

Updated: 11:59 BST, 25 June 2021 New research has uncovered the UK's illegal vehicle modification hotspots, based on the number of offences reported in the last year. It found that the most common illegal alteration to cars, motorcycles, vans and trucks was to the number of offences reported in the last year. It found that the most common illegal alteration to cars, motorcycles, vans and trucks was to the number of offences reported in the last year. It found that the most common illegal alteration to cars, motorcycles, vans and trucks was to the number of offences reported in the last year. It found that the most common illegal alteration to cars, motorcycles, vans and trucks was to the number of offences reported in the last year. It found that the most common illegal alteration to cars, motorcycles, vans and trucks was to the number of offences reported in the last year. 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That an equivalent to 1,452 per million people and more than any other part of the country. Norfolk was second with 1,241 offences per million people with Northern Ireland in third spot with 1,179 offences per million people last year, according to the responses from 36 forces across the UK.Gwent was at the bottom of the list. The Welsh county, which has a population of 594,200, saw only four illegal car modifications in 2020, equivalent to seven cases per one million people. Incorrect lights (5,723) offences), illegally tinted windows (4,183 offences) and modified exhausts (776 offences) were the remaining common illegal number plates can include drivers displaying number boards with reflective coatings that prevent speed cameras from identifying the characters on the plate when the flash is activated, but also stretch to unlawful fonts and designs, as well as incorrect spacing between numbers and letters for motorists to create desired words. However, the more concerning issue is the alternation of plates to evade authorities and escape detection while partaking in a number of crimes, including non-payment at petrol stations. TOP 10 UK HOTSPOTS FOR ILLEGAL VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS Rank Locations Total offences (per million people) 1 Gloucestershire 925 1,452 2 Norfolk 1,136 1,251 3 Northern Ireland 2,232 1,179 4 Suffolk 873 1,147 5 London 9,373 1,047 6 Surrey 930 777 7 Northamptonshire 501 665 8 Dyfed-Powys 320 616 9 Greater Manchester 1,518 535 10 Leicestershire 494 449 Source: Comparethemarket FOI request to 36 UK police forces Police issue drivers with fines of £100 if they're found to have an illegally modified number plate. One common case is drivers using tape to alter characters so the car isn't detected by ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras when stealing fuel from filling stationsAltering the characters of a number plate - usually with black tape - or the act of duplicated plates of legitimate motors to escape automatic number plate recognition cameras when breaking the law is becoming an increasing problem, and one the authorities want to bring to an end. The Home Office announced late last year that it plans to crackdown on dodgy number plates, amid concerns that sellers are enabling criminals to clone other vehicles freely without having to provide evidence of ownership as part of their efforts to dodge the police. The surveillance camera commissioner, Tony Porter, said in November that the trade is resulting in innocent motorists being wrongly accused of road traffic violations, and other offences committed by criminals using vehicles with cloned number plates. 'It's a bit of a wild west out there and needs closer control,' Porter told The Telegraph in 2020, explaining that there are as many as 40,000 businesses selling number plates, with many showing total disregard for laws requiring them to first obtain proof from the buyer than they have the right to display that registration. The Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plate retailers to sell plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for online number plates without evidence of ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to make it more difficult for ownership of the vehicle it is registered to A Home Office has vowed to a home office has vowed to a home of the vehicle it is registered to A Home office has vowed to a home of the vehicle it is registered to A Home office has vownership number plates affects road safety and provides cover for criminals, and we are working with the police to bear down on these crimes. We welcome this report and are carefully considering its recommendations. 'Currently, drivers displaying illegal plates are slapped with a fine of £100. That means motorists were hit with a collective fines with a value of almost £1.4million last year. And punishments look set to get stricter.Under the proposal for a new private members bill, drivers of vehicles with missing or obscured number plates could get three penalty points on their licence as well as fines. Commenting on the results of the study, Dan Hutson, head of motor insurance at comparethemarket.com, said: 'Modifications tend to fall into two categories: performance or cosmetic, but any modifications can increase car insurance premiums, so it's best to check with your provider before making any changes and there are some providers who specialise in modified cars. 'Modifications which are against the law are likely to invalidate any type of car insurance policy, so do your research beforehand.' As a road user in Britain, it is imperative you understand the requirements that constitute a number plate's legality and what can render a registration plate non-compliant. If you cannot tell the difference, you run the risk of punishment, including fines being issued by the Police. The current British Standard for UK number plates manufactured, sold or fitted from that date must therefore comply. The new British Standard 'e' builds upon BS AU 145d to ensure public safety and security through ANPR camera readings and harder, more resilient plates being produced. At Aplates, our registration plates must have characters that comply with the criteria set out in BS AU 145e. The characters must be solid black in the prescribed Charles Wright typeface, and they need to comply with the rules governing size, spacing, grouping and positioning. Number plates may optionally have raised 3D characters of plain black colour (known as "4D" number plates), provided that they meet all requirements of the British Standard. Number plates MUST have the following features: They must be the prescribed reflective yellow colour. They must have reflective properties complying with British Standard BS AU 145e. They must have physical resilience properties complying with British Standard BS AU 145e. They must display solid black characters in the prescribed Charles Wright typeface that comply with the rules governing size, spacing, grouping and positioning. They must bear the current British Standard number, BS AU 145e. They MUST NOT have any of the following: Any font or typeface except the regulation Charles Wright typeface; Any character colour, shading, effect or texture except solid black; Any text, except that which is required or is specifically allowed by the rules; Any badge, emblem image or graphic element not expressly allowed by the rules; Any coating, treatment or another measure that may affect the reflective properties or legibility of the number plate, either visually or by number plate recognition technology; Any screws, bolts or other objects that alter the appearance of characters or interfere with legibility. Plates MAY optionally have the following: Raised 3D characters of plain black colour (known as "4D" number plates) provided that they meet all requirements of British Standard BS AU 145e; A coloured border as allowed by the rules; A national flag/emblem as specifically allowed by the rules; National identifier letters as specifically allowed by the rules. Fully electric/zero-tailpipe-emissions vehicles may optionally display the approved green 'flash' or panel at the left-hand end of the number plate. If the registration is spaced correctly and the British Standard is adhered to, the following number plate styles are considered road legal. Standard Printed Plates 4D Plates (characters have coloured backgrounds) 4D Carbon Gel Plates (characters aren't a solid black colour) 3D Carbon Gel Plates (characters aren't a solid black colour) Show plates are illegal for use on public UK roads - they are strictly intended for Show purposes only, e.g. car roadshows. Following the latest iteration of the British Standard (BSAU 145e), various number plate styles (including 4D Krystal, 4D Neon Gel and Carbon Gel) are no longer road legal in the UK. Consequently, Aplates strictly sell these as Show plates. This means they are printed without our manufacturer details and the British Standard. EXPLORE ALL PLATE STYLES NOW The latest batch of banned UK number plates has been revealed - but why are combinations referring to Russia or Ukraine not allowed? Every six months, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) reveals what is considered too much for the roads. This year the list includes combinations such as AR25 HOL, TE25 ROR and TO25 POT - and that is just some of the least offensive ones. The list also features combinations that refer to Russia and Ukraine, while last year's September ban struck off plates such as NO74 LEZ referring to anti-Ulez messaging. DVLA reviews every year what references could offend or provoke the public, but they also consider ongoing current affairs such as the Russia-Ukraine war. Witty drivers might try to get around the rules by combining letters and numbers in imaginative ways, but DVLA has taken most combinations into account. The first batch of this year's banned number plates comes out today and features '25' for 2025. The second batch will be revealed in September and the plates will have 75, which comes from 50 plus this year's number (25). This year, the '5' in '25' could be used to make letter S. Combinations **25 RUS and **UKR referring to the Russia-Ukraine war are banned along with other political references. Other banned combinations include YE25 WAR, YS25 DTH, PE25 RVT and GB25 SHT. Drivers who are not displaying their number plate correctly or if it is obscured, altered or illegally rearranged could land with a £1,000 fine. A DVLA spokesperson told Metro previously: 'The vast majority of registration numbers are made available, but DVLA holds back any combinations that may cause offence, embarrassment or are in poor taste.' More Trending So, the goal is to create a 'respectful driving environment' while allowing drivers to show their flare, experts from BigWantsYourCar.com said. 'Personalised plates are great for drivers to show off who they are, but it's important to be creative and respectful. The DVLA keeps offensive plates off the road to make sure things stay safe and comfortable for everyone,' a spokesperson explained. They said this year's decision to ban references to Russia and Ukraine 'makes sense' as it could be 'upsetting to people, especially those who have been affected by the fighting.' Get in touch with our news team by emailing us at webnews@metro.co.uk. For more stories like this, check our news page. MORE: Woman dragged down drive by runaway Range Rover that nearly crushed husband MORE: Warning to UK drivers over 2025 vehicle tax hike for older cars MORE: Driver clocked speeding at 122mph in 30mph zone In the UK, vehicle number plates must adhere to strict regulations set by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). A number plate can be deemed illegal if it fails to comply with certain standards. Number plates must use a specific typeface known as the Charles Wright 2001 font. Any modifications to the font style, thickness, or size can render the plate illegal. The spacing between letters and numbers must be consistent with DVLA guidelines. Altering the spacing to make the plate spell a word or name is illegal. Plates must also have the correct size and layout, which is different for cars, motorcycles, and other vehicles. The plates also need to be rectangular and correctly positioned on the vehicle. Custom shapes and arrangements can make a plate illegal. They must be reflective and have a white background for the front plate and a yellow background for the rear plate. illegal.Legally manufactured number plates should display a British Standard. This ensures the plate meets durability, visibility, and reflectivity requirements - and has been approved flags and identifiers on their number plates, including the Union Jack, Cross of St. George, Scottish Saltire, or Welsh Dragon. Other emblems and flags cannot be used. Illegal plates can result in fines, MOT failure, and the police can remove a car from the road until the plates are corrected. The current number plate system was introduced in 2001. The number changes every six months (for brand-new cars) and it helps identify where and when the vehicle was registered. An example of what a registration number should look like is: YG23 ABC The first two letters are assigned randomly making sure that the number as a whole is unique. The two numbers that represent the age of the vehicle change twice a year: in March and September. The cars registered between March and August 2023 will have the number 23 on their plates. The vehicles registered between March and February will have the current number plate system has been explained, and you know what it should look like, it's important to point out that you can have them modified and get a personalised registration number. Also, you can't alter the numbers yourself. You have to go through the legal channels to get them modified, such as the DVLA website. What rules do number plates have to follow? A lot of people believe that the fact they can buy a personalised number plate means they can have whatever numbers, letters, symbols and font they wish. This is not the case. There are strict laws in place which the number plates must comply. Here are some of the rules you must follow: Personalised number plates As previously mentioned, if you would like to personalise your number plate you must do so with a manufacturer that has been registered on DVLA's RNPS (Register of Number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents you need to present before you can have the number plate several documents yo one in the front and the other in the rear. The plate in the front must be white with bold black letters. The plate in the rear must be yellow with bold black letters. Charles Wright is the standard font for UK number plates. letters don't need to be reflex-reflecting. What number plates are illegal in the UK? Did you know that having a number plates in order to fulfil the requirements: Random symbols The only symbols allowed on number plates are flags to identify where your vehicle is from. You're allowed to have the union flag, English, Scottish or Welsh flags. This means that any other symbol, such as football club flags, are strictly forbidden. Dirty number plates The law is clear: your number plates must be legible. This means that if you let the plates get dirty to a point where the authorities can't read them, you could be stopped and get a fine. Wrong spacing The space between characters must be 11mm in order to comply with the legislation. Anything other than that could mean a fine if spotted by the authorities. Are 3D number plates illegal in the UK? The short answer to this question is: yes. According to the government website, it is legal to have a raised 3D number plate, as long as it follows the other rules, such as having it clean and visible and complies with the colours and font set in the guideline. Fine If your current number plate doesn't comply with the legislation you could be issued an 'vehicle defect rectification notice (VDRS)'. This VDRS gives you up to 14 days to get a new number plate made following the legal guidelines and get the document stamped by an official supplier. Failing to do so, next time you're stopped by the police they will issue a fine of up to £1,000. Stay safe and avoid fines Complying with the number plate legislation is important to ensure authorities will be able to identify your car in case of emergency. For more motoring advice head to our blog section where you'll be able to find guides and the latest driving insights. Page 2 With petrol and diesel prices constantly on the rise, it's super important that you make the most out of every drop of fuel so that you can improve economy and save yourself some money. There are lots of different techniques and habits you can incorporate into everyday driving that will have a positive impact on your vehicle's fuel economy. Try following a few of the fuel saving tips and tricks below; you may be very pleasantly surprised just how much difference a change in driving style can make. Our top fuel saving tips Tyres & Tyre Pressures One of the biggest factors in terms of fuel economy is the performance of your vehicle's tyres inflated to the correct pressures has a significant impact on your vehicle's fuel economy. s can have a detrimental effect on your mpg by as much as 2.5 percent. Another way that tyres can have an impact is with their fuel efficiency. An A-rated tyre can improve fuel economy by as much as 7.5 percent compared with a rated tyre, meaning, with the correct tyre pressure, we've already improved economy by 10 percent and we're only on the first tip! This is another big one. Simply anticipating what is likely to happen in front of you when driving will greatly improve your efficiency, as well as reduce wear and tear on your car's brakes. Here's how to do it: While maintaining your focus on the vehicle directly in front of you, take the time to look further ahead and see what's going on. If there's a red light, try to lift off the gas a little earlier than you might normally, without taking it to extremes, of course. If the lights change, you'll still be rolling and you'll spend less time getting up to speed, using less fuel in the process. Simply put, the less time you spend braking and accelerating, the less fuel you'll use. Accelerate and decelerate smoothly When the lights turn green, don't stamp on the accelerator and get up to speed as fast as physically possible. Accelerate briskly but smoothly, reaching the desired speed in a reasonable time frame so as not to frustrate your fellow road users behind you. Don't wait until the last minute to come to a standstill either, lift off the gas nice and early and brake gently until you come to a stop. When it comes to speed bumps, don't accelerate quickly and then slam on the brakes to go over the bump. Try to maintain a constant speed of between 15 to 20mph unless your car is particularly low or the bumps are exceptionally high. Remove Excess Weight The heavier your car is, the more fuel it will use trying to get from A to B, so anything you can do to make it lighter will save you money. Roof boxes and bike racks are the main culprits, but simply having a good clear out of what's in the backseat and the boot can have a positive impact as well. Lightness is why cars like the 2.0-litre petrol Mazda MX-5 can have reasonably quick acceleration but still return over 50mpg on a long run. Check your speed & use cruise control Always being mindful of the speed you're travelling at is good, safe practice anyway, but it can help in terms of fuel economy, too. Motorists should adhere to speed limits at all times so as they aren't breaking the law, but saving money is another solid reason to do so. For instance, travelling above the national speed limit at 80mph instead of 70mph will use an extra 10 percent of fuel - as well as cost you extra money in speed fines. Cruise control only helps the situation. Slowing down and speeding up increases fuel usage in a big way, so letting the car maintain the exact cruising speed for you whenever possible is the most efficiently; you simply have to be able to use them to get the car to move at various speeds However, to get the most mileage out of every drop of fuel and maintain maximum efficiency, it's vital that you're always using the right gear at the right gear at the right gear at the right determined between 1500 and 2500 rpm, so you should aim to change up to the next gear whenever you exceed the higher end of that range. For diesels, it's between 1300 and 2000 rpm. Service & maintain your car Ensuring that your vehicle is in tip-top mechanical shape is vital when making sure that fuel economy is as good as it can be. A car that has its engine serviced regularly and in line with manufacturer schedules, using the correct parts, fluids, and lubricants, will work better and be more efficient than one that isn't. It'll be more reliable, too. Wheel alignment (also known as tracking) also affects fuel economy, and it can be knocked out by something as simple as a pothole in the road, so make sure you get it checked regularly. Avoid Unnecessary Idling When a car is standstill and the engine is turned on and idling, you're getting precisely zero miles per gallon from your fuel. This is because fuel is being used, but you aren't going anywhere. So, waiting for a mate outside their house? Turn the engine off. Eating your burger at the drive-thru? Turn the engine off. And yes, even when you're defrosting your car, if you want to save fuel, you'll have to keep the engine off. Modern cars with "stop/start" technology save fuel by turning the engine off. Modern cars with "stop/start" technology save fuel by turning the engine off. functions wisely As a general rule, anything that drains the car's battery in any significant way is also a drain on your car's fuel tank. This is because it uses the alternator to keep the battery in any significant way is also a drain on your car's fuel tank. town driving. At higher speeds the effect is less noticeable, and using the air con at motorway speeds is actually more efficient than having the windscreens and anything else heated will use extra fuel, too. Don't Coast Many drivers, particularly those who are used to driving cars from the '70s and '80s or even earlier, will swear that putting the car into neutral while going downhill or coming to a standstill will reduce fuel consumption because the rpm is lower. This is not true, certainly not of modern vehicles. Simply leaving the car into neutral while going downhill or coming to a standstill will reduce fuel consumption because the rpm is lower. the engine - means you won't be using any fuel at all. This is because the engine is using the driveline to turn itself over rather clever, but it works. It's a lot safer to leave the car in gear, too. Reduce Drag Car manufacturers go to extreme lengths to ensure their cars are aerodynamic, slipping through the air as efficiently as possible to improve both performance and fuel economy. Then we buy them, and ruin all the manufacturer's hard work by installing bike racks, roof boxes and by driving with the windows and sunroof open all the time. All these things create extra drag, meaning the car's engine has to work harder to maintain the speed at which it's travelling, increasing fuel consumption. When not in use, you should remove any external carriers and keep the windows and sunroof closed on the motorway. Plan Your Route Making sure you know where you're going from the get go means that you're not wasting time and money driving around in circles trying to find your destination. Modern sat nav systems will often give you a choice of route after you've typed in a destination in a similar amount of time, only using less fuel. Planning your journey to navigate around traffic hotspots or road works can help keep your fuel consumption to a minimum. Consider a Hybrid Consider a Hybrid cars help you reduce your petrol or diesel costs by allowing you to complete part or all of your journey using an electric motor to reduce the workload of the engine. There are three different types of hybrid: mild, full and plug-in hybrid, all of which work in a different way, but their goal is the same: to reduce fuel consumption. With manufacturers launching an ever-increasing number of hybrid cars, some of which are now available for under £10,000, now could be a good time to make the move into an electrified vehicle. Small changes can equal a big reduction in fuel consumption Following all of the above rules could have a significant impact on your fuel bills. Simply making a few changes to your driving style and maintaining your car to keep it in tip-top condition can make all the difference. Car number plates; we see them every day and rarely give them a second thought but there's a lot more to the humble number plate in the UK with businesses offering car owners the chance to express themselves with personalised registrations or by messing with the collection of letters and numbers on the front (and back) of their motor in all kinds of ways. But the number plate also serves a vital purpose and there are rules governing exactly how it must be displayed. Step over the line and a fine of up to £1,000 could be in store for displaying an illegal number plate on your car. In this guide we'll look at the rules around number plates in the UK and cover what you can and can't do to inject some individuality into your car's alphanumeric code. The basic UK car number plate must be made from a reflective material. The front number plate must display black characters on a white background. There must be a mark to show who supplied the number plate. The British Standard number must be displayed - 'BS AU 145e' for plates fitted after 1 September 2021. The characters must not be removable or reflective. The characters must be a single shade of black on plates fitted after September 1 2021. Skip advertAdvertisement - Article continues belowThe number plate shade of black on plates fitted after September 1 2021. Scotland and Wales as well as the union flag, plus national identifier letters such as GB, UK, CYM, ENG, SCO or Wales. Zero-emissions vehicles can display the 'green flash' on the left-hand side of the plate. This was introduced in 2020 as a way of identifying EVs on the road and encouraging uptake. These green plates should only be available to owners of electric cars but there are reports of sellers supplying the plates for petrol or diesel models. UK plates is illegal, these plates are allowed if they conform to the other rules. Things get a bit more complicated when we start to get into number plate letter and number spacing, size and font and this is an area where many illegal number plates fall foul of the regulations by pushing the boundaries too far. The government leaflet INF104 includes full details of the regulations by pushing the boundaries too far. UK number plate font. Italics or other styles of letters are not allowed. The letters and numbers must also be spaced as follows... Advertisement - Article continues belowCharacters troke (the thickness of the black lines) must be 14mm. The space between the age identifier and the random letters must be 11mm. The vertical space between the age identifier and the random letters must be 11mm. over three lines unless the car was first registered before January 1 1973 or was built before January 1 1980, is registered in the historic tax class and exempt from VED tax. Motorcycle number 1 2001. Motorcycle plates can also have smaller characters, as detailed in the full table below. Date of first registration After Sept 1 2001 (Group 1) Before Sept 1 2001 (Group 1) Before Sept 1 2001 (Group 2) All motorcycles and tricycles Character stroke 14mm 16mm ones that do not conform to the guidelines above but in practice, there are all kinds of number plate modifications that car owners employ for cosmetic purposes or to make their number plate characters read differently; they may also buy plates with illegal fonts, coloured characters or shaded backgrounds. The reasons for these offences vary, but often it's drivers with personalised plates trying to make the characters more closely resemble a word; others may mis-display a plate after unwittingly buying a used car with an incorrect plate fitted; and criminals can deliberately obscure number plates in the hope of avoiding detection by ANPR cameras. Whatever the reasons, however, number plates are supposed to be purchased only from approved, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) registered vendors, who should refuse to issue plates that do not meet the regulations and check documentation including the V5C logbook to make sure the buyer has the right to buy that registration. Problems tend to start when plates are purchased from offshore, unregistered sellers. As exposed in our 2019 investigation, companies get around the law by marketing their plates as 'show plates', which are not meant to be used on the road. Any quick search of the internet will reveal various types of number plate available that are obviously illegal to anyone with a passing knowledge of the font and spacing rules but it's also possible to buy legal-looking plates that might be used for more nefarious purposes. Advertisement - Article continues belowUnregistered sellers will often issue plates to buyers with none of the documentation checks required by the DVLA. Banned number plates and cloned plates are freely available as a result but using them on your car could have serious repercussions. If it's difficult to read your car number plate for any reason, including a build-up of grime on its surface, you run the risk of getting fined. It's important to keep your number plate clean for that reason. It's a similar story with faulty numberplate lights, you're required to make your plate or an obscured plate can be issued with a Traffic Offence Report (TOR) or a Vehicle Defect Rectification Scheme (VDRS) notice, which means they escape a penalty if the fault is fixed within 14 days. Ultimately they could be liable for fines ranging from a £100 fixed penalty notice up to £1,000 for more serious or persistent offending. Cars can even be seized as evidence in extreme cases. In addition to this police action, the DVLA's policy is that if a vehicle is stopped more than once with a number plate failing to meet regulations, the registration could be issued with a new random number plate could also have their registration number rescinded. An Auto Express investigation from December 2020 looked that the problem of penalties for illegal number plates in the UK are intended to ensure that all number plates can be read by police, automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras and other safety cameras. Between 2015 and 22 May 2020, the DVLA only rescinded 109 number plates. Yet over the same period, the 13 police forces (out of 45) answering our freedom of information requests issued 625 traffic offence reports to the same vehicles more than once. At least five of these forces told us they do not liaise with the DVLA over such offences. Some forces, including the Metropolitan Police, could confirm when a ticket had been issued to the same person. A total of 22 forces were unable to tell us how many times a ticket had been issued to the same vehicle and keeper for an incorrectly displayed plate, often because they did not log such details. This means that we can only say for certain that the 625 double offences were for the same incorrectly displayed registration, not that the same person committed the offence. So while it's not possible to say for sure whether these plates should have been rescinded, the fact that many police forces are unable to determine this has prompted concern from motoring experts. Advertisement - Article continues belowSkip advertAdvertisement - Article continues belowWe contacted the DVLA to ask if it considered the current legislation and working practices around double number-plate offences to be fit for purpose, and the organisation informed us: "In cases where a fixed penalty has been issued it is a matter for individual police forces to decide whether to notify the DVLA." The National Police Chiefs' Council said: "Effective information sharing is an integral part of our roads policing strategy." It added: "We regularly review our information-sharing processes, and are committed to doing everything we can to make these processes as efficient as possible." Jack Cousens, head of roads policy from the AA said: "Enforcing the proper display of number plates only works when the DVLA and police forces complete the correct paperwork and tell each other what's happening. Clearly some forces have stopped doing so. "Effective roads policing can help tackle wider crimes such as drug trafficking and robbery. This is yet another example of traffic offences falling down the pecking order when it comes to police priorities." Find a car with the expertsLabour hints at major luxury car tax U-turn to boost EV sales Is pressure from retailers and car makers finally cutting through with ministers? It's only a matter of time before Jaguar Land Rover builds a factory in the USAMike Rutherford thinks Jaguar's 'Reimagine' strategy will result in the company exploring further opportunities in the USAMazda has killed off the electric MX-30, and we can't say we're surprised Mazda has killed off the electric MX-30, and we can't say we're surprisedThe MX-30 EV has been axed, but the Japanese brand will have another crack next year when it launches the all-new Mazda 6e saloon Number plates are an essential part of vehicle identification. With various styles and options available, it can be confusing to know what's not. This comprehensive guide will help you navigate the complex world of UK number plates in the UK must adhere to strict regulations. Table of Contents Legal number plates in the UK must adhere to strict regulations set by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). These plates must be made from reflective material and display black characters on a white background for front plates, and black characters on a yellow background for rear plates. The characters must be a single shade of black. All legal plates must be marked with the British Standard number. For plates fitted after September 1, 2021, they must be a single shade of black. All legal plates must be marked with the British Standard number. this is 'BS AU 145e'. For plates fitted before that date, the standard is 'BS AU 145d'. All plates must include the name and postcode of the supplier. The character font used must be the standard is 'BS AU 145d'. (area code), two numbers (age identifier), and three letters. Certain stylistic elements are permitted, such as 3D effect characters, as long as they don't interfere with the plates are legal, they must still conform to all standard number plate regulations. Failure to comply with these laws can result in fines of up to £1,000 and potential MOT failure. Legal Number Plates : 4D Plain Number Plates are a modern style of vehicle registration plate characterised by their three-dimensional raised characters, typically made of acrylic or similar durable plastic, which are affixed to a flat background plates. These number plates should adhere to all the rules mentioned above for the legal number plates. cut plates provide a clean, sleek look. 4D Matte: 4D matte number plates raised characters like standard 4D plates, but with a non-reflective as required by law. This creates a distinctive appearance where the characters appear to stand out against the reflective background. No adhering to the DVLA principle about number plates can make these number plates illegal. If the matte finished characters are not securely attached or alter the plate's overall structure, it would be illegal. Any attempt to use the matte finish to alter or obscure the true registration number is illegal. 5MM / 5MM Gel: The 5MM or 5MM Gel plates are an evolution of the 4D design, pushing the three-dimensional effect even further. These plates feature characters that protrude a full 5mm from the surface, using a gel-like acrylic material that gives them their alternative name. The increased depth creates a more dramatic visual impact compared to standard 4D plates, potentially offering increased durability due to the thicker material. Their legal status can be more contentious than standard 4D plates because of the extreme design. Installation requires careful fitting to ensure the extra depth doesn't interfere with the plate's mounting or the vehicle's bodywork. Pressed plates represent a traditional and widely accepted form of number plate in the UK. In this style, the characters are pressed or embossed into a flat metal or plastic, slightly raised letter effect without the dramatic 3D appearance of 4D or 5MM plates. These can be made of metal or plastic, with metal being more traditional and durable. While the basic design is standard, there can be variations in the pressing depth and characters, is reflective, meeting legal requirements. Shaped plates are designed to fit specific vehicle models, offering a more integrated look. These plates are contoured or shaped to match the curvature or design of particular vehicle models, enhancing the overall aesthetic of the vehicle by following its body lines. While road legal and MOT compliant, they must still adhere to all DVLA regulations regarding character size, spacing, and reflectivity. Shaped plates are usually made of flexible materials to allow for curved designs, and each design is typically only suitable for a specific make and model of vehicle. This custom fitment ensures they sit perfectly in the plate recess of particular vehicle models, creating a seamless look. Kelly Trickett Compliance Officer Motorfinity "The DVLA permits some number plate style variations, but strict compliance with font, size, spacing, and reflectivity rules is vital. Owners should prioritise BS AU 145e and Road Vehicles Regulations over aesthetics to avoid issues and ensure ANPR compatibility." Illegal Number PlatesWhile the UK's number plate regulations may seem straightforward, many vehicle owners unknowingly fall into the trap of displaying illegal plates. Illegal number plates come in many forms, often stemming from attempts to personalise or stylise the plate beyond legal limits. What Makes A Number Plate stemming from attempts to personalise or stylise the plate beyond legal limits. prescribed format without manipulation. Incorrect Font: Only the mandated 'Charles Wright 2001' typeface is permitted. Any other font, including stylized or decorative lettering, is illegal. Wrong Colours: Front plates must have black characters on a white background, while rear plates require black on yellow. Any deviation from this colour scheme is unlawful. Reflective or Removable Characters: Characters must be non-reflective and permanently affixed. Plates with reflective or removable letters and numbers are prohibited. Unapproved Flags or Emblems: While certain national flags and identifiers are allowed, any other graphics, logos, or emblems are illegal. Misrepresented Registration is illegal. Consequences of Using Illegal Number Plates Fines: Drivers caught with illegal plates can face fines of up to £1,000. MOT Failure: Vehicle's registration number. Insurance Implications: Using illegal plates could potentially invalidate your car insurance. Common Misconceptions "Slight" Modifications are Okay: Even minor alterations to spacing or font can make a plate illegal. Old Vehicles are Exempt: While some classic vehicles can use certain vintage-style plates, they must adhere to the same regulations as standard plates. 3D and 4D Number Plates and the UK car scene. They offer a cool, eye-catching look for vehicles without breaking any rules. These plates and its Key Features 3D and the UK car scene. They offer a cool, eye-catching look for vehicles without breaking any rules. number plates have slightly raised black letters and numbers stuck onto the plate, creating a eve-catching look while following the rules. Characters are raised approximately 1-3mm from the plate surface. Made from acrylic material bonded to the reflective background. Compliant with UK regulations when properly manufactured. 4D Plates and Its Key Features 4D plates have even taller letters and numbers that stick out more, sometimes with coloured edges, making them really pop out from the plate surface. Often use a thicker, gel-like acrylic material for characters. May include colour-coded edges on characters (within legal limits) Provide a more dramatic 3D effect compared to 3D plates. Legal Considerations of 3d and 4D Plates Both 3D and 4D number plates can be legal in the UK, provided they meet all other DVLA requirements for character font, size, spacing, and overall plate dimensions. The raised characters must not interfere with the plate's reflective properties or legibility. It's crucial to purchase these plates from authorised suppliers to ensure compliance. Following are the key points to remember in terms of their legalities Characters must still conform to the mandated 'Charles Wright 2001' font. Spacing and size regulations apply, regardless of the 3D effect. The plate's reflective background must meet British Standard requirements. Any coloured elements (like character edges) must not affect overall legibility. While 3D and 4D plates offer an attractive option for vehicle owners looking to enhance their car's appearance, it's essential to ensure that the chosen design complies with all current UK regulations. As with any number plate, using noncompliant 3D or 4D plates can result in fines and other penalties. When considering 3D or 4D plates, always purchase from a Registered Number Plate Supplier (RNPS) and verify that the plates meet the latest British Standard (BS AU 145e as of September 2021) to avoid any legal issues. Illegal number plates may have incorrect spacing, use unapproved fonts, display unauthorised symbols or flags, have reflective characters, or use tinted covers that affect visibility. Number plate frames are legal in the UK as long as they don't obscure any part of the registration number or interfere with the plate's reflectivity. the DVLA and conform to all standard number plates are white and rear plates are white and rear plates are yellow to help other road users quickly identify which direction a vehicle is facing, especially in low light conditions. The current rules, effective since September 2021, require plates to meet the British Standard BS AU 145e, which specifies sizing, fonts, and the need for a supplier's business name and postcode on the plate. Raised or 3D letters are legal on UK number plates as long as they comply with all other DVLA regulations regarding font, size, and spacing. No, only the official Charles Wright font is legal for use on UK number plates. Custom fonts or styles are not permitted. The current format is two letters (area code), two numbers (age identifier), and three random letters. For example: AB51 CDE. Motorfinity, we pride ourselves on offering exclusive discount across all makes and models. Whether you're looking for efficiency, style, or cutting-edge technology, our selection is designed to meet every need. You can choose from Personal Contract Purchase (PCP), Hire Purchase (HP), and leasing deals. Each option provides flexibility and benefits tailored to different driving habits and budgetary needs. Are you eligible? Our nations Armed Forces, Veterans, Emergency Services, NHS, Police and Prison Services, the Education and Social Care sectors and more form our eligible audience. Please note: Regtransfers will not supply number plates that do not meet current regulations. Furthermore, we strongly advise that non-compliant plates should be avoided. Potential penalties for driving with illegal number plates include a heavy fine, MOT failure and the withdrawal (without compensation) of your private registration number. We explained the rules governing the manufacture, supply and display of car number plates on our main number plates that do not contain all the elements required by the regulations must not be used on UK public highways. Number plates that feature additional, non-regulation elements that may affect the clarity or legibility of the registration number must not be used on UK public highways. Displaying such number plates on a vehicle on public roads is an offence punishable by a hefty fine, MOT failure and withdrawal (without compensation) of the registration number displayed. If one has paid several thousand pounds for a personal number plate then, obviously, the price of using illegal plates can be very high. If your number plates break any of the current regulations that were in force when your plates are illegal to use on public roads. The following is a non-exhaustive list giving examples of non-compliant elements that could see you pulled over by the police: Non-regulation fonts The Charles Wright font specified in the regulations is the only legal characters but the regulation font then they are not legal. Mis-spaced characters The spacing between characters, characters, characters groups and the edges or borders of number plates are all set out in the regulations. If your number plate does not comply with the prescribed spacings, then it is not legal. Altering the appearance of the characters on your number plate in any way (for example, by the positioning of screws and bolts, or with paint, ink or tape, is illegal. Obscuring your number plates from clear view) is illegal. Treating your plates with any substance, paint, spray etc that changes its reflective properties, or that interferes the readability of your plates by humans or by ANPR cameras, is illegal. Allowing dirt to accumulate on your number plates to such an extent that it hinders clarity or legibility is illegal. Allowing dirt to accumulate on your number plates by humans or by ANPR cameras, is illegal. not specifically listed as permissible in the regulations then your plates are illegal. Basically, only the characters, borders, flags and panels specified in the regulations may be used. Non-compliant colour or reflectivity of backgrounds or characters Number plates must be manufactured and sold by registered makers and sellers. Registered providers have to ensure that their plates are manufactured in accordance with the regulations and the specifications set out in British Standard number plates that don't comply are illegal. False or cloned registration numbers Displaying number plates that bear a registration number other than the one assigned to the vehicle by DVLA (shown on the vehicle's V5C registration document) is illegal. In additional criminal charges. Currently, the penalties risked by drivers using illegal number plates may include any or all of the following: A fine up to £1000 MOT failure Withdrawal of the registration number without compensation. This may be applied whether the registration number without compensation. the vehicle. For full details of the regulations, including all the features and elements that must be included and those that may, optionally, be included and those that may, optionally, be included and those that may optionally how to replace lost, damaged or stolen plates, please see our main acrylic number plates page.