



Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency

**INF46**  
Vehicle Services

## Registration numbers and you



For more information go to  
[www.gov.uk/personalised-vehicle-registration-numbers](http://www.gov.uk/personalised-vehicle-registration-numbers)

Simpler | Better | Safer



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## 1. Registration numbers

Registration numbers are a way of identifying vehicles. **All registration numbers are owned by the Secretary of State** and are allocated to vehicles (and may be withdrawn) as part of the process of registering and taxing vehicles.

## 2. Displaying registration numbers

Registration numbers must be correctly displayed in line with the law. You must go to a Registered Number Plate Supplier (RNPS) to get a number plate. The list of RNPS suppliers is available from

**[www.gov.uk/number-plate-supplier](http://www.gov.uk/number-plate-supplier)**

If you do not keep to the law relating to the style, size and spacing of letters and numbers on number plates, you could be fined up to £1000 and the registration number may be permanently withdrawn from use.

Further information is available in our leaflet

**Vehicle registration numbers and number plates (INF104)** – which you can download from **[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)**

**You cannot use a registration number to make your vehicle appear younger than it actually is.**

## 3. Buying a personalised registration number



Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency

### Personalised Registrations

We have our own sales scheme, offering a range of registration numbers which have never been issued. Through this scheme you can buy the right to have a particular registration number assigned (put on) to a vehicle.

Visit our website at **[www.dvlaregistrations.direct.gov.uk](http://www.dvlaregistrations.direct.gov.uk)** to see what personalised registrations we have available and how much they cost. Prices start from £250, and include VAT and the 'assignment fee' (the fee we charge to put the registration number on a vehicle). When you are ready, you can buy online 24 hours a day.

We hold five traditional auctions and three timed auctions each year.

Full details of each auction are advertised in the press and on our website. If you would like more information about our auctions, please go to [www.dvlaregistrations.direct.gov.uk](http://www.dvlaregistrations.direct.gov.uk)

**Registration numbers bought under our sales scheme can only be used on vehicles that are registered (or about to be registered), are taxed (or are being taxed), or have a SORN in force at the time of application and used in the UK.**

#### **4. What do you get for your money?**

You buy the right to have the registration number assigned to a vehicle registered in your name, or in the name of another person (the nominee).

**The nominee has no right to the registration number until it is assigned to their vehicle.**

We will send you a 'certificate of entitlement' (V750). This will include details of:

- the registration number
- the purchaser and nominee
- the date the right to assign the registration number will end (see section 8).

You can extend the right for a further 10 years. You can apply up to 28 days prior to its expiry. You can add (if you do not have one), or change a nominee up until or at the same time the registration number is assigned. More details about this are on the V750.

#### **5. Where else can you get a registration number?**

Dealers in registration numbers advertise in the national press or specialist magazines and many have their own website. They may sell registration numbers from their stock or act as an agent for motorists who want to sell the registration number from their vehicle. Dealers may also sell registration numbers that they have bought from us, but they are **not** acting on behalf of DVLA.

## 6. Selling a vehicle which has a personalised registration number

Do not sell or transfer your vehicle before you move the personalised registration number to your new vehicle (transfer it) or put it on hold (retain it).

If you sell or transfer your vehicle before we give you a new V5C with a replacement registration number, the personalised registration number will pass to the new registered keeper.

We either:

- allocate (assign) a vehicle with a registration number
- hold the number (retain) for the registered keeper.

The registered keeper is the only person who has the right to apply to transfer or retain the registration number. It is not personal property so remember, when you want to sell your vehicle displaying a personalised plate if you don't move it... you'll lose it.

## 7. Transferring and retaining (keep the use of) a registration number

### Transferring a registration number

A transfer allows a registration number to be moved from one vehicle to another. Only the registered keeper of a vehicle can apply to transfer its registration number. **When a vehicle is registered with another registration number, that vehicle will have its existing registration number withdrawn unless you apply to transfer or retain it at the same time.**

### Retaining a registration number

A retention allows a registration number to be removed from a vehicle and held on a document.

You can retain a registration number for 10 years.

Only the registered keeper of a vehicle can apply to retain a registration number and choose to become the grantee or give the details of someone else.

The grantee has the right to the registration number. The grantee has the right to assign (put on) the registration number to a vehicle registered

in someone else's name. This person is known as a nominee.

We will issue a **'retention document' (V778)** to the grantee. This will include details of:

- the registration number
- the nominee (if one is given in the application)
- the date the registration number should be assigned by.

**The nominee has no right to the registration number until it is assigned to their vehicle.**

Once the grantee has assigned the registration number to their or their nominee's vehicle, the right to the registration number goes to the registered keeper of that vehicle.

## **How to apply to transfer or retain a registration number**

If you would like to take the number off a vehicle and keep it on a retention document for up to 10 years. You can do this online at

**[www.gov.uk/keep-registration-number](http://www.gov.uk/keep-registration-number)** (the fee is £80).

You can also transfer the registration number onto another vehicle online at

**[www.gov.uk/keep-registration-number](http://www.gov.uk/keep-registration-number)** (the fee is £80). You can complete the process by putting the registration number onto the vehicle immediately afterwards at

**[www.gov.uk/put-registration-number-vehicle](http://www.gov.uk/put-registration-number-vehicle)**

Alternatively, you, as the registered keeper, will need to fill in form V317. This form contains more information about transferring or retaining a registration number. You can get the form from **[www.gov.uk/dvlaforms](http://www.gov.uk/dvlaforms)** or from DVLA.

## **Registration numbers that cannot be transferred**

Check your Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C) before you apply, to make sure that the registration number can be transferred. If the V5C states that the registration number is non-transferable, you cannot transfer or retain it.

## **Registration numbers starting with 'Q'**

If a vehicle has a registration number starting with 'Q' or 'QNI' prefix, that registration number cannot be transferred and must stay on the vehicle.

### **8. Your right to assign or retain your registration number is due to end**

**You must either assign the registration number or apply for an extension before this happens.**

Your V750 or V778 will tell you how to do this.

**You will lose your right to the registration number if you act too late.**

You can extend the right to a registration number for 10 years.

### **9. Adding or changing a nominee's details on your certificate of entitlement or retention document**

You can do this as long as your certificate or document has not run out. Your V750 or V778 will tell you how to do this.

### **10. You no longer want to assign the registration number**

You can apply for a refund of the assignment fee (if you paid the assignment fee at the time you purchased or retained the registration number).

If you have a certificate valid for 10 years, you can apply for a refund before the expiry date of your V750 or V778 certificate. For any other certificate, you can apply for a refund within six years of the expiry date.

**Once a certificate has expired, you lose the right to display the registration number.**

## 11. Your vehicle is leased

Only the vehicle's registered keeper can apply to transfer or retain a registration number. The leasing company (if they are the keeper) would have the right to transfer or retain the registration number. If you still want to assign a registration number on a leased vehicle, check with the leasing company that they agree to you doing so and that they are prepared to co-operate with transferring or retaining the registration number in the future.

## 12. Your vehicle is stolen and not recovered

After a year you can apply to have its registration number **transferred to your replacement vehicle** as long as certain conditions of the transfer scheme are met. In addition the following must also apply:

- the theft must have been reported to the police
- the theft has been on DVLA records for at least 12 months (the police should tell DVLA for you) but for no more than three years
- the vehicle had a valid MOT certificate when it was stolen
- the vehicle had valid vehicle tax at the time of theft.

To apply, or for more information, write to:

### **Personalised Registrations**

DVLA

Swansea

SA99 1DS

You will need to give the registration number.

If your vehicle is recovered and you or your insurer decide to sell or destroy it, you'll need to apply to keep or transfer your registration number online at **[www.gov.uk/keep-registration-number](http://www.gov.uk/keep-registration-number)** or using form V317 before the vehicle is disposed of.



### **13. Your vehicle is written off**

You can still apply to transfer or retain the registration number as long as:

- the vehicle is available to be inspected (we will also ask for an insurer's engineers report)
- you can meet all the conditions of the transfer or retention schemes.

**Important – if you want to transfer or retain the registration number you must make sure your insurers know that the vehicle must be made available for us to inspect. If your insurers settle your claim and sell the vehicle as salvage before the registration number is properly transferred or retained, it will pass with the vehicle to the new keeper and you will lose your right.**

Once you have successfully transferred or retained your registration number from the written off vehicle, let your insurers know about the change of registration number and send them the replacement **V5C**. If your insurers intend to sell the write off as salvage, the vehicle must display the replacement registration number.

### **14. Your vehicle no longer exists or has been scrapped**

**Once a vehicle no longer exists its registration number is withdrawn.**

If your vehicle has been scrapped, you will not be able to transfer its registration number. For more information you can visit **[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)**

## 15. What happens to the registration number if you export your vehicle?

By law you must tell us if you are taking your vehicle abroad for more than 12 months.

If you want to transfer or retain the registration number you must do so before the vehicle leaves the UK. You cannot apply once the vehicle is out of the country.

You should get advice from Customer Enquiries, **well before** the date the vehicle is being exported. Please phone 0300 790 6802. Lines are open between 8am and 7pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 2pm on Saturdays.

## 16. Keeping the registration number if you rebuild or convert your vehicle

Not all registration numbers can be transferred. Your V5C will say if you can transfer the registration number. If you can you should consider:

- transferring it to another vehicle
- retaining it on a document **before breaking up or carrying out any alterations or conversions**. If you do not do this you may lose your right to the registration number.

For more information see our leaflet, Guidelines for the registration of rebuilt or radically altered vehicles and kit cars (INF26).

## 17. Transferring and retaining the registration number of an old vehicle which is not registered at DVLA

It is possible for you to register the vehicle at DVLA, but you will not be able to transfer or retain the registration number.

For more details you can visit **www.gov.uk** or see leaflet How to register your 'old' vehicle (V848).

## Further information

For more information you can visit

**[www.gov.uk/personalised-vehicle-registration-numbers](http://www.gov.uk/personalised-vehicle-registration-numbers)**

You can also phone Customer Enquiries (Vehicles)

on **0300 790 6802** between 8am and 7pm

Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 2pm on

Saturdays.

**All fees quoted were correct when  
this booklet was printed.**

## Buying a vehicle?

The tax is no longer transferable so you must tax it before you use it.

[www.gov.uk/vehicletaxrules](http://www.gov.uk/vehicletaxrules)

