



**VEHICLE EQUIPMENT
SAFETY COMMISSION**

Regulation VESC-15

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DESIGN
OF A VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
SYSTEM FOR PASSENGER CARS**

**Approved August 1975
Amended July 1977**

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Washington, D.C. 20005

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1. Purpose:

- 1.1 The purpose of this regulation is to provide the states with a uniform minimum requirement for the design of a passenger car vehicle identification number (VIN) system.
- 1.2 It is designed to provide a unique passenger car identifier for the interests of highway safety, motor vehicle registration and law enforcement utilization.

2. Scope:

- 2.1 The scope of this regulation is primarily directed to establish the minimum identification elements, codification criteria, and the sequence of the identification elements contained in a passenger car vehicle identification number system.

3. Definitions:

- 3.1 **Body Type**—The general configuration or shape of a vehicle distinguished by characteristics, such as: number of doors, seats, windows, roofline, hardtop, convertible, etc. (Body style and body type are synonymous).
- 3.2 **Car Line**—A name denoting a family of vehicles within a make which has a degree of commonality in construction, such as: body, chassis, etc.

Example—"Fury" is a *car line* of the Plymouth *make*. Fury 1, Fury 2 and Fury 3 are specific series within the Fury *car line*.
- 3.3 **Commissioner**—As hereinafter referred to within this regulation shall mean the appropriate state official or state agency responsible for promulgating rules and regulations governing motor vehicle title and registration administration.
- 3.4 **Engine Type Identifier**—A code which shall relate to the identity of models within engine make, by which component information, such as fuel type, number of cylinders, etc. can be determined from manufacturer specifications.
- 3.5 **Field**—A set of numerals or alphabetic characters reserved for a specific element of information contained in the number.

3.6 Fixed Length Field—The nonvarying number of numerals or alphabetic characters assigned to a given field in the vehicle identification number.

3.7 Make—A distinctive name applied to a group of vehicles. “Make” and “Division” are synonymous. “Make” and “Manufacturer” may, or may not be synonymous.

Example of Make—Ford, Volkswagen, Dodge and Pontiac.

Example of Make and Manufacturer (synonymous)—Ford, Chrysler, Avanti.

“General Motors” is a manufacturer, not a make.

3.8 Make Code Repository—The Society of Automotive Engineers maintains this facility for the purposes of ensuring accurate make code assignments and to prevent the issuance of duplicate make codes.

3.9 Manufacturer—Any person, firm or corporation engaged in the production or assembly of passenger cars.

3.10 Model—The overall term applied to a vehicle, denoting the make, car line, series, body type, engine type and model year.

3.11 Model Year—A year designation that shall be encoded in the VIN to reflect the model year in which the vehicle was produced. Not necessarily the year of manufacture, “model year” is used in similar context to the term “fiscal year”, which, in both instances may involve months of two calendar years, but not exceeding a total of twelve months.

Exception—In the introduction of a new make, or a new car line within an established make, and the introduction occurs not more than six months prior to the model year forthcoming, manufacturers may elect to designate the model year of such vehicles in the year of the model year forthcoming.

Example—The model year of the “Jones Company” is the period, September through August.

The “Jones Company” introduces a new car line, the “Jet”, in March 1975, and designates these vehicles as 1976 models through August, 1976, a period of eighteen months.

In the instance of new regulatory requirements conflicting with the phase-in of a new car line replacing an existing car

line, it is possible that the model year of the existing car line could be extended to involve a period not to exceed twenty-four months.

- 3.12 **Passenger Car**—A four-wheeled motor vehicle manufactured primarily for use on the public streets, roads, and highways and designed for carrying ten passengers or less.
- 3.13 **Plant of Origin**—The plant of origin is the plant at which the VIN authorization is established.
- 3.14 **S.A.E.**—The acronym for “Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc.”
- 3.15 **Sequential Number**—Also referred to as the “production number”. It consists of the last six characters of the vehicle identification number.
- 3.16 **Series**—A specific level of decor or opulence within a car line, usually distinguished by some marketing term, and denoting a price class.
- Example—Within the “Fury car line” of the “Plymouth make”, three “series” are available. These are identified as the *Fury I*, *Fury II* and *Fury III* series.
- 3.17 **Vehicle Descriptor Section (VDS)**—The first of the two basic sections of the vehicle identification number. It provides components of information which describe the vehicle. While the components of information are determined in a uniform manner, coding techniques may vary within manufacturer passenger car systems. The elements of make, car line, series, body type and engine type shall be encoded within the Vehicle Descriptor Section of the VIN.
- 3.18 **Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)** — The number assigned to a motor vehicle by the manufacturer, primarily for motor vehicle registration and identification purposes.
- 3.19 **Vehicle Indicator Section (VIS)**—The second of the two basic sections of the vehicle identification number. It provides components of information relating to the specific identity of a given vehicle (sequential number), plant of origin and model year.

3.20 VIN—The acronym for “Vehicle Identification Number”.

3.21 Year of Manufacture—The calendar year in which a vehicle is manufactured.

4. Application:

4.1 This regulation applies to all passenger cars.

4.2 “Make codes” required of manufacturers for vehicle identification purposes in this regulation are obtainable from the Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc.

Address inquiries to:

Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc.
Vehicle Make Repository
400 Commonwealth Drive
Warrendale, PA 15096

5. Promulgated Rules and Regulations:

5.1 The Commissioner shall promulgate rules setting forth requirements of a passenger car vehicle identification number system, so that each passenger car is described and identified in a unique manner, and that all passenger car vehicle identification number systems shall utilize the elements of identification, codification rules and sequence of the elements of identification as set forth in this regulation.

5.2 This regulation is in compliance with FMVSS-115.

6. Requirements:

6.1 Passenger Car Vehicle Identification Number Basic Content—The VIN shall consist of a vehicle descriptor section followed by a vehicle indicator section.

6.2 Vehicle Descriptor Section (VDS) *Content*—The VDS shall contain the make code identifier (obtainable from the SAE), and codes defining car line, series, body type and engine type identifier.

- 6.3 Vehicle Descriptor Section (VDS) *Structure*—The make code identifier shall be the first field in the VDS. The second field shall consist of car line, series and body type identifiers. The third field shall be the engine type identifier.
- 6.4 Vehicle Descriptor Section (VDS) *Length* — The number of characters contained in the VDS shall be eight.
- 6.5 Vehicle Descriptor Section (VDS) *Coding*
- 6.5.1 Make Code Field — It shall be a three-character code, as assigned by the Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc.
- 6.5.2 Car Line, Series, Body Type Field — It shall be a four-character code. The first and second characters shall be alphabetic. Alphabetic characters Q and U shall not be used. The third and fourth characters shall be numeric.
- 6.5.3 Engine Type Field — It shall be a one-character code and may consist of an alpha or numeric character, excluding I, O, Q and U.
- 6.6 Vehicle Indicator Section (VIS) *Content*—The VIS shall contain model year, plant of origin and sequential number fields of information.
- 6.7 Vehicle Indicator Section (VIS) *Structure*—The fields providing for model year, plant of origin and sequential number shall appear in that sequence.
- 6.8 Vehicle Indicator Section (VIS) *Fixed Length*—The VIS shall contain eight characters of information.
- 6.9 Vehicle Indicator Section (VIS) *Coding*
- 6.9.1 Model Year Field—The model year code shall be the first character of the VIS and shown in a one-character field.

TABLE—Characters used for designating the model year

YEAR	CODE	YEAR	CODE	YEAR	CODE
1971	1	1981	B	1991	M
1972	2	1982	C	1992	N
1973	3	1983	D	1993	P
1974	4	1984	E	1994	R
1975	5	1985	F	1995	S
1976	6	1986	G	1996	T
1977	7	1987	H	1997	V
1978	8	1988	J	1998	W
1979	9	1989	K	1999	X
1980	A	1990	L	2000	Y

6.9.2 Plant of Origin Field—The plant of origin code shall be the second character of the VIS and shown in a one-character field. It may consist of an alpha or numeric character, excluding I, O, Q and U.

6.9.3 Sequential Number Field—The sequential number shall be the third and last field of the VIS. It shall contain six numeric characters.

6.10 Secondary Characteristics—Any field within the VIN may reflect more than the required characteristics, as long as the primary requirements are within compliance of this regulation.

Example—The sequential number shall consist of six numeric characters, a factor consistent within this regulation.

A given manufacturer with two divisions may elect to utilize the high-order digit of the sequential number as an internal make code.

Such as—512346 as one internal make identity. 5 is the high-order digit, meaning that 5 through 9 identify one division (make), while “1” through “4” in the high-order digit position identify the second division (make).

Such practice involves internal operation practices of a manufacturer and/or in the application of the non-public VIN applied for law enforcement purposes.

Cha.

Typ
(A-
(B-

*Ma.

Ca.

Se.

Bo.

En.

Mo.

Pl.

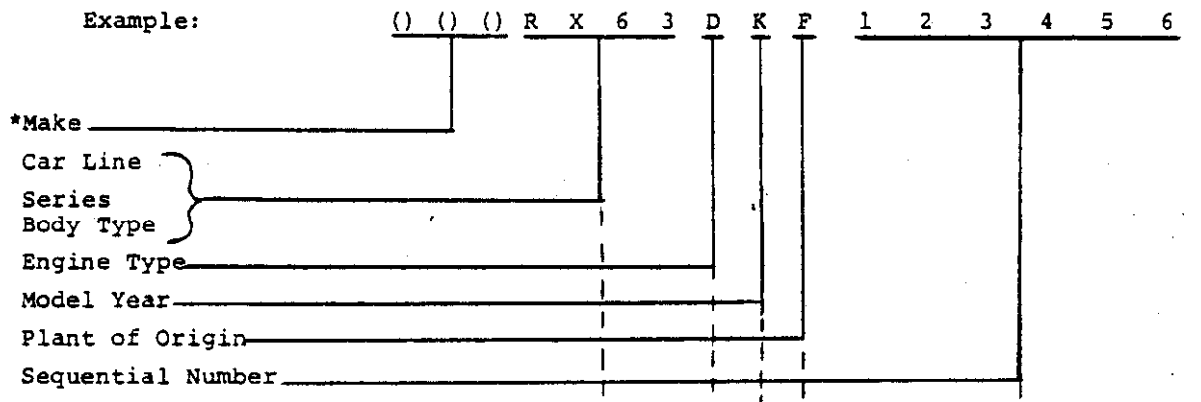
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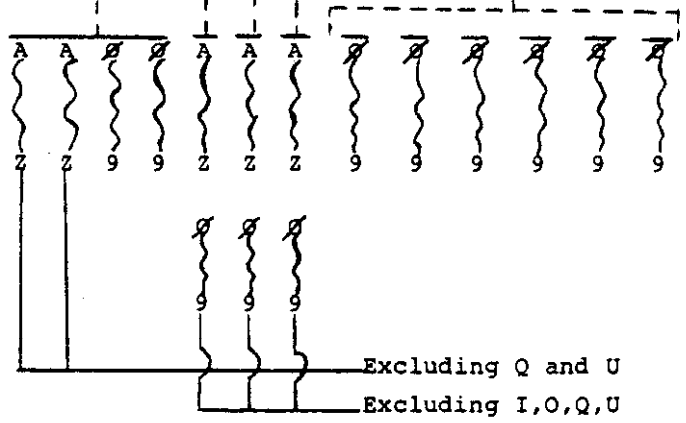
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VIN SCHEMATIC DESIGN

	Vehicle Descriptor Section								Vehicle Indicator Section							
Character of the VIN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Type of Character (A-Alpha N-Numeric) (B-Alpha or Numeric)	()	()	()	A	A	N	N	B	B	B	N	N	N	N	N	N



Range of Characters:



*See Section 4.2

Note: It is suggested that the characters of the VIN be displayed on forms and communications in block format as indicated below.



*Make Codes as assigned by the Society of Automotive Engineers, Inc.

VE
SC