

TORQUE

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U.K. Registration Documents & SORN

It has always been as well to make sure that you get a V5 registration document with any new bike you buy or are given, to give a degree of assurance, though not a guarantee, that the seller is the rightful owner. Since March this year there has been an even more compelling reason, if you don't get one with the bike, a new one will cost you money. If you have the document from the previous keeper of the vehicle, you must send it to DVLA at Swansea to register the change of ownership, this service is still free. However if you do not have the previous V5 you can apply for a new one in your name, as before, on form V62 but you must now pay £19 with the application. The £19 fee is also charged if you are already the registered keeper but need a new V5 because the original is lost, stolen or destroyed.

It is an offence not to have your bike registered with DVLA in your own name & you must inform them, & get a new V5, if you move house. Also you will need to produce a V5 in your name to get a tax disk for a bike, if there has been a break in its taxation, eg: off the road & un-taxed for a period. If the bike is continuously taxed the tax renewal reminder can be produced instead of the V5, but you only get the reminder if Swansea has your correct address of course.

From the beginning of this year any new documents issued have been a new version V5C instead of the old V5. In addition from June 2004, anyone taxing or declaring SORN on a vehicle is automatically being sent a new V5C to replace their V5, free of charge, so that by June 2005 every vehicle with either a tax disk or SORN will have a new V5C document. Then on 1st July 2005 all existing V5s will no longer be valid. The reason for the change to quote the DVLA:-

"The registration certificate has been developed to comply with European Directive 1999/37/EC, which requires member states to introduce a common format for Registration Certificates. This will help with the identification of vehicles in international traffic and be used for re-registration throughout the European Union."

Good to know then, that your £19 isn't going to be wasted.

You must already be aware that if you are not renewing your tax disk, such as taking your bike off the road for the winter, you must still send back your reminder form, or take it to the post office, filled in to declare Statutory Off Road Notification. The idea being that every vehicle has either a tax disk or SORN, supposedly making it easier to track down road tax dodgers. DVLA will usually send you a reminder if SORN has been in force for 12 months and needs renewing, but you do not always get a reminder, and the onus is on the keeper to make sure that your vehicle has either a tax disk or SORN. If you don't have a reminder you can declare SORN using form V890. The first you might know about your SORN expiring could be a fixed penalty fine arriving through the post.

There is an exception; if neither a tax disk nor SORN has been in force on a vehicle since 31st January 1998 then it still does not need SORN unless you tax it for the road again. Obviously any such vehicles without either tax or SORN will not be sent a new V5C document. This set me wondering how you stand after July 2005 without a valid registration document. So, on your behalf, I asked DVLA press office. To my surprise, I fairly quickly, got some very helpful answers.

Q I would expect that a large part of our membership may own older vehicles that have not been "on the road" for quite some time, some possibly temporarily broken down for spares, but without being officially declared as being scrapped. Under these circumstances, do such vehicles become un-taxable & therefore unusable after 1-7-05?

A *Vehicles which have not been licensed or declared SORN since 31 January 1998, will not be able to use their V5 to license their vehicle or notify Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) of changes after 1 July 2005. Provided keepers of these vehicles obtain a new V5C before 1 July 2005 they will not be inconvenienced. Unfortunately, these vehicles will not automatically receive a new style V5C, however, an intensive publicity campaign advising motorists how to apply for one will be launched in Spring 2005.*

Q Will any registration numbers on such vehicles be lost?

A *I would like to assure you that motorists who have a valid claim on a vehicle and its registration mark, will not be disadvantaged. Keepers will not lose their entitlement to a registration mark when the old registration documents are invalidated.*

Q Is it necessary to declare SORN now, even though not legally required, in order to be able to return the bike to the road at a later date?

A *It will not be necessary to declare SORN now. A vehicle license can be obtained with a V5/V10 prior to 1 July 2005 and a V5C/V10 thereafter.*

Q Will transfer of ownership of such vehicles without Tax or SORN either now or after 1-7-05 still be possible, & will a new owner be able to obtain a new registration document & tax the vehicle?

A *The transfer of keeper ship of such vehicles will be possible, provided the vehicle has a V5 or after 1 July 2005 a V5C. The new keeper will be able to obtain a tax disc provided that the procedure for notifying a change of keeper are complied with and the new keeper supplement is forwarded to the new buyer.*

It seems then that there is no point in declaring SORN on a bike that doesn't need it but that it is going to be advisable to apply for a new V5C before 1st July 2005, using the V5 if you have one, or form V62 and £19. I would think that this will be free of charge as long as you can produce an existing V5 document. My reading of answer 1 is that not applying for a V5C till after 1st July 2005 will result in "inconvenience". There is no information available about what this "inconvenience" will be, but will probably mean a lot of form filling, possibly a fee even with an existing V5, and maybe even an inspection at a Local Vehicle Licensing Office such as is required for a registration number transfer.

I have a couple of mopeds in the shed that exist as only bare frames with VIN and registration plates, it seems that it is not necessary to declare SORN on them at the moment, but it is advisable to obtain a new V5C document before 1st July 2005 to avoid a lot of hassle, if one day, I decide to rebuild these for the road.

If you require more information you can visit the DVLA web site at www.dvla.gov.uk or www.dvla.gov.uk/newrules for the latest updates on the changes, and you can download & print off various forms such as the V62 & V890 mentioned above. . These forms are, of course, also still available from any Post Office that issues tax disks.

John K Woods

Torque Editor

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DVLA - Proposed New Charges. Open your wallet and say "help yourself"!

Following my article a couple of issues ago about new style V5C registration documents and the £19 charge to replace a missing document, it was brought to my attention (thanks Arthur) that DVLA are proposing a complete overhaul of its charging policy and a number of additional charges for items which at the moment are free. The DVLA web site is currently featuring the "DVLA consultation on fee proposals" which can be found at http://www.dvla.gov.uk/public/consult/driver_fee/df_summary.htm . The reasons for the changes are given as being:-

"In 2003, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) took a number of initial steps to modify its fee structures, partly to move towards a regime that better supports its policy outcomes and partly to accommodate immediate funding pressures. This year, it is taking a forward look in terms of completing its alignment for policy support and the introduction of new policy initiatives over the next years."

This gibberish simply means that a lot of new charges are to be introduced to cover the cost of running the DVLA, and perhaps make a profit for the treasury? The proposals feature 4 options for alternative patterns of charges for both driver and vehicle services. The most significant change to

driver licensing, in one of the options, would see the introduction of a £19 fee for the compulsory renewal of your photocard driver's license every 10 years, the same charge as presently made to replace a lost driving license. There will be a program to replace all existing paper licenses with photocard ones, and one option would involve a £5 charge for this, in the other options it will be free. The charge for a first license for under 21 year olds would be removed, though over 21s applying for a first license would be charged £30. It is the proposals for vehicles that are likely to have the greatest impact on us. Each of the 4 options would involve new charges for either an Annual Registration Fee or a Change of Keeper Fee or both.

The Annual Registration Fee is included, in varying amounts, in 3 of the 4 proposed new fee options. It is being put forward as an annual charge to provide the funding for the registration system. At its highest this fee would be £4.50 and would be charged at the same time as your road tax renewal. The actual level of charges is not final and may be adjusted prior to introduction in 2006. The document states that the charges are "*modest*" in relation to the overall cost of running a car, but the charges are proposed to be the same for all vehicles and on the price of taxing a bike it represents a significant increase in cost, for example 30% onto the £15 cost of taxing a 125 or a moped. The charge would also be applied when renewing your, supposedly free, Historic Vehicle tax disk. **This charge would also be applied to vehicles that are off the road and would be charged when applying for, or renewing SORN.**

This charge amounts to a "possession tax" and if introduced, would be liable to be increased at any time by the DVLA, without the scrutiny of parliament which is required for an increase in Road Tax. It would seem that the only way to avoid the annual fee is to declare the vehicle as having been scrapped, but then the registration number would be lost and it would be impossible to return the bike to the road at a later date. As stated in my previous article, SORN is not required for a vehicle that has not had tax or SORN since before Feb. 1998, but you need to get a new V5C document by next July. Once the registration records are updated from these V5C applications, I wonder how long it will be before they require these vehicles to have SORN?

The Change of Keeper fee of £7.50 also features in 3 of the 4 new fee options. It seems that they will expect sellers to collect this money from the buyer of a second hand vehicle and then send it to the DVLA at the same time as sending in the change of owner slip from the vehicles V5C. Until such time as the fee is received, the vehicle remains registered to the former keeper, who remains liable for tax or SORN on the vehicle. The new charges would enable the reduction of the initial vehicle registration charge for brand new vehicles from the present £38 to as low as £25 depending on the option adopted. Great play is made in the document of the new pattern of charges ensuring "*all vehicle keepers provide a fair share of funding support*". I wonder what definition of "*fairness*" allows charging a fee of £7.50 for transferring a £25 moped to subsidise a reduction of £13 in the fee for registering a brand new Rolls Royce for instance?

The Introduction to the document states that the charges are required in order to maintain more complete and accurate records of all vehicles in use and on drivers using them in the interest of improving road safety and reducing vehicle crime. This is just another example of the present trend to fool the British public into accepting any type of draconian infringements of our liberty, and making us pay for it ourselves, by perpetuating the fear of ever present crime and danger. The document admits that the removal of the under 21s first license fee is to encourage young, unlicensed drivers to get licenses, but it obviously has not occurred to these people that adding all these extra costs to vehicle use is more likely to have the opposite effect and tempt even more people to decide to bypass the whole system and use unregistered, untaxed, uninsured, unsafe vehicles. Our club members, who are all law abiding citizens, will cough up for the new charges, but we will all have to risk suffering the consequences of an accident with an uninsured driver.

The consultation period has now closed for responses to the proposals, but I know that the FBHVC, of which our club is a member, were canvassing opinion for a response to the proposals. We must hope that the final option chosen by the DVLA will not cause us too much hardship although it is certain that whatever the outcome, we will finish up paying more for our motorcycling.