the name, address and entitlement.

Documents to confirm identity	Documents to confirm entitlement to the registration number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A driving licence, with or without a photo (whether or not it was issued in the United Kingdom) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Vehicle Registration Certificate V5C/V5C(NI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bill from an electricity, gas or water supplier, a landline phone bill, a council tax bill or rates bill in Northern Ireland (issued within the last six months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Keeper Supplement V5C/2/V5C/2(NI) of the Vehicle Registration Certificate V5C/V5C(NI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bank or building society statement (issued within the last six months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Certificate of Entitlement V750/V750(NI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A passport (whether or not it was issued in the United Kingdom) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Retention Document (V778) (does not apply in Northern Ireland)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national identity card issued by the government of a state or of a territory other than the United Kingdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Renewal reminder for a tax disc or SORN V11/V11(NI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A debit card or credit card (issued by a bank or building society) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Temporary Registration Certificate (V379) (does not apply in Northern Ireland)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A police warrant card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Number plate Authorisation Certificate (V948) with an official DVLA, DVA or VOSA stamp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An armed forces identity card 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter of authorisation from a lease or hire company, including a fleet operator. The letter must quote the document reference number from the V5C/V5C(NI)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of the insurer's name, reference and policy number (for repairs approved by an insurance company).

You should always record a relevant number from each of the original documents you see. For example, in the case of a driving licence, this would be the driver number. In the case of a V5C/V5C(NI) it would be the 11 digit document reference number (shown in section 1).

Used-vehicle dealers

Dealers who are registered as number plate suppliers and sell used vehicles with new number plates fitted have to keep a record of:

- the 11 digit document reference number shown in section 1 of the V5C/V5C(NI);
- the date the number plate was replaced; and
- the registration number of the vehicle

(This only applies to refitting plates, not selling replacement plates. In this case, suppliers must check a customer's ID and their entitlement to the registration number.)

Plates fitted after insurance claims

If you are a body repairer and you have fitted plates to a vehicle an insurer has referred to you, the V5C/V5C(NI) might not be available. In this case you can keep a record of the insurer's reference and policy numbers instead, together with proof of identity of the customer.

5 General points

- The person buying a number plate does not have to be the registered keeper. Someone can buy a number plate for another person.
- If you supply complete plates or parts of plates to other suppliers for them to sell on, you need to satisfy yourself that the business and outlets you are supplying are registered. You should keep a record of the supplier's registration number. The supplier fitting the final number plate is responsible for checking ID and proof of entitlement and keeping records of sales.
- If you do not keep proper records you are breaking the law under section 24 of the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001 and you could be fined up to £1000.
- Please make sure you dispose of unwanted number plates correctly and securely so they cannot be used illegally. Ideally you should cut them into at least four pieces with none of the pieces showing over half of the registration number.

6 Non-Compliant number plates

It is already an offence for motorists to display non-compliant number plates on their vehicles.

From 1 November 2008 it will become an offence to supply number plates that do not keep to the Road Vehicles (Display of Registration Marks) Regulations 2001 and the British Standard. This offence will apply throughout the UK and you could be fined up to £2500, suspended from the register for up to five years, or both.

The offence only applies to plates with a vehicle registration number (VRM) issued by us or DVA. It does not apply to plates without a VRM. For example, it will still be possible for car dealers to make plates showing the model of a car for use on a car in a showroom. These plates are not number plates in law and are outside the scope of the offence. It will be illegal to supply plates with the VRM mis-spaced to look like a name of an individual, using non standard font or colour, or with a slogan or message printed on them.

Information about the display of registration marks is given in the booklet Vehicle Registration Numbers and Number Plates (INF104).

Foreign number plates

The registration scheme does not apply to foreign number plates. However, you should make sure foreign plates are not for vehicles registered in the UK. To guard against fraud, you should ask for a document showing what vehicle the plates are for and, where possible, record a document number noted on the document.

7 Details on the internet

The following details are held on the website at www.businesslink.gov.uk

- The names of registered suppliers
- The addresses of registered suppliers

8 How to apply to be registered

You can download an application form from our website at www.businesslink.gov.uk or get a form by phoning us on **0870 600 1016**.

If you have just one place of business you must fill in and return application form V940.

If you have two or more places of business you must fill in form V940 and supplementary form V940/1.

Send the relevant form and the registration fee to:

DVLA
The Register of Number Plate Suppliers
Swansea
SA99 1DB.

You can apply and pay the registration fee of £40 for each place of business. This can be done by calling **0870 600 1016** and quoting a credit card or debit card.

If your application is successful you will receive an 'Acknowledgement Letter' (V942) to confirm that the business is a registered number plate supplier. Please keep this letter secure as it contains your supplier identity number (SID).

9 Registration fee

The one-off fee of £40 for each place of business covers our administration costs and the cost of enforcing the scheme.

Note: you must register your head office and each place of business, and pay a fee of £40 for each one. Your head office will be given the SID for the purpose of the register, and each further place of business will be shown as an outlet on the register under the head office's SID. However, subsidiary companies should register separately to get their own SID number.

10 How long registration lasts

Your registration will last as long as you supply number plates as part of a business.

Your registration will end if you stop trading as a number plate supplier. In this case you must tell us within 28 days.

A magistrates' court can suspend a business from trading for up to five years. When the suspension ends we will start your registration again. Before doing this we will write to ask you whether you will be trading as a number plate supplier.

11 Change of registration details

When your company changes from a limited company, a partnership or a sole trader to another, by law this may be classed as a new company and we will charge a fee.

To tell us about changes to your registration details you must fill in the 'changes' section on Acknowledgement Letter (V942) and send the letter to:

DVLA
The Register of Number Plate Suppliers
Swansea
SA99 1DB

By law you must tell us when company details change.

Warning – Using DVLA's name or logos (except where correctly describing or identifying services provided by us) when not authorised to do so could be an offence, and we can take legal action without giving notice.

12 Enforcement

In addition to the police and Trading Standards, representatives of the Secretary of State are able to enter premises of registered number plate suppliers without a warrant, at any reasonable time, to inspect number plates on the premises. They are also allowed to inspect and take copies of or seize any of the records held.

We (and the DVA) have a team of enforcement officers who visit suppliers' premises. They can answer questions and offer advice to help you keep to relevant laws. However, if they think that it is necessary they will investigate you and may proceed with a prosecution. If you are convicted of not keeping to the registration scheme, a magistrates' court may either fine you, suspend you from selling number plates, or both.

Sample template of a sales records

You must make sure that the **original** documents you see can confirm your customer's name, address and entitlement to the registration number.

Your company name

Supplier identity number (SID)

Vehicle registration number

Customer's name and address

Proof of identity provided

- Driving licence, with or without a photo (whether or not issued in the United Kingdom)
- Electricity, gas, water, landline phone, council tax bill or rates bill in Northern Ireland (issued within the last six months)
- Bank or building society statement (issued within the last six months)
- Passport (whether or not it was issued in the United Kingdom)
- National identity card issued by the government of a state or of a territory
- Debit or credit card issued by a bank or building society
- A police warrant card
- An armed forces identity card

Proof of entitlement provided

- Vehicle Registration Certificate V5C/V5C(NI)
- The New Keeper Supplement V5C/2/V5C/2(NI)
- Certificate of Entitlement V750/V750(NI)
- Retention Document V778 (does not apply in Northern Ireland)
- Renewal reminder for a tax disc or SORN V11/V11(NI)
- Temporary Registration Certificate V379 (does not apply in Northern Ireland)
- Number plate Authorisation Certificate V948 with official DVLA, DVA or VOSA stamp
- A letter of authorisation from lease or hire companies, including fleet operators. The letter must quote the document reference number from the V5C/V5C(NI)
- Record of the insurer's name, reference and policy number (for repairs approved by an insurance company)

A traceable number taken from **original documents** (not copies)

Original document	Document number

Your signature: _____ Date: _____

Your name (PRINT): _____

You must keep this sales record for three years and show it to a police officer, DVLA or DVA enforcement officer or trading standards officer if they ask to see it.