



In the UK a new style of number plate designed to last for 49 years, came into force at midnight on the 1st September 2001

The new plates will apply to all new vehicles registered on or after 1 September. The change is needed as the previous system of age identifiers, using a single letter at the start of the number plate, ran out of combinations with "Y" registrations on 31 August this year. This change is the first major overhaul of the numbering system which has been running for 38 years.

The new number plate format will show the area in which a vehicle was registered, as well as the year and, specifically, in which half of the year it was registered.

The first two letters of the new format number plate will show at which of the DVLA's 40 local offices a vehicle is first registered. Each office has been assigned a set of unique two-letter local memory tags

In the example above the GB indicates the vehicle was first registered in Maidstone.(see table alongside)

The two numbers used in the new format number plate will be an age identifier and will not only show in what year the vehicle is first registered, but also in which part of the registration year. The two-digit number in the first six months of the registration year, March to August, will differ from the number used from September to February, the second half of the registration year.

From 1 September 2001 to February 2002 the two-digit format will be 51, This being the year of registration plus 50. In 2002, from March to August, the digits will be 02, and from September 2002 to February 2003 it will be 52. This system will continue until the sequence is exhausted.

The final three letters of the new format number plate, are random letters. They make every mark unique.

The new format has been designed in this way to make it easier for witnesses of incidents to recall details of number plates and will help the police to investigate crimes involving the use of motor vehicles. This system will become increasingly effective as recognition of the local memory tag letters develops.

This format was designed following two public consultation exercises. The first, in 1997, established the general layout of the new format. The second, in 1999, helped in the process of allocating the local memory tags. Full details are shown on the DVLA website <http://www.dvla.gov.uk>.

Local Identifier	DVLA Office	Local Office Identifier
A	Peterborough Norwich Ipswich	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
B	Birmingham	A – Y
C	Cardiff Swansea Bangor	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
D	Chester Shrewsbury	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
E	Chelmsford	A – Y
F	Nottingham Lincoln	A B C D E F G H J K L M N P R S T V W X Y
G	Maidstone Brighton	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
H	Bournemouth Portsmouth	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
K	Luton Northampton	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
L	Wimbledon Stanmore Sidcup	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
M	Manchester	A – Y
N	Newcastle Stockton	A B C D E G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
O	Oxford	A – Y
P	Preston Carlisle	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
R	Reading	A – Y
S	Glasgow Edinburgh Dundee Aberdeen Inverness	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
V	Worcester	A – Y
W	Exeter Truro Bristol	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y
Y	Leeds Sheffield Beverley	A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P R S T U V W X Y

Year	March	September	I D E N T I F I E R N U M B E R	Year	March	September
2001		51		2006	06	56
2002	02	52		2007	07	57
2003	03	53		2008	08	58
2004	04	54		2009	09	59
2005	05	55		2010	10	60