



Number plates.

Taxi Compliance Officer Information Sheet 21

The rules about what Vehicle Registration Marks should look like and how they should be displayed are very complex and highly regulated. This sheet deals with what you need to know as a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle licence holder.

What are the basic rules ?

- Number plates must be made to the correct standard (currently BS AU 145e). You can find out more about the size and font of the characters here : www.gov.uk/government/publications/vehicle-registration-numbers-and-number-plates
- Number plates must be easily read. They should not be dirty or obscured. "Taxi" plates must not cover up any part of the characters including any cable ties used to secure the plate.
- The characters cannot be misrepresented. They must appear in the same format as your V5. Number plate screws etc must not change the appearance of the character.
- The rear number plate must be lit at night.
- The plate must be retroreflecting to a certain standard. You cannot make the white or yellow backgrounds any darker.
- The plate can only show certain National Identifiers, for example "GB" "Wales", Union Flag, Red Dragon etc. It cannot display the name of a football team/religious icon/military insignia etc.

Can I use square number plates ?

Yes. You can display your "taxi" plate next to a square number plate. However, please check that you get the right plate for a car, not for a motorcycle as the characters are smaller on these and not allowed on cars.

Characters on car plates will be 79mm high and 50mm wide (except for 1 or l), and the thickness of the character will be 14mm.

What happens if I display a number plate which does not comply with the rules ?

You could be given a Fixed Penalty Notice for £100, or be taken to Court. If its a personalised plate then the DVLA may be informed who could withdraw that registration mark.

If a plate is found to be adapted to prevent it being read by a camera (like a film or coating being put over it), the driver of the vehicle may still be liable to a Penalty even if they are unaware of the adaptation.

It may also be a breach of your Licensing Conditions which your Council may also deal with, or check on their Inspections of your vehicle.

I will normally take action on incorrect number plates, to prevent other drivers thinking “its ok”, and also displaying illegal plates.

What should I do if someone else is using my vehicle registration mark, or my number plate is stolen ?

If you think someone else is using your number plate, or has cloned your vehicle please contact the police and DVLA to report it. It would also be worth letting your Council know too.

Report to the police by calling 101 or better still online at www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report

I do have a supply of anti-theft screws you can use to prevent the theft of your number plate, just ask me for a pack.

I will produce a separate Information Sheet about Cloned vehicles in the future.

Who can make number plates ?

Be careful about who you use. Some number plates advertised on the internet are made abroad and do not comply with our standards, even though they may be marked with the BS number. Number plates should only be manufactured by a registered number plate supplier. They will need to see proof of your name and address and that you are allowed to use that registration number – usually that’s the V5.

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This is one of a series of information sheets produced for the benefit of Driver, Vehicle and Operator licence holders by Police Constable 4645 Patrick QUINTON, Taxi Compliance Officer, The Bridewell Police Station, Bristol, BS1 2AA

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To join the “Taxi Cop” WhatsApp group, and get information about PC Quinton’s work, news updates and licensing/law updates, send a message to 07469 400832. Your details will not be visible to any other members of the group and your privacy is protected.

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