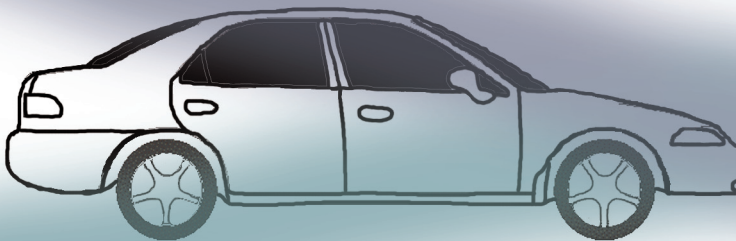


The Vehicle Identity Check (VIC) Scheme

Vehicle Identity and Crime



Vehicle crime is a serious problem. It costs the economy an estimated £3 billion a year and it affects motorists directly by raising insurance premiums.

One aspect of vehicle crime is car ringing. "Ringing" is a practice which involves passing off stolen cars as repaired accident damaged cars. One consequence of this is that innocent members of the public can find that they have been sold a car which later turns out to have been stolen. The Vehicle Identity Check (VIC) was introduced on April 7 2003 and makes car "ringing" more difficult.

From this date damaged cars must be notified to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if the cost of repair exceeds the pre-accident value. Usually, this takes place when an Insurer decides to "write off" a car, following an engineer's assessment of the damage. These cars are given a VIC marker, which is a note added to the DVLA computer record and as long as it remains on the record, DVLA will not issue a replacement Registration Certificate (V5C, commonly known as a log book) or Vehicle Licence reminder (V11) for the car. The VIC marker will be removed when the car passes a VIC. This means that its identity has been confirmed by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). DVLA will then be able to issue a replacement V5C.

Remember: *If you buy a car that has been "written off" by an Insurer it is likely that it will need a VIC even though the accident damage may seem light. You can confirm that the car has a VIC marker, or if a previous VIC has already been carried out, by telephoning VOSA on 0300 123 9000. VOSA can only carry out a VIC once a VIC marker has been set. If this has not happened, or if a VIC has already been carried out, VOSA cannot carry out a VIC.*

When is a VIC needed?

If your car is involved in an accident and subsequently notified to DVLA as "written off" by an Insurer, but you decide to keep the car to repair yourself, it may still get a VIC marker. You should still have the V5C and you can legally drive the car as long as it is

taxed, has a valid MOT, is roadworthy, and you have appropriate insurance cover. However, if a VIC marker is set, DVLA will not issue you with a V11 or a new V5C if you should need a replacement. This could cause you some inconvenience. VOSA's advice is that you find out whether a VIC marker has been set by telephoning VOSA on 0300 123 9000. Then if there is a VIC marker set, apply for a suitable date for the VIC to be carried out.

NOTE: If you buy a car without a V5C or that requires a VIC, you may not be able to tax or register the car until the car has passed a VIC.

How do I apply for a VIC?

- Before submitting an application form you must confirm that a VIC marker is set by contacting VOSA on 0300 123 9000. VOSA can not carry out a VIC unless a VIC marker is set.
- Following this you must complete a VIC1 application form and either send it to VOSA with the fee or indicate on the form that you wish to pay by credit / debit card or by VOSA pre-funded account.
- The VIC1 application form is available from www.direct.gov.uk and can either be submitted on line or printed and sent by fax or post. Details of where to send your application are included on the application form. If you would like an application form sent to you please contact VOSA on 0300 123 9000.
- Fee details are available from www.direct.gov.uk or by contacting VOSA on 0300 123 9000.
- You will receive confirmation of the appointment date and time once VOSA has processed your application form.

Can I drive the car to the VIC site?

You can drive to the VIC site as long as the car is

- Covered by a valid MOT certificate (if applicable)
- In a roadworthy condition
- Displaying number plates

You do not need road tax to drive directly to or from a VIC, but you should be aware that it is an offence to keep or use a car on public

roads if it is not taxed and registered. Also make sure that if the car is being driven to the VIC site the person driving the car is insured to do so. VOSA will not carry out a VIC unless the car is capable of being driven under its own power. However if, for some other reason, it cannot be driven to the VIC site it can be transported, but arrangements must be made in advance with the VIC Site Manager. Please allow additional time if the car is to arrive by transporter, in order for it to be unloaded safely, prior to the start of the appointment.

What do I do if the car does not have number plates fitted and I need to drive to the VIC?

Contact VOSA on 0300 123 9000 who may be able to assist you with obtaining number plates. They will need to confirm

- That the car has a VIC marker set
- That you are the Registered Keeper of the car

What happens at the VIC site?

You will need to report to reception on or before the appointed time, with your appointment letter and any evidence to support your application e.g. purchase / repair receipts. The VIC will be carried out by a trained Inspector. It takes about 20 minutes. You will not be allowed to watch the VIC. You must also comply with all on-site Health and Safety requirements and any instructions given to you by VOSA staff. VIC sites can be busy places, with vehicles manoeuvring in restricted areas. Consequently, VOSA do not permit animals or children under 16 on site. Also, you are asked to restrict the number of accompanying adults.

The VIC may involve checking the car's accident damage but this is for identification purposes only, it does not assess the quality of the repair, so you should seek independent expert opinion as to whether the car is roadworthy. The car must be repaired to a high enough standard to indicate that it is going to be put back on the road. If it is not, VOSA may refuse to conduct the VIC. If, whilst carrying out the VIC the inspector notices a serious defect which would make the car dangerous to drive, then they will issue a

prohibition notice. This will mean that the car cannot be driven until it has been made roadworthy and the prohibition has been removed.

If your car is found to be acceptable at a VIC

If your car is found to be acceptable at a VIC the DVLA record will be updated with the result. This normally occurs within 48 hours. You will be issued with a VIC Pass Certificate (VIC20) and you can then apply to DVLA for a V5C using a V62 application form. A fee is required (for details contact DVLA on 0870 240 0010) but if your car was a category C "write off" you are exempt from payment. You must confirm the category in the box provided on the form V62.

If prior to carrying out the VIC you have already submitted a V62 to the DVLA, you would have been sent a letter informing you that your vehicle needed a VIC. Following a successful VIC, this letter should be returned to DVLA complete with the date of the VIC pass. DVLA will then arrange to issue a V5C.

In addition, if you intend to tax the vehicle straight away at your DVLA Local Office, they may ask to see the VIC20. If you lose or have not been given the VIC20 then the DVLA record will still be updated automatically.

Once issued the new V5C will permanently indicate that the car has had its identity checked.

If you are considering buying a car which already has a VIC20 but no V5C, we would strongly advise that you first check the validity of the VIC20 by contacting VOSA on 0300 123 9000.

If your car is found to be unacceptable at a VIC

If your car fails to satisfy the VOSA inspector at a VIC, you will be issued with a VIC Failure notice (VIC21), which will give the reasons for "failure". If the car has "failed" because it does not match the DVLA vehicle record, VOSA will investigate and rectify any discrepancies where they may exist. Other cases may be referred to the Police for further investigation. This does not necessarily mean the car is stolen; it is part of the process to try and confirm the identity of the car. If following further investigations the identity of the car can be satisfactorily confirmed, VOSA will amend the "fail" result to a "pass" result.

Local VOSA staff will try to explain to you as fully as possible the reasons for failure, but if you need further advice please contact VOSA on 0300 123 9000.

NOTE: The VIC is a once - only process and if VOSA have issued a VIC failure notice for a car then they will not accept any further VIC applications for that car. However, the original applicant can make an appeal against a failure decision (see below).

VIC Appeals

If you do not agree with the result of the VIC, you can make an appeal to VOSA. Appeals must be submitted on form VIC 17, together with the correct fee (current VIC fee). For further information regarding the Appeal procedure, contact VOSA.

For further information about the VIC please contact VOSA on 0300 123 9000 or visit: www.direct.gov.uk