

**REDUCING
MOTORCYCLE EVASION
OF
VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY (VED)**

A Consultation Paper

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Introduction

- 1.1 Almost a quarter of all motorcycles are unlicensed and the vehicle records for these are therefore out of date. Inaccurate records have an impact on road safety and law enforcement. Without an accurate record, there will continue to be spiralling motorcycle thefts, rising insurance premiums and poor prospects of recovering motorcycles when they are stolen. The purpose of this paper is to address the high level of evasion of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and to improve the accuracy of the vehicle register. This consultation paper sets out the main issues for consideration and seeks views on them.
- 1.2 The Aim of this paper is to reduce the level of evasion amongst motorcyclists and to improve the accuracy of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) vehicle records. To do this, the government needs to:
 - Induce motorcycle keepers to relicence their vehicles
 - Identify a specific location for the display of vehicle excise licences (commonly referred to as tax discs) to aid police, traffic wardens etc.
 - Stop discs from becoming targets for theft
 - Continue to provide for refunds
- 1.3 A consultation document on reforming motorcycle VED was issued by Treasury in December 2001, and deals specifically with rates of VED. It is entirely separate from this consultation.
- 1.4 A Press Release will be issued after the consultation period to publicise the results.
- 1.5 This document complies in all respects with the 'code of practice on written consultation' issued by The Cabinet Office. If you consider that this document does not comply with the consultation criteria reproduced at Annex B, please write setting out the areas where you feel the document departs from the criteria. The address to write to:

Mr Robert Toft
Consultation Co-ordinator
DVLA
Swansea Vale 2
Sandringham Park
Swansea
SA7 0EU

Invitation to Comment

- 2.1 The Government seeks your suggestions on how to achieve the objectives outlined in paragraph 1.2. Your ideas may be different to, supportive of, or a combination of any possible proposals in section 4. It would greatly ease the job of analysis if the responses were made on the form in Annex A, although other and more general comments are also welcome.
- 2.2 It is normal, on request, for the Agency to make information available about the volumes and names of organisations that replied to consultation papers. We would also give a summary of the main points made. However, we will give information about the views expressed only if we have the consent of those who provided them. Please therefore indicate in your response, whether you consent to us divulging the text of your reply or a summary of your comments.
- 2.3 You are invited to send comments to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. All views received by 9 August 2002 will be taken into account. The address to respond to is:

Debra Hams
Motorcycle Enforcement
Consultation Enforcement
Business Planning Driver and
Vehicle Licensing Agency
Swansea Vale 2
Swansea
SA7 0ED
Telephone number 0870 6001016
Fax number 01792 765147
E-mail vedenf.ebp.ops@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

- 2.4 Internet responses may be sent using the electronic version of this document available at <http://www.dvla.gov.uk>
- 2.5 Please note responses to this document will be considered carefully, but will not be acknowledged individually. Responses and the name of the respondents may be quoted and made available to the public. Please indicate if you do not wish this information to be made available (see the response form at annex A)

3. Background

- 3.1 The 1999 National Roadside Survey estimated that almost 25% of motorcycles were unlicensed. This represents 265,000 vehicles (an annual revenue loss of £11.3 million). If a vehicle is unlicensed it is also likely to be without a current MoT certificate and insurance cover.
- 3.2 Accurate data is critical to the Agency's ability to conduct its business effectively. It is a product of the Agency's business and is the basis upon which road safety and the fight against crime is facilitated. Taking enforcement action against those who evade VED is vital to establishing an accurate vehicle record.

- 3.3 The motorcycle class has the highest level of evasion but includes some of the lowest rate of duty. There may be several reasons for this such as the high cost of insurance premiums for younger riders and the risk of theft of the disc. Since insurance and (if the vehicle is over three years old) MoT certificates have to be produced at the relicensing stage, any motorcyclist who cannot afford the insurance cannot obtain a tax disc. Another reason for the evasion is their seasonal use, which some riders believe reduces the risk of detection.
- 3.4 Evasion amongst vehicles (across all classes) more than 10 years old is more than twice the evasion of level of vehicles less than 10 years old. Evasion is around 10 times higher for vehicles whose owner details are not known.
- 3.5 It is not always easy to spot tax discs on motorcycles because they are displayed in several places. Motorcyclists are therefore often unnecessarily.
- 3.6 Motorcycle discs are sometimes stolen for display on other classes of vehicles thus giving them the appearance of being licensed. Consequently, many motorcyclists carry their discs around rather than display them on their vehicles. Motorcyclists who have licensed their vehicles therefore risk getting stopped by the police.
- 3.7 Few motorcycles have been wheelclamped under the DVLA's wheelclamping scheme because they are not generally parked on public roads or kept on the roadside overnight. They are also manoeuvrable enough to avoid roadside checks.
- 3.8 16,665 motorcycles were involved in VED enforcement action in 2000/01.
- 3.9 Currently relicensing takes place at participating post offices (around 4,000 Nationwide). A tax disc is issued on production of a valid insurance certificate and, if the vehicle is over 3 years old, a current MoT certificate. Work is currently underway to provide keepers with the option of relicensing electronically by 2005.
- 3.10 Tax discs can be surrendered for a refund on all types of vehicles where duty is payable and DVLA would wish to continue to provide for refunds of motorcycle VED.

4. Proposals

4.1 This section sets out some proposed reforms for consideration. Most would require legislative changes. The requirement of the appropriate evidence of MoT and insurance at relicensing would remain. When considering the proposals, the following key elements have to be considered.

- (i) accuracy of the vehicle register
- (ii) road safety
- (iii) enforcement
- (iv) licence visibility
- (v) durability

- (vi) security; and
- (vii) cost

Option 1

4.2 To use the number plate to signify compliance with licensing legislation by adopting a “sticky licence” (shape and size to be determined) with an adhesive backing and constructed so that it would disintegrate/fragment with any attempt to remove it. A paper counterfoil would also be issued in order to claim a refund. This could be done in 2 ways:

4.2.1 The “licence” to have an adhesive backing to adhere to the number plate.

4.2.2 The licence to adhere to a licence holder suitably located to the rear of the motorcycle, and attached to the numberplate.

For

- The “sticky licence” removes the risk of theft for use on other classes of vehicles
- Will assist the police in identifying the licensing status of the vehicle for enforcement purposes
- The licence would be year coloured and contain expiry month, with security features that would restrict any possible counterfeiting
- Method of relicensing could remain with the Post Office?Local Office as at present and would lend itself to electronic relicensing at a future date
- Would not incur additional costs for the motorcyclist

Against

- Lack of space on the number plate determine shape and size of the licence. The minimum size of the number plate may have to be increased
- There will be a need for a paper counterfoil displaying all relevant information i.e. registration mark, check digit, make/model or motorcycle, to be retained by the owner to allow for refunds
- There is a risk of the licence being maliciously damaged
- Number plates may become a target for theft

Do you agree that we should adopt the “sticky licence” system? (See Q2 & Q3 of Annex A Response form).

Option 2

4.3 Issue number plates with a “licence” laminated into the number plate.

For

- It would assist the police in identifying the licensing status of the vehicle
- Ensure that the character sizing of the numbering and lettering, margins etc of the number plate complies with legislation
- The licence would be secure

Against

- Would make number plates more expensive
- The number plate would need to be changed every time a vehicle was relicensed
- The motorcyclist would be responsible for affixing the number plate to the vehicle
- Number plates may become a target for theft
- The number plate would need to be surrendered for a refund
- The method of relicensing could not remain at Post Offices as at present. Other options would need to be examined e.g. relicensing at Local Offices or number plate manufacturers
- Pressed aluminium plates used for classic machines do not lend themselves to laminated number plates

Do you agree that we should adopt this system? (See Q4 of Annex A Response Form).

5. Registration of off road motorcycles

5.1 DVLA operates a voluntary scheme for all owners of purely off road machines to register their motorcycles so that the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) is centrally recorded. In the event of the machine being stolen and subsequently recovered this enables it to be reunited with the owner.

5.2 This is an increasing incidence of off road motorcycles being used for criminal activity or creating a nuisance.

5.3 should all off road motorcycles be required to be registered.

Do you agree that all off road bikes should be registered (See Q5 of Annex A response Form).

ANNEX A: RESPONSE FORM

Your Particulars

Your name: The organisation that you represent (if any)

Your address:

Your telephone number (if you wish):

Your fax number (if you wish): Your e-mail address (if you wish):

Q1. Are you prepared to allow your response or name to be quoted or made available to the public ? (para 2.2)

Yes No

Comments

Q2. Should we adopt a “sticky licence” system adhered to the number plate ? (see para 4.2.1)

Yes No

Comments

Q3. Should we adopt a “sticky licence” system adhered to the licence holder suitably placed on the rear of the motorcycle? (see para 4.2.2)

Yes No

Comments

Q4. Should we use the number plate as poof of licensing (lamineate licensing details into the plate) and renew the number plate on relicensing? (see para 4.3)

Yes No

Comments

Q5. Should all off road motorcycles be registered? (see para 5)

Yes No

Comments

Q6. Do you have any other suggestions or comments on the issues raised in this document?

Yes No

Comments

Annex B

The Consultation Criteria

1. Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.
2. It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what time-scale and for what purpose.
3. A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.
4. Documents should be made widely available with the fullest use of electronic means (through not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals
5. Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for consultation.
6. Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and the reasons for decisions finally taken.
7. Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation co-ordinator, who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.

ANNEX C:

List of Consultees

1. Business

1A. Trade/Employers Associations

ROAD FEDERATION

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION

CHERISHED NUMBERS ASSOCIATION ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

INSTITUTE OF REGISTRATION AGENTS AND DEALERS

NATIONAL OWNER DRIVERS ASSOCIATION UK

ROAD BRITISH NUMBER PLATE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

BRITISH TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

THE TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION UNION OF INDEPENDENT COMPANIES

ABC OWNERS CLUB

AJS & MATCHLESS OWNERS CLUB ARIEL OWNERS MOTORCYCLE CLUB THE BMW CLUB

BRITISH OWNERS CLUB (ESSEX) BROUGH SUPERIOR CLUB

BSA BANTAM ENTHUSIASTS CLUB THE BSA BANTAM RIDERS REGISTER BSA

GOLDSTAR OWNERS CLUB

BSA OWNERS CLUB

CASTLEFORD AND DISTRICT BRITISH MOTORCYCLE CLUB

COSSACK OWNERS CLUB

DOT MOTORCYCLE CLUB

DOT MOTORCYCLE CLUB

LONDON DOUGLAS MOTORCYCLE CLUB FRANCIS BARNETT OWNERS CLUB

GREEVE RIDERS ASSOCIATION

THE GRIFFIN TRUST

HARLEY-DAVIDSON RIDERS CLUB HEINKEL TROJAN ARCHIVE TRUST HIGHLAND

CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE CLUB THE OFFICAL HONDA MONKEY BIKE CLUN

INVICTA MILITARY VEHICLE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

THE HUMBER REGISTER

THE LAMBRETTA CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN MOTO RUMI CLUB

3-M TRAFFIC PRODUCTS

NATIONAL AUTOCYCLE AND CYCLEMOTOR CLUB

NEW IMPERIAL OWNERS ASSOCIATION

NORTON OWNERS CLUB NSU

PANTHER OWNERS CLUB

REGISTER ORKNEY VINTAGE CLUB

RALEIGH SAFETY SEVEN & EARLEY RELIANT OWNERS CLUB

ROYAL ENFIELD OWNERS CLUB

ROVER SPORTS REGISTER RUDGE ENTHUSIAST CLUB THE SCOTT OWNERS CLUB

THE SOCIETY OF AUTOMOTIVE HISTORIANS INC

STAR,STARLING STUART AND BRITON REGISTER

STRATHMORE VINTAGE VEHICLE CLUB LTD

SUNBEAM MOTORCYCLE CLUB SUNBEAM OWNERS FELLOWSHIP

SUSSEX BRITISH MOTORCYCLE OWNERS CLUB

THE TRIDENT AND ROCKETTHREE OWNERS CLUB

THRE TRIUMPH OWNERS MOTORCYCLE CLUB
LE VELO OWNERS CLUB
VELOCETTE OWNERS CLUB
THE VESPA CLUB
THE VINCENT HRD OWNERS CLUB
THE VINTAGE MOTOR CYCLE CLUB
VINTAGE MOTOR SCOOTER CLUB
VINTAGE JAPANESE MOTORCYCLE CLUB

1B. Insurance Industry

MOTOR INSURERS BUREAU
MOTOR CONFERENCE OF (ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INSURERS)

1C. Motor & Number Plate Trade

FIRST EUROPEAN NUMBER PLATES (UK) LIMITED
HALFORD LTD
HIGH PROFILE HILLS (PATENTS) LTD
INDEPENDENT MOTOR TRADERS
ASSOCIATION MOTORCYCLE SPORT & LEISURE PERFORMANCE BIKES RIDE
SCOOTERING
SCOOTER TRADE AND INDUSTRY SPEEDWAY STAR
STREETFIGHTERS
SUPERBIKE
TORQUE
TRAILBIKE AND ENDURO MAGAZINE TRIALS AND MOTORCYCLE NEWS
TWIST AND GO SCOOTER MAGAZINE WHEELS ONLY
USED BIKE GUIDE
WHICH BIKE?
WHICH MOTORCYCLE AND SCOOTER?

2C. Press/Media

AUTOCAR
AUTO EXPRESS
BBC TOP GEAR
CAR MAGAZINE
COMMERCIAL MOTOR MAGAZINE
MOTOR TRANSPORT MAGAZINE
WESTERN MAIL
WHAT CAR MAGAZINE
BACK STREET HEROES
BIKE
BIKER
BIKING TIMES
CLASSIC & MOTORCYCLE MECHANICS
CLASSIC BIKE
THE CLASSIC BIKE GUIDE

3. Government/public Authorities and Agencies

3A. Central Government

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT LOCAL OFFICE AND THE REGIONAL
CABINET OFFICE (BETTER REGULATION UNIT)
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, VEHICLES DIVISION
DVLNORTHERN IRELAND DOE NORTHERN IRELAND
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
HOME OFFICE-POLICE DIVISION
HOME OFFICE-CRIME TARGETS TASK FORCE
HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY
HOUSE OF LORDS LIBRARY
LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE
WELSH OFFICE
DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA & SPORT
UK PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, BRUSSELS
HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION
HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING
TRAFFIC COMMISSIONERS
VEHICLE CERTIFICATION AGENCY
VEHICLE INSPECTORATE

3.B Police

ASSOCIATION OF CHIEF POLICE OFFICERS (ACPO)
ACPO SCOTLAND
NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD
POLICE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION
THE COMMISSIONER OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE
THE POLICE FEDERATION
THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION