

# 6.3 Registration Plates and Vehicle Identification Number

| Information  | Method of Inspection  | Reason for Rejection  |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Registration Plates</b></p> <p><b>Unregistered vehicles</b> need not be fitted with registration plates.</p> <p><b>Foreign, diplomatic and military vehicles</b><br/>This inspection does not apply to foreign registered, diplomatic or military vehicles.</p> <p><b>Vehicles manufactured before 1 January 1973</b> may have registration plates displaying white, grey or silver characters on a black background.</p> <p><b>Registration plate markings</b> such as the BSAU number must be a part of the plate. Stickers etc are not allowed.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> A three-wheeled vehicle, which has a motorcycle derived front end, does not require a front number plate.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check that there is a registration plate at both the front and the rear of the vehicle, and check each one for security and condition.</li> <br/> <li>2. On vehicles first registered on or after 1 January 1973, check               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the colour of the characters and background</li> <li>• that the registration plates are fixed vertically, or as close to vertical as is reasonably practical.</li> </ul> </li> <br/> <li>3. On vehicles first registered on or after 1 September 2001, check that the registration plates               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. display the name and postcode of the supplying outlet</li> <li>b. display a BSAU 145d marking</li> <li>c. do not display a honeycomb or similar effect background</li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A registration plate               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. missing or incorrect</li> <li>b. so insecure that it is likely to fall off</li> <li>c. letter or figure missing or incomplete</li> <li>d. faded, dirty, delaminated, deteriorated or obscured, (for example by a towbar) so that it is likely to be misread or is not easily legible by a person standing approximately 20 meters to the front/rear of the vehicle</li> <li>e. background overprinted or shadowed with text e.g. vehicle manufacturer name</li> </ol> </li> <br/> <li>2.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a front registration plate does not have black characters on a white background</li> <li>b. a rear registration plate does not have black characters on a yellow background</li> <li>c. a registration plate not fixed vertically, or as close to vertical as is reasonably practical.</li> </ol> </li> <br/> <li>3. A registration plate obviously               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. not displaying the name and postcode of the supplying outlet</li> <li>b. not displaying a BSAU 145d marking</li> <li>c. displaying a honeycomb or similar effect background.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> |
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|---|--|--|
| <p><b>International symbols or flags</b> must be part of the manufacture of the registration plate. Stick on symbols or flags are not acceptable.</p> | <p>4. Refer to pages 4 - 6 and check visually that the characters are correctly formed, spaced, and are not obviously likely to be misread due to, for example, badly positioned or uncovered retaining bolts etc.</p> | <p>4. A registration plate with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. characters which are obviously not the correct height, character width, stroke width, not of equal width along their entire length or incorrectly spaced</li> <li>b. a character not correctly formed, sloping, or likely to be misread</li> <li>c. any feature that has the effect of changing the appearance or legibility of any of the characters, so that the true identity of the vehicle is less easily established</li> <li>d. characters formed using a font which is not substantially similar to the prescribed font</li> <li>e. characters formed using broken or multiple strokes</li> <li>f. characters laid out in an incorrect format</li> <li>g. a margin obviously less than the minimum requirement</li> <li>h. a non-reflective border obviously wider than permitted or positioned too close to the characters (see page 5).</li> </ul> |
| <p>Cont'd ↓</p>   | <p>5. On dual purpose registration plates, check that only an acceptable international symbol or flag is displayed (see page 6)</p>  | <p>5. A dual purpose registration plate displaying a symbol other than an acceptable international symbol or flag.</p>   |
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|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Vehicle Identification Number</b></p> <p>A Vehicle Identification Number (VIN or chassis number) is required on all vehicles first used on or after 1 August 1980, except those which are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• kit cars</li><li>• amateur built vehicles</li></ul> <p>If a VIN cannot be found the vehicle presenter should be advised of the likely location of the VIN and asked to thoroughly search for the number with the aid of the registration certificate. If following this action the VIN cannot be found, or in circumstances where more than one different VIN is present the vehicle presenter should contact the nearest Vehicle Registration Office.</p> | <p>6. Check that the vehicle is permanently displaying a legible Vehicle Identification Number.</p> <p>This can be either</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• on a VIN plate secured to the vehicle, or</li><li>• stamped or etched on the vehicle body or chassis.</li></ul> | <p>6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. a Vehicle Identification Number not permanently displayed or not legible, or</li><li>b. more than one different Vehicle Identification Number displayed.</li></ul> <p><b>Note</b> It is acceptable for a vehicle that has been manufactured as part of a multistage build, (a modification taken place to a vehicle at the manufacture stage before sold as new) to show more than one VIN. The second and subsequent stage VINs will also be a 17 digit VIN and will be displayed on an additional plate. When a multistage built vehicle is presented for test the last stage VIN must be used for MOT documentation.</p> |

**Prescribed Font**

**I23456789  
ABCDEFGHI  
JKLMNOPQ  
RSTUVWXYZ**

**Note:** 3D and some other style characters are permissible, provided the font style is adhered to.

**Format**

**New style (from 1 September 2001) registrations** must be set out in either a one or two line format as illustrated below



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## 6.3 Registration Plates – Additional Information

Vehicles registered before 1 September 2001, can be set out in either one, two or three line formats, as illustrated below

AI23 ABC

AI23  
ABC

A  
I23  
ABC

ABC I23A

ABC  
I23A

ABC  
I23  
A

### Cherished Plates

Older style registrations must meet the registration plate requirements according to the date of first registration of the vehicle, with a format style similar to that illustrated below e.g. letters on one line, figures on another, or a larger space between the two groups of characters.

ABC I23

ABC  
I23

### Northern Ireland Registration Plates

These are not age related and usually consist of three letters followed by four numbers. They must conform to the same standards as other UK registration plates, depending on the date of first registration. This includes the optional display of the distinguishing sign of the UK.

### Borders

Registration plates can optionally display a non-reflective border with a maximum width of 6mm and not closer than 5mm to the characters.

**Dual Purpose Registration Plates**

Registration plates on any age of vehicle may also display the distinguishing sign of the UK, as shown below. Display of the Union flag, Scottish Saltire, Cross of St George, Red Dragon and their respective National identifiers are also permitted. Other emblems, such as football team crests etc are not allowed.



**Size of Characters**

Testers are not required to physically measure the characters or their spacing and the following information is provided for guidance only. Registration plates should only be rejected for character dimensions or spacing if they are clearly incorrect.

| Relevant Dimension                                       | Tricycles & quadricycles | All other vehicles |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Character height   | 64mm                     | 79mm               |
| Character width<br>(except for the figure 1 or letter l) | 44mm                     | 50mm               |
| Stroke width   | 10mm                     | 14mm               |
| Space between two characters in group                    | 10mm                     | 11mm               |
| Vertical space between groups of characters              | 13mm                     | 19mm               |
| Horizontal space between groups of characters            | 30mm                     | 33mm               |
| Margins (minimum)  | 11mm                     | 11mm               |

**Note 1: Some vehicles registered before 1 September 2001 may be fitted with larger plates that have characters 89mm high and other relevant dimensions that are subsequently larger.**

**Note 2: Imported vehicles whose construction/design cannot accommodate standard size number plates are permitted to display registration plates with smaller characters, in line with those for tricycles and quadricycles detailed in the table. Their margins and vertical space between groups may also be reduced to 5mm.**

**Note 3: The space permitted between a “1” or an “l” and another character is proportionately greater than the above dimensions.**