



How to import your vehicle permanently into Great Britain

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Section 1: Scope of this advice

This booklet explains the procedures for importing, licensing and registering vehicles purchased outside Great Britain. It is aimed mainly at individuals who wish to buy a car - including motor caravans, ambulances and dual-purpose vehicles, or light goods vehicles, including bi-purpose vehicles.

If you wish to import a vehicle other than a passenger car or light goods vehicle - for example, a motorcycle, a heavy goods vehicle, or a bus - please refer to Appendix 5 of this booklet. The vehicle classifications are explained in Appendix 4.

If you intend to import a vehicle into Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, or the Isle of Man, you should contact the appropriate authorities there for advice on how to proceed.

If your vehicle is fully licensed and registered outside the UK it can be driven here as a visiting vehicle for a limited period. Please see Appendix 6.

What we can't advise on:

- lists of manufacturers, dealers and car prices
- insurance brokers
- shipping arrangements
- VAT and import duty (see Appendix 2, H M Customs & Excise)
- suitable garages/mechanics for any modifications
- temporary registration in country of purchase (please consult your dealer or the Embassy of the country concerned)

Exporting a vehicle from Great Britain

If a vehicle is being taken out of Great Britain for more than 12 months, it is classed as a permanent export. You should notify the Export Section, DVLA or your nearest DVLA Local Office and surrender your registration document and in return you will be issued with an export certificate. You should contact the Embassy of the country of import for information on their requirements.

What are the Main Considerations when Importing a Car or Light Goods Vehicle?

There are two main things you need to establish *BEFORE* you attempt to import a vehicle:

Is the vehicle suitable for use on roads in Britain?

You will need to present appropriate documents and/or submit the vehicle for a test before you register and license it.

Do you meet the appropriate Customs and Excise requirements concerning import duties etc.?

You will need to satisfy HM Customs and Excise; and show that you have paid the relevant VAT and duties when you license and register the vehicle (see Appendix 2, H M Customs & Excise).

Section 2: Technical requirements

What you need to do depends mainly on the age of the vehicle and the standards applicable in its original sales market. Generally speaking, you are unlikely to have significant problems importing a vehicle from the European Union except to ensure that the lighting and mirrors are set up for left hand traffic and the speedometer includes an miles per hour display. Cars from other parts of the world might need extensive modification before they can be used in Britain. You should not assume that a vehicle which seems to be similar in appearance is identical to a model already available in Britain. Vehicles outwardly similar to European-specification models, but intended for other markets, can often be unsuitable for use in Britain without some modification.

Please note: the Department cannot advise on whether a particular vehicle is suitable for use in Britain. You should always consult the manufacturer or his agent for advice, especially about whether any modifications are necessary and whether they can be made. You should give the manufacturer as much information as possible about the origin of the vehicle so that he can give appropriate help. Ideally, this should include the Vehicle Identification Number - usually 17 characters, but 8 in the case of vehicles made for the Japanese market - stamped on the chassis.

After-sale issues

If you are importing or buying a vehicle which has not been type-approved - e.g., one built for a non-European market such as Japan or North America - you are advised to check (before purchasing) with the person or company supplying it that the after-sale service satisfies your needs. This applies in particular to vehicles which are subject to Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) and Enhanced SVA (ESVA) and imports from outside the European Union, which are unlikely to have been type-approved. You are also advised to check that your vehicle insurance is valid in such circumstances.

Particular questions you might wish to ask are:

- **Does the vendor have access to any applicable vehicle recall scheme?**

For vehicles sold in the UK, manufacturers and the Government's Vehicle and Operator Services Agency operate a Code of Practice covering the recall of vehicles in the event of a defect being discovered. Vehicles not made for the European Market are unlikely to be covered by that Code, but there might be similar arrangements in the country for which the vehicle was originally intended to be used. You should check that in the event of a Manufacturer's recall campaign, your vehicle is adequately covered.

- **Can the vendor verify who carries product liability for the vehicle in the event of problems - in particular, if the vehicle has been modified for use in Great Britain?**
- **What are the terms of any warranty?**

A manufacturer's warranty might only be valid in the country for which the vehicle was originally intended to be used. A warranty might be invalidated if modifications are made to the vehicle, but not authorised by the manufacturer, even if the modifications are needed to comply with British requirements.

- **What are the servicing arrangements (including the availability of spare parts)?**

Engine management systems for vehicles that look similar might be significantly different to reflect variations in driving conditions and fuel quality in other parts of the world. Not all dealers have the equipment to service such vehicles.

- **Is the owner's manual and vehicle labelling in English?**

You may find it helpful to refer to Appendix 1 for a summary of the following procedures.

If you wish to import a vehicle manufactured more than 10 years ago, please go to section 2.1.

If you wish to import a passenger car or light goods vehicle from a European Union (or European Economic Area) country, please go to section 2.2.

If you wish to import a vehicle from Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, please go to section 2.3.

If you wish to import a passenger car from any other country, please go to section 2.4.

2.1 All cars and light goods manufactured more than 10 years before registration in Great Britain.

Any car or light goods vehicle 10 years old or more may be imported regardless of its origins or whether you have previously lived in the country of export. The vehicle must pass a standard "MoT" roadworthiness test before it can be licensed and registered. At August 2003, this costs up to £40.75.

The MoT test is only a spot check of a limited number of key safety and environmental features of a vehicle's condition. Alone, it will not guarantee that the vehicle meets all applicable standards, (particularly those concerning design and construction.) These are set out in the Road Vehicles

(Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 and the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989, both as amended. The relevant standards will be determined by the vehicle's year of manufacture. These regulations are complicated and it is extremely difficult to give individual advice on the likelihood of compliance - particularly for non-European vehicles. Section 2.6 includes general guidance on basic checks you should make. Please see also Section 4.

2.2 Cars & light goods vehicles up to 10 years old and since the date of manufacture and type approved in the European Union.

Throughout the European Union, manufacturers of most cars are granted a "Type Approval" for a model or range of models. This signifies that the vehicle has been designed and constructed to appropriate safety and environmental standards. There are two kinds of type approval.

EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA) - Passenger Cars Only

Most new cars sold in the European Union will conform to an "EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval". (ECWVTA has been available optionally since 1993. From January 1998, virtually all new mass-produced cars sold in the EU must conform to an ECWVTA).

ECWVTAs are recognised throughout the European Union but you must ensure that the vehicle is suitable for use on UK roads. Normally, this will not be a problem for right-hand drive vehicles intended for the UK market. To confirm compliance with an ECWVTA, you should obtain from the manufacturer or his agent a valid "Certificate of Conformity" (CoC) and present it when first licensing & registering the vehicle. (The manufacturer might charge if a duplicate Certificate is required). A CoC is only valid for the UK if the light and rear-view mirrors are designed for left-hand traffic and the speedometer is marked in m.p.h. as well as km/h.

If the certificate is not valid in these respects, you should be in a position to produce evidence that modifications for left hand traffic have been made and that the speedometer includes a miles-per-hour display e.g. a statement from a garage/mechanic or receipts for necessary replacement parts (see Section 2.6 for further guidance). When the modifications have been completed and you have obtained a statement or invoices to that effect from a garage/mechanic, you should send it together with the CoC to the Vehicle Certification Agency who will, if satisfied, issue a Mutual Recognition Certificate for which the charge will be £65 (as of August 2003). It is this Certificate that you will need to present to your local DVLA Local Office.'

Vehicles with a valid CoC can be imported by individuals and businesses without restriction; it is not necessary to demonstrate compliance with the personal import criteria as described in Section 2.4.

If your vehicle is more than 3 years old, it must also pass the normal "MoT" roadworthiness test before it can be licensed and registered. (At August 2003, this costs up to £40.75).

National Type Approval (NTA) - Passenger Cars and Light Goods Vehicles

If your passenger car was built before 1996, or you have a light goods vehicle, it will probably conform to a NTA. Strictly, this is valid only in the EU State in which it was issued. Naturally, a British Type Approval is acceptable. However, if your vehicle was nationally type-approved in another EU country, it may also be acceptable in Britain under a procedure called Mutual Recognition.

As with ECWVTA, compliance with a NTA is normally shown by a valid Certificate of Conformity issued by the manufacturer. If you establish that your vehicle conforms to a NTA issued outside Britain, ask the manufacturer for a statement explaining the differences between your vehicle and the nearest model which has type approval in Great Britain. If a similar model to yours is not available in the UK, then ask which requirements of NTA your vehicle fails to comply with. The manufacturer or importer may charge for this work. When you have this information, please contact the British Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA); they will tell you whether the NTA is recognised here. If it is, the Agency will issue a Mutual Recognition Certificate - a charge will be made for this, at August 2003 £65 - which you must present when first licensing & registering the vehicle in Britain. The only reason a Mutual Recognition Certificate can be refused is if the type of vehicle in question is unsuitable for use on UK roads.

If your car or light goods vehicle is more than 3 years old, it must pass the normal "MoT" roadworthiness test before it can be licensed and registered. (At August 2003, this costs up to £40.75).

2.3 Cars and light goods vehicles up to 10 years old since the date of manufacture previously registered in Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.

Northern Ireland

If you propose to import a car or light goods vehicle first registered in Northern Ireland on or after 2 December 1985, you need only present evidence of its previous registration in Northern Ireland and, if the vehicle is over 3 years old, a valid MoT roadworthiness certificate.

The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Most vehicles sold in these islands comply with British requirements. If you are able to demonstrate that the vehicle had been registered in Great Britain before being exported to the islands, that will suffice.

Vehicles registered in the Isle of Man (IoM) usually include, where appropriate, type approval information obtained from Great Britain. An IoM export certificate that includes this information is adequate evidence for licensing and registration in Great Britain. Similarly, an IoM export certificate might also include a CO₂ emissions figure, which can be used in Great Britain, where appropriate, to obtain a lower rate of Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) under the graduated scheme. If the CO₂ figure is not shown, but you wish to claim a lower VED rate, you will need to obtain a Certificate of Conformity from the vehicle manufacturer to provide evidence of the emissions standard the vehicle meets.

Vehicles registered in Jersey should have a type approval number on the export certificate. If the export certificate has this information this is adequate evidence for licensing and registration in Great Britain.

For other IoM and Jersey exports and, currently, vehicles imported from other the Channel Islands, you will need to proceed in accordance with Section 2.2 or 2.4 as appropriate.

2.4 Cars and light vehicles up to 10 years old and not type-approved for the European Union or Great Britain

You should first consult the manufacturer or his agent to establish the design and construction pedigree of the vehicle. If the car was built to a British or European type-approval specification, please follow the procedure in Section 2.2 .

If the car is not to a British or European Type Approval specification, you can only proceed if the vehicle meets, or is modified to meet, technical standards broadly comparable with those of European type approval

Single Vehicle Approval

Your vehicle will have to pass a Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) inspection of its design and construction before it can be registered and licensed. A vehicle that passes will be issued with a Minister's Approval Certificate, which you will need to present to license and register it. (A Department's Approval Certificate issued in Northern Ireland is also valid in Great Britain.) If your vehicle is 3 or more years old it will also have to pass the normal "MoT" roadworthiness test prior to licensing & registration.

Since 1 August 2001 there have been two levels of SVA: standard and enhanced. Standard SVA will be applied in cases where the number of affected vehicles is expected to be low and we can accept that the very demanding safety and environmental standards of type approval will not be undermined. The enhanced inspection (ESVA) will be applied in other cases - i.e. where the number of vehicles entering service warrants a more thorough inspection. Further advice is given in free leaflet SVA4, which can also be seen on the DfT web site.

Enhanced SVA will be required for the majority of non type-approved imports, whether imported by individuals privately or for any commercial reason.

Standard SVA will apply only for the following main categories of imported vehicle ¹:

- Any "personally imported" vehicle as defined below
- Any left-hand drive vehicle

At August 2003 the Standard SVA inspection for cars and dual-purpose vehicles costs Â£150 and for goods vehicles (including bi-purpose vehicles) Â£60. For ESVA the basic fees are Â£180 and Â£90 respectively you might have to pay more for independent tests if you do not have all the required information for your vehicle. Special rates apply for re-tests and other circumstances. Please see leaflet SVA4 for details.

What is a Personal Import?

With effect from 1 February 2001 you are a personal importer only

- a. if the vehicle has been imported by a person entering the United Kingdom;
- b. that person had, at the time the vehicle was imported, been normally resident in a country other than the United Kingdom for a continuous period of at least 12 months;
- c. that person intends to become normally resident in the United Kingdom;
- d. the vehicle has been in the possession of that person and used by him in the country where he has been normally resident for a period of at least 6 months before its importation; and
- e. the vehicle is intended for his personal or household use in the United Kingdom.

What the applicant will need to produce as evidence of meeting the above criteria:

1a. Outside the EC C+E 388 as proof of 12-month continuous residence. (No other custom forms will be accepted as a substitute for this).

1b. Inside the EC documents such as household bills will be accepted as evidence but they must cover the 12-month period.

or

2. ownership document or Registration document *plus* insurance document or service invoices for the vehicle covering the *6-month period*. **NB the European Community countries are:** Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Eire, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden the UK, ., Cyprus, The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

NB the original documentation is needed

For further information, please refer to SVA 4

2.5 Motor caravans, ambulances

When considering applicable technical standards, these are classed as a special kind of passenger car; a different classification may be applied for other purposes, such as taxation.

The only pre-registration test is the annual MoT test. Motor caravans and ambulances are exempt from the Type Approval and Single Vehicle Approval described above. New imported motor caravans and hearses are subject to roadworthiness (MoT) testing three years after first UK registration and every year thereafter. New imported ambulances are subject to MoT testing one year after first UK registration and every year thereafter. A motor caravan, that has been used on roads outside Britain before being imported, is subject to annual MoT testing three years after the date of manufacture. An imported ambulance previously used abroad is subject to annual MoT testing one year after the date of manufacture.

British Construction and Use and Lighting Regulations require that vehicles incorporate a number of individual components that are marked to show they have been type-approved to British or European standards unless specifically exempt. Such components include lights, windscreens, seatbelts, mirrors and tyres. The only lawful alternative to this for imported motor caravans and ambulances is possession of a Minister's Approval Certificate under the SVA scheme. You can volunteer your vehicle for SVA to gain exemption from these requirements instead of replacing the individual components. General guidance is given in Section 2.6 on common problems, but you should seek the manufacturer's or importer's advice on how best to proceed.

2.6 Modifications necessary for use in Britain.

The following is general guidance on the most common problems you are likely to encounter. It is not exhaustive and you should always seek the manufacturer's advice in relation to individual models.

Please note: Even if you source a vehicle from the EC or Northern Ireland, it may have been imported by your supplier from outside the EC and may still require the modifications described in this section.

Left hand traffic

If your vehicle is left hand drive, it will probably need to be modified or adjusted for use in left-hand traffic. In particular:

- Headlamps will need to be replaced or adjusted to produce the required dipped beam for left-hand traffic. The alignment requirement must be met without the use of masks, beam converters or adapters unless they are an integral part of an approved headlamp.
- For vehicles first used on or after 1 April 1980, at least one rear fog light must be fitted on the centre-line or the offside of the vehicle.
- Rear view mirrors must give the required field of view for use in left-hand traffic.

Imperial Speedometer

Great Britain uses imperial units for speed measurement. The law requires that speedometers must include a miles-per-hour display. Please note in particular that any modified display must be visible in daylight *and* in darkness.

Markings may be added to the existing speedometer provided they are:

- accurate;
- durable;
- can be seen clearly in daylight and when the instrument is lit during darkness.

Emissions

Vehicles sold in several parts of the world (**especially the Middle East, Africa and South America**) often do not meet European emissions standards. Please note that petrol-fuelled cars manufactured from August 1992, and other vehicles manufactured from August 1994, might be required to meet a standard that can usually only be achieved by a catalytic converter. Details of vehicles needing to meet such a

standard may be found in "In Service Exhaust Emissions Standards for Road Vehicles" which is available from The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency, Berkley House, Croydon Street, Bristol, BS5 0DA , telephone 0870 60 60 440. All passenger cars with up to 5 passenger seats and up to 2,500kg gross weight manufactured from August 1995 *will* need to meet the "catalyst" emission standard to pass SVA / ESVA.

Radio Activated Security Systems (RASS)

If your vehicle has a radio-activated immobiliser, alarm or central locking, only radio frequencies within the following ranges must be used in the UK:

417.90 - 418.10 MHz (until Jan 2008);

433.05 - 434.79 MHz; 868.00 - 868.60 MHz, 868.70 - 869.20 MHz and 869.70 - 870.00 MHz

Systems using other frequencies are unlawful. The maximum penalty for non-compliance is a fine of up to Â£5000 and/or 6 months imprisonment. In practical terms, you run the risk that you will not be able to arm or disarm the vehicle security system due to other signals on the same frequency interfering with your key-fob transmitter. If in doubt, you should check with the vehicle or security system manufacturer what frequency is used and replace the system if necessary. Type-approved devices are readily available as 'after-market' accessories. They will be marked to show they meet either European Directive 95/56/EEC or UN/ECE Regulation 97. Other systems might be acceptable: if in doubt, please check with the system manufacturer whether the Enhanced SVA requirements are met. We recommend replacement systems be fitted by a professional installer.

*Please Note: The RASS technical requirements will be checked as part of the Enhanced SVA inspection for vehicles manufactured after 1 October 1998. **The ESVA test does NOT recognise systems operating between 417.9 and 418.1 MHz.***

Dimensions

The maximum permitted width of vehicles in GB is 2.55m and the maximum length for a rigid vehicle is 12m.

Numberplates

Once your vehicle has been allocated a UK registration number, it must be displayed on front and rear numberplates in accordance with UK requirements. Failure to meet the requirements is an offence attracting a maximum fine of up to Â£1,000 and in some cases the registration mark may be withdrawn. The police can also issue fixed penalty fines for illegally displayed numberplates and vehicles may also fail the annual vehicle MoT test. It is an offence to alter, rearrange or misrepresent letters or numbers in order to form names or words; e.g. A242 ABC must not be displayed as A242A BC.

For vehicles first registered on after 1 January 1973, the characters must be black, the background must be reflex-reflecting material, white at the front and yellow at the rear. Each number plate shall be permanently and legibly marked in such a position as to be clearly visible when the number plate is fitted to the vehicle, with the following information: (i) the name, trade mark or other means of identification of the maker; (ii) the number of the British Standard, i.e. BS AU 145a.

New or Replacement Plates Fitted from 1 September 2001 must be fitted in accordance with BS AU 145d, and show (i) the number of the BS (i.e. BS AU 145d), (ii) the name trade mark or other means of identification of the manufacturer or component supplier; (iii) name and postcode of the supplying of identification of the manufacturer or component supplier; (iv) name and postcode of the supplying outlet.

Certain imported vehicles may be permitted to display numberplates with smaller characters if:

- The vehicle does not have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval

And

- The vehicle's construction/ design cannot accommodate standard size plates

Specifications for numberplates

Standard size plates

| | |
|--|------|
| Character Height | 79mm |
| Character Width (except the figure 1 or I) | 50mm |
| Character Stroke | 14mm |
| Space between characters | 11mm |
| Space between groups | 33mm |
| Top, bottom and side margins (minimum) | 11mm |
| Space between vertical lines | 19mm |

Smaller size plates (for certain imported vehicles)

| | |
|--|------|
| Character Height | 64mm |
| Character Width (except the figure 1 or I) | 44mm |
| Character Stroke | 10mm |
| Space between characters | 10mm |

Diagrams of the standard permitted numberplate layouts and requirements are shown in **Appendix 7**.

These notes are a basic guide only. If fuller details are required, the relevant regulations should be referred to. Currently these are The Road Vehicles (Display of Registration Mark) Regulations 2001 as amended - copies available from the Stationery Office: PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN (telephone orders: 0870 600 5522); fax orders: 0870 600 5533) or either the DVLA or HMSO web sites.

Vehicles imported from North America

Generally speaking, most USA and Canadian design and construction standards will be accepted as being equivalent to Single Vehicle Approval standards. There are, however, two important exceptions *in addition* to the above left-hand traffic, RASS and number plate requirements.

- Many North American cars follow a different convention for the colour of their external lights. Front side lights, and all turning indicators are likely to require modification - including the addition of amber front side repeater turn indicators.
- There are no standards on external projections in North America. Beware of vehicles with features such as "bull bars", non-retracting mascots, and protruding exhaust pipes.

Vehicles imported from Japan

The most common disparities with Japanese standards are: no rear fog light; no m.p.h. display on the speedometer; inadequate number plate space; wrong RASS frequency; and the fuel-filler nozzle being of incorrect diameter (which safeguards against using leaded fuel in vehicles fitted with a catalytic converter).

1 There are other limited circumstances in which standard SVA will be applied. Please refer to booklet SVA4 for details

Section 3: Registration and licensing procedures

A vehicle imported into GB for use on the public road must be licensed and registered immediately after arrival. The vehicle must be in this country and available for inspection before you make the application. The inspection may be to establish the vehicle's category as well as its identity. After arrival the only circumstances in which you can drive the vehicle before completing these formalities are to and from a pre-arranged SVA and /or MoT test and to and from a garage for remedial work following failure to pass the tests. Thereafter the vehicle must be kept off road until the licensing and registration formalities have been completed. N.B. UK law requires a vehicle to be licensed and registered for road use. To avoid difficulties, importers are advised by DVLA to transport rather than drive their vehicles from the port of entry to home or first destination and to keep them off the road until they have been properly licensed and registered.

Application for licensing and registration should be made to the DVLA Local Offices nearest your place of residence. Addresses and telephone numbers are given in Appendix 3. Please note this type of application is not dealt with 'over the counter'. These offices are open Monday to Friday 9:00 - 17:00 (except on the second Wednesday of each month when they open at 9:30).

What documents will I need?

In order to license and register your vehicle the following documents which must be originals, will need to be submitted to your DVLA Local Office:

a) New Vehicle

- i. V55/4 application form
- ii. Registration fee - currently Â£38 (not applicable for vehicles registered in the disabled taxation class)
- iii. The duty payable for road fund licence (Vehicle Excise Duty)
- iv. A current certificate of British motor insurance
- v. Evidence of payment of duties to Customs & Excise or self-declaration
- vi. Evidence of Type Approval
- vii. Declaration of Newness
- viii. Evidence showing the date the vehicle was collected (normally the invoice)

b) Used Vehicle

- i. V55/5 application form
- ii. Registration fee - currently Â£38 (not applicable for vehicles registered in the disabled taxation class)
- iii. The duty payable for the road fund licence (Vehicle Excise Duty)
- iv. A current certificate of insurance
- v. Evidence to determine the age of the vehicle e.g. foreign registration document, letter from the manufacturer
- vi. Evidence of payment of duties to Customs & Excise or self-declaration
- vii. Evidence of Type Approval
- viii. A current MoT certificate (if applicable)

If you are registering your vehicle using either form V55/4 or V55/5 you will need to produce documentation confirming both your name and address. This procedure was introduced on 1 January 2004 to ensure the keeper details provided at the time of registration are genuine, thereby preventing the fraudulent registration of vehicles. You **must** provide either your DVLA photocard driving licence or **one** original document from **each** of the lists below. Copies are not acceptable.

Documentation confirming your name:

Current DVLA paper driving licence
Passport
Birth Certificate
Marriage Certificate
Decree nisi/ absolute

Documentation confirming your address

Utility bill issued within the last 3 months - gas, electricity, water, landline telephone
Council tax bill for current year
Bank/ Building Society statement issued within the last 3 months
Medical card

Registration and licensing will not take place unless you have the necessary documentation (including a test certificate if appropriate). In some cases the Local Office may wish to see the vehicle to check its identity.

Postal Applications

Postal applications can be made by sending the completed V55/4 or V55/5 application form to your DVLA Local Office ensuring that you include all the documents required to license and register your vehicle. For the address of the nearest Local Office call 08702 43044 or see Appendix 3.

Returning Your Identity Documents

In most cases your documentation will be returned with your Vehicle Excise Licence (tax disc). If you would like your documents returned by special delivery please provide a prepaid self-addressed special delivery envelope. DVLA can not guarantee to return your documents by a specific date or event (eg a holiday).

Non-Receipt of Identity Documents

Unless you contact DVLA **within 3 months** of the date you sent your application they will not be able to carry out the necessary follow-up investigation both at the DVLA Local Office and with the Post Office. DVLA will **not** be liable to any claim after the three month period.

Further Information

For further advice on completing application forms V55/4 or V55/5 please refer to booklet V355/4 or V355/5. Alternatively, you may wish to contact your DVLA Local Office. The documents V55/4, V55/5, V355/4 and V355/5 are all available from DVLA Local Offices.

New vehicle previously driven (delivery mileage only)

A 'brand new' vehicle can be driven to GB and registered as 'new' provided

- a. the vehicle is registered in GB quickly after collection - this is taken to be 14 days but may be extended to one calendar month at peak periods (e.g. prior to 1 March and 1 September);
- b. it has reasonable delivery mileage;
- c. it has not been previously 'permanently' registered.

Insurance against third party liability

You must obtain insurance cover before you drive in the UK. This can be arranged prior to arrival through an UK insurance company or broker. The British Insurance Brokers' Association (BIBA) should be able to provide you with information about insurance companies which provide the type of cover you will need. The BIBA can be contacted at: BIBA House, 14 Bevis Marks, London, EC3A 7NT, Tel: (0)20 7623 9043.

What customs forms do I need?

You will need one of the following:

Vehicle Imported from Within the EU

VAT 415 - This form must be completed by individuals who have personally acquired a New Means of Transport (NMT) in another Member State. The form is available at Local Offices and following completion will be forwarded to Customs & Excise with a copy of the sales invoice.

NB. NMT vehicles are defined for Customs purposes as originating from within the EU and are either less than 6 months old or have travelled less than 6,000 kms (3,750 miles).

This form does not apply to members of British Forces Germany who must use BFG form 414 to register their vehicle.

VAT 414 - This self -declaration form can only be used in the following circumstances:

- a. for NMT vehicles acquired commercially within the EU by VAT registered traders.
- b. for vehicles not classed as NMTs (i.e. over 6 months old and having travelled more than 6,000 kms / 3,750miles) which have been acquired from within the EU.

This form does not apply to members of British Forces Germany who must use BFG Form 414 to register their vehicle.

Vehicle imported from outside the EU

C&E 386 - This form is issued by HM Customs for a vehicle of any age personally imported from outside the EU.

C&E 388 - This form is issued by HM Customs for a Customs restricted vehicle of any age personally imported from outside the EU.

C&E 389 - This is a self-declaration form which should be used by VAT registered traders for commercial imports from outside the EU.

These forms will show that the appropriate taxes have or will be paid. For more detailed advice about import duties please contact HM Customs and Excise. (see Appendix 2.)

How do I show compliance with technical requirements?

You will need to prove that your vehicle meets the appropriate technical standard described in Section 2. To do this you must present:

- a. A Certificate of Conformity or
- b. A Mutual Recognition Certificate or
- c. A Single Vehicle Approval Certificate or
- d. Evidence of previous British registration (including registration in Northern Ireland) or
- e. A British National Type Approval Certificate or
- f. Evidence of exemption from Type Approval. This may be because the vehicle is more than 10 years old or is an exempted class.

Please Note:

- *All the documents must be originals.*
- *At least one of the documents must bear the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) officially.*
- *The other documents must refer to the VIN, but it will be acceptable if the VIN is added by the applicant.*
- *You will need to provide proof that the vehicle is a "personal import" at the time of applying for SVA under the "personal import" category. If accepted as proof that the vehicle is a "personal import", all the documents will be officially stamped. You may then use them to apply for an SVA test and they will be accepted for registration.*
- *When the vehicle is registered, you will be required to surrender foreign registration documents but you will be given photocopies if you request them.*

Section 4: Is there anything else I need to know?

Keeping your vehicle in good condition

The Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) and Lighting Regulations impose obligations on the registered keeper of the vehicle. Compliance with Section 2 of this booklet will enable you to license and register your vehicle. However, this still does not necessarily guarantee that your vehicle is legal to drive on the road. There are several other legal requirements you must comply with. In essence, they say that, when on a public road, a vehicle must be kept in a safe condition and be able to meet certain emission standards. If you use a vehicle which is in breach of the Regulations you can be made to rectify it by the police, or, in extreme cases, be immediately prohibited from using it.

Driving Licence

If you are resident in Great Britain but do not hold a current British driving licence or a valid licence issued by another member state of the European Community or Economic Area, you may drive small vehicles for up to 12 months from the date you became resident, provided your full national licence remains valid.

Appendix 1: Flow Chart

Flow chart of the import procedures for cars and light goods vehicles up to 10 years old

This flow chart is available as a download in PDF format:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/vehicles/vssafety/importsapproval/importprocedureforcarsandlig4560>
(PDF, 92KB)

Appendix 2: Contacts for further information or help.

Department for Transport

General enquiries about vehicle import procedures and policy on Single Vehicle Approval

Department for Transport
Vehicle Technology and Standards 5
Zone 2/03
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 2078

Fax: 020 7944 2196

General advice about licensing & registering vehicles

Customer Enquiry Unit at:
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
Longview Road,
Swansea
SA6 7JL

Opening hours: 0800 - 2030 Monday - Friday, 0800 - 1730 Saturdays

Tel: 0870 2400010

Fax : 01792 782793

e-mail : vehicles.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk

web-site : <http://www.dvla.gov.uk>

Specific advice about licensing & registering vehicles

Your nearest DVLA Local Office - see Appendix 3

Mutual Recognition of National Type Approvals issued in the European Union.

The Vehicle Certification Agency
1 The Eastgate Office Centre
Eastgate Road
BRISTOL
BS5 6XX

Tel: 0117 952 4191

Fax: 0117 952 4144

e-mail: enquiries@vca.gov.uk

web-site: <http://www.vca.gov.uk>

General enquiries about the SVA scheme should be made to one of the VOSA Test Stations in leaflet SVA4 or to:

The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency
Welcombe House,
91-92 The Strand,
Swansea SA1 2DH.

Tel: 0870 6060440

Fax: 01792 454313

e-mail: enquiries@vosa.gov.uk

web-site: <http://www.vosa.gov.uk>

Technical enquiries about the SVA scheme:

SVA Section
The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency
Welcombe House
91-92 The Strand
Swansea SA1 2DH

Tel: 0870 6060440

Fax: 01792 454367

e-mail: technical@vosa.gov.uk

Hm customs and excise

Advice on import duty and tax

Please contact your local Customs and Excise Business Advice Centre. You will find the number in the phone directory under "Customs & Excise". Customs & Excise notices and other information are available on the internet.

Tel: 0845 010 9000

Web-site address: <http://www.hmce.gov.uk/>

Appendix 3: DVLA local offices

Addresses and telephone numbers:

Scotland

| | | |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Aberdeen | Greyfriars House, Gallowgate, Aberdeen, AB10 1WG. | 0870 240 6279 |
| Dundee | Caledonian House, Greenmarket, DD1 4QP. | 0870 240 6280 |
| Edinburgh | Department of Transport, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XE | . 0870 240 6281 |
| Glasgow | 46 West Campbell Street, Glasgow G2 6TT | 0870 240 6282 |
| Inverness | Longman House, 28 Longman Road, IV1 1SF | 0870 240 6283 |

Northern England

| | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|
| Beverley | Crosskill House, Mill Lane, Beverley, HU17 9JB. | 0870 240 1316 |
| Carlisle | Ground Floor, 3 Merchants Drive, Parkhouse CA3 0JW | 0870 240 0292 |
| Chester | Norroy House, Nuns Road, Chester, CH1 2ND | 0870 240 1318 |
| Leeds | 1 st . Floor, 42 Eastgate, Leeds, LS2 7DQ | 0870 240 3514 |
| Manchester | Trafford House, Chester Road, M32 0SL | 0870 241 2146 |
| Newcastle | Eagle Star House, Regent Farm Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 3QF | 0870 240 0669 |
| Preston | Buckingham House, Glovers Court, Preston, PR1 4DQ | 0870 240 0691 |
| Sheffield | Cedar House, Hallamshire Court, 63 Napier Street, Sheffield, S11 8HA | 0870 240 1315 |
| Stockton | St Marks House, St Marks Court, Thornaby, Stockton on Tees, TS17 6QR | 0870 240 0695 |

Midlands

| | | |
|--------------------|--|----------------------|
| Birmingham | 2nd Floor, Edward House, Edward Street, Birmingham, B1 2RF | 0870 240 3518 |
| Northampton | Wooton Hall Park, Northampton, NN4 0GA | 0870 240 6228 |
| Nottingham | Block 6, Government Buildings, Chalfont Drive, NG8 3RA | 0870 240 6228 |
| Shrewsbury | Whitehall, Monkmoor Road, SY2 5DR | 0870 240 1223 |
| Worcester | Clerkenleap Barn, Broomhall, Worcester, WR5 3HR | 0870 240 1319 |

Eastern England

| | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| Chelmsford | 2nd Floor, Parkway House, 49 Baddow Road, Chelmsford, CM2 0XJ | 0870 241 2147 |
| Ipswich | Podium Level, St Clare House, Greyfriars, IP1 1UT | 0870 240 8231 |
| Lincoln | Firth House, Firth Court, Lincoln, LN5 7WD | 0870 240 0671 |
| Luton | 2 Dunstable Road, LU1 1EB | 0870 240 3515 |
| Norwich | 11 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1UP | 0870 240 8232 |
| Peterborough | 88 Lincoln Road, Peterborough, PE1 2ST | 0870 240 8229 |

London & Southern England

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Bournemouth | Tregonwell Court, 118 Commercial Road, Bournemouth, BH2 5LN | 0870 240 4731 |
| Brighton | 4 th Floor, Mocatta House, Trafalgar Place, Brighton, BN1 4UE | 0870 240 4732 |
| Maidstone | Coronet House, 11 Queen Anne Road, Maidstone, ME14 1XB | 0870 240 3517 |
| Oxford | Ground Floor, 3 Cambridge Terrace, Oxford, OX1 1RW | 0870 240 8230 |
| Portsmouth | 5 th Floor, Baltic House, Kingston Crescent, North End, Portsmouth, PO2 8AH | 0870 240 4730 |
| Reading | 77-81 Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0ER | 0870 241 5161 |
| Sidcup | 12-18 Station Road, Sidcup, DA15 7EQ | 0870 240 3516 |
| Stanmore | Government Buildings, Canon Park, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, HA7 1BD | 0870 241 1269 |
| Wimbledon | Ground Floor, Connect House, 133-137 Alexandra Road, London SW19 7JY | 0870 600 6767 |

West of England

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|
| Bristol | Northleigh House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, BS34 8SR | . 0870 240 1317 |
| Exeter | Hanover House, Manaton Close, Matford Business Park, Marsh Barton Trading Estate, Exeter, EX2 8EF | 0870 240 4734 |
| Truro | Pydar House, Pydar Street, Truro, TR1 2TG | 0870 240 6278 |

Wales

| | | |
|----------------|---|----------------------|
| Bangor | Penrhos Road, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, LL57 2JF | 0870 240 1225 |
| Cardiff | Archway House, 77 Ty Glas Avenue, Llanishen, CF14 5DX | 0870 240 1224 |
| Swansea | Heol Pentrefelin, Swansea, SA6 7HG. | 0870 240 1320 |

Please ring: 0870 600 1017 for details of any changes in telephone numbers for the Local Offices.

Appendix 4: Definitions

"Bi-purpose vehicle" means a vehicle constructed or adapted for the carriage of both goods and not more than 8 passengers, not being a vehicle to which the Motor Vehicles (Type Approval) (Great Britain) Regulations apply (i.e. not a passenger car, dual purpose vehicle, motor caravan or motor ambulance). Bi-purpose vehicles are thus subject to goods vehicle type approval, or if up to 3.5T gross weight, alternatively SVA.

" Dual-purpose vehicle" means a vehicle constructed or adapted for the carriage both of passengers and of goods or burden of any description, being a vehicle of which the unladen weight does not exceed 2,040 kilograms, and which satisfies the following conditions as to construction, namely:

- a. the vehicle must be permanently fitted with a rigid roof, with or without a sliding panel;
- b. the area to the rear of the driver's seat must -
 - i. be permanently fitted with at least one row of transverse seats (fixed or folding) for 2 or more passengers and those seats must be properly sprung or cushioned and provided with upholstered back-rests; attached either to the seats or to a side or the floor of the vehicle; and
 - ii. be lit on each side and at the rear by a window or windows of glass or other transparent material having an area or aggregate area of not less than 1,850 square centimetres on each side and not less than 770, square centimetres at the rear; and
- c. the distance between the rearmost part of the steering wheel and the back-rests of the row of transverse seats satisfying the requirements specified in sub-paragraph b(i) above or, if there is more than one such row of seats, the distance between the rearmost part of the steering wheel and the back-rests of the rearmost such row must, when the seats are ready for use, be not less than one-third of the distance

between the rear most part of the steering wheel and the rear most part of the floor of the vehicle.

"Hearse" means a motor vehicle intended for the transport of deceased people and having special equipment for such purpose.

This shall be interpreted as a vehicle:-

- having an enclosed glazed area to the rear of the driving position,
- being fitted with a permanent deck of suitable length to accommodate a full size coffin
- incorporating bier fittings such as coffin stops and/or rollers, and
- not fitted with any seats or seat mountings below the deck/bier, (although storage space may be provided).

"Light Goods Vehicle" means a motor vehicle used for the carriage of goods and having a maximum gross mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes.

"Minibus" means a vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 8 but not more than 16 seated passengers in addition to the driver.

Specific requirements for a minibus are set out in Schedules 6 and 7 of The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, as amended.

"Motor Ambulance" means a passenger vehicle intended for the transport of sick or injured people and having special equipment for such purpose.

The interpretation applied to this definition is as follows :-

The vehicle shall be readily identifiable as a vehicle used for the carriage of sick, injured or disabled people to or from welfare centres or places where medical or dental treatment is given by being permanently marked "Ambulance" (or "Ambiwlans") on both sides

The vehicle must have the following equipment or characteristics;

- An optical warning system ie a blue warning beacon (or special warning lamp) or a device which fulfils the same function
- An acoustical warning system
- One operational 12v socket for medical devices in the patient's compartment
- The electrical supply system shall consist of at least four separate sub-systems as follows;
 - basic system in non-equipped vehicle
 - supply system for specific body mounted devices
 - supply system for patient compartment
 - supply system for communications.

Apart from the basic system, (the pre-converted vehicle system) the road ambulance body shall not be used as part of any of the supply systems. (ie it must be an insulated return system)

- A communication system;
 - with a transceiver permanently installed
 - connected to external antenna(e)
- A permanently fitted bulkhead;
 - separating the driver's compartment from the patient's compartment,
 - if fitted with a door that the door is self closing while the vehicle is moving and is secured against self-opening,
 - having one or two windows with a minimum separation of 100mm, and
- any permanently fitted window;
 - shall be made of material displaying an "E" marking
 - shall have a maximum area of 0.12m²
 - shall allow direct visual contact with the driver
 - shall be secured against opening
 - shall have an adjustable blind or other means of preventing the driver being disturbed by the light of the patient's compartment.
- External Windows;
 - positioned or screened to ensure patient's privacy,
 - displaying an "E" or "E" marking.
- Restraint Systems
 - All positions for occupants on board shall be fitted with a permanent restraint which when subjected to a force of 10g shall prevent the occupant becoming detached such as to create a hazard to the safety of other persons on the ambulance.
 - All items (eg medical devices/equipment /objects) on board shall be fitted with a permanent restraint and when subjected to a force of 10g shall not become detached such as to create a hazard to the safety of the persons on the ambulance.
 - The maximum distance the patient, the stretcher and any item attached to either the holding assembly or stretcher may travel is 150mm.
- Evacuation
 - It shall be possible to release all persons in the ambulance without the use of equipment on board the ambulance.
- Doors
 - An audible and/ or visual signal shall warn the driver when any door is not completely closed when the vehicle is in motion.

"Motor caravan" means a special purposes passenger car constructed to include living accommodation which contains at least the following equipment:

- seats and table,
- sleeping accommodation which may be converted from the seats,
- cooking facilities, and
- storage facilities.

This equipment shall be rigidly fixed to the living compartment; however, the table may be designed to be easily removable.

The interpretation applied to this definition is as follows

Seats and a Table

- Are required to be an integral part of the living accommodation area, and mounted independently of other items.
- The table must be capable of being mounted directly to the vehicle floor and /or side wall.
- The table mounting arrangement must be secured as a permanent feature, (bolted, riveted, screwed or welded), although the table may be detachable.
- Permanently secured seating must be available for use at the table.
- The seats must be secured directly to the vehicle floor and/or side wall.
- The seats must be secured as a permanent feature, (bolted riveted, screwed or welded).

Sleeping Accommodation

- Must be an integral part of the living accommodation area.
- Either beds or a bed converted from seats (to form a mattress base)
- Secured as a permanent feature, with base structures bolted, riveted, screwed or welded to the vehicle floor and / or side wall, (unless the sleeping accommodation is provided as a provision over the driver's cab compartment).

Cooking Facilities

- That are an integral part of the vehicle living accommodation and is mounted independently of other items.
- That are secured to the vehicle floor and / or side wall.
- Secured as a permanent feature, (bolted, riveted, screwed, or welded).
- The cooking facility must consist of a minimum of a two ring cooking facility or a microwave in either case having a fuel/power source.
- If the cooking facility is fuelled by gas having a remote fuel supply, the fuel supply pipe must be permanently secured to the vehicle structure.
- If the cooking facility is fuelled by gas having a remote fuel supply, the fuel reservoir must be secured in a storage cupboard or the reservoir secured to the vehicle structure.

Storage Facilities

- Storage facilities must be provided by a cupboard or locker.
- The facility must be an integral part of the vehicle living accommodation, ie mounted independently of other items, unless incorporated below seat/sleeping accommodation or the cooking facility.
- The storage facility must be a permanent feature, (bolted, riveted, screwed or welded).
- The storage facility must be secured directly to the vehicle floor and / or side wall, unless a storage provision is provided over the driver's cab compartment.

"Passenger Car" means a motor vehicle which is constructed solely for the carriage of passengers and their effects or is a dual-purpose vehicle and which â

i is adapted to carry not more than 8 passengers exclusive of the driver and either has four or more wheels or, if having only three wheels has a maximum gross weight of more than 1,000 kg,

or

ii. has three wheels, a maximum gross weight not exceeding 1,000 kg, and either a design speed exceeding 50 k.p.h. (31 mph) or an engine with a capacity exceeding 50cc, and is not a motorcycle with or without a sidecar attached.

Note: Larger vehicles such as Limousines with bench seating arrangements can be approved, subject to the applicant declaring that the vehicle is only suitable for carrying up to 8 passengers.

Appendix 5: Imports of vehicles other than cars & light goods vehicles.

Motorcycles/ Tricycles/ Quadricycles (sometimes known as ATVs)

The licensing and registration procedures are broadly similar to those for cars. Further information on these aspects should be sought from your DVLA Local Office (see Appendix 3). In addition, you should be aware of the specific construction and use requirements for motorcycles in Great Britain before you consider importing one. A fact sheet providing details of these requirements is available from the address below. Once imported, motorcycles over 3 years old must undergo an annual MoT roadworthiness test. From 17 June 2003 all motor cycles/ tricycles/ quadricycles under 10 years old from the date of manufacture (except for some exempt categories) must have either EC Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA), National Type Approval or Motorcycle Single Vehicle Approval (SVA). Further information on the MSVA scheme is available on the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency website at: <http://www.vosa.gov.uk>. Further information is available from:

Department for Transport,
VTS 6,
Zone 2/04,
Great Minster House,
76 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 020 7944 2078.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (i.e. over 3.5T)

HGVs are subject to the provisions of the Motor Vehicles (Type Approval Goods Vehicles) (GB) Regulations 1982 as amended. This provides for the issue of a Minister's Approval Certificate to individual vehicles meeting the required standards. You should consult the manufacturer for advice on whether the vehicle is type approved and then the Vehicle Certification Agency for advice on whether it may be imported.

Goods vehicles of all weights type-approved in an EU or EEA State can be dealt with under the Mutual Recognition Procedure described in Section 2.2.

In certain circumstances, goods vehicles up to 5,500kg gross weight can use the Single Vehicle Approval scheme. Please see booklet SVA4 for further information.

Buses and Coaches

The licensing and registration procedures are broadly similar to those for cars, but there are other legal requirements you should be aware of before you consider importing a bus or coach. At present, the only mandatory technical inspection for buses to be used privately is the annual roadworthiness test for vehicles over 1 year old. Vehicles to be used in public service must also pass a test to achieve a Certificate of Initial Fitness to enter service. Further information is available from:

Department for Transport,
VTS7,
Zone 2/01,
Great Minster House,
76 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 4DR
Email: vsed@dft.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7944 2064

Appendix 6: Visiting vehicles

Under European Community (EC) arrangements, a visitor from another Member State can use his/her vehicle on the foreign plates for 6 months in a 12-month period. The vehicle must be properly registered and taxed and insured in the home country.

Visitors who bring a vehicle to Great Britain (GB) on a temporary basis from outside the EC, are subject to Customs restrictions. Vehicles belonging to visitors who qualify for Customs reliefs are exempt from the normal GB domestic registration and licensing requirements. The vehicle's stay within the European Union is normally restricted to 6 months in a 12-month period, although there are exceptions. Further advice on this can be obtained from Customs & Excise.

Please note - GB residents who permanently import a vehicle are required to register the vehicle immediately.