

SecurePlate Editorial – Scots Auto Scene
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Number Plate and Identity Theft Coming to Scotland Sooner Than You Think

No doubt you will remember the introduction of the new British Standard for Number Plates BSAU 145d, back in September 2001. BSAU 145d required Number Plates to have a standard set of numbers and letters produced to a specific size, height and position on the plate. It also specified that Number Plates must carry the supplying outlets identity and their postcode in order to facilitate traceability and also to display the BSAU145d mark to prove that the plate conforms to the standard.

However the new Standard did not solve the problem of the myriad of different styles of numbers, letters and colours that were being offered on number plates, which presented a problem for the increasing number of Police, Speed and Local Authority camera systems as they can not read these plates.

The Registration of Number Plate Suppliers (RNPS) was introduced into England and Wales in September 2003 to combat this problem and as a means of regulating the supply chain to control the supply of false Number Plates. The legislation requires a supplier to meet defined business criteria and register with the DVLA who then issue a Supplier Identification Number (SID).

The RNPS set out that for a motorist to be able to purchase a replacement or new set of Number Plates that they must, at the point of purchase, prove entitlement to the registration mark through production of the V5 vehicle registration document plus suitable personal identification. It is an offence if the registered supplier fails to keep a record of the information supplied or if he sells a plate that does not meet BSAU 145d.

DVLA HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE REGISTRATION OF NUMBER PLATE SUPPLIERS WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO SCOTLAND IN OCTOBER 2007.

This means that if you supply Number Plates you will have to register with the DVLA, who have their own team of Inspectors that will have enforcement powers, and non-compliance can result in withdrawal of registration.

Following the introduction of RNPS in England and Wales petty and serious criminals are no longer able to purchase “false” Number Plates which were used on vehicles involved in criminal activities such as fuel theft from filling station forecourt, speed camera dodging, masking stolen vehicles or vehicles involved in far more serious crimes. With plates only being available with proof of vehicle ownership and identity, criminals started to steal Number Plates. On the basis of the experience south of the boarder

THE VERY SERIOUS AND GROWING PROBLEM OF NUMBERPLATE THEFT IS SET TO EMERGE IN SCOTLAND.

In the year following the introduction of RNPS in England and Wales, reported plate thefts which were virtually non-existent shot up to 33,000 pairs and anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of thefts since then has doubled year on year.

The theft of plates is set to increase as the Police and DVLA now use Automatic Number Plate Reading Cameras (ANPR) mounted on vehicles as a major initiative to catch known criminals, road tax and insurance dodgers through cross referencing the Number Plate with the Police National Computer System, DVLA's database and the motor insurance bureau's databases.

A STOLEN NUMBER PLATE IS IDENTITY THEFT.

There are now many cases of "innocent" motorists who apart from having to wade through bureaucracy and spend valuable time and money proving their innocence have received both fines and penalty points on their licence or even a summons to court as a result of their identity being stolen and used in crime.

To combat this problem the DVLA in conjunction with Soldsecure and Thatcham developed a standard for a Theft Resistant Number Plate. In summary the standard laid down that to qualify a Number Plate should be able to withstand any attempts to remove it for a minimum of three minutes, or if removed it should break into a minimum of four pieces, rendering it unusable for fitment to any other vehicle. A plate could only claim to be Theft Resistant if it had been fully tested and accredited by either Soldsecure or Thatcham.

After two years of intensive development, September 2006 saw Hills Numberplates Limited launch SECUREPLATE the first and only approved Theft Resistant Number Plate System in the UK.

Secureplate has met with great success in the market and is now recognised and backed by many Police Forces and their Crime Prevention Officers in England and is included in their initiatives to combat Number Plate Theft. Hills are now working in conjunction with the Police Forces in the promotion of Secureplate.

Number Plate theft is certain to become a major problem in Scotland with the introduction of RNPS in October 2007. Fortunately Hills Number Plates Limited is one company that is ahead of the game and is able to deliver an Antitheft Number Plate Solution to the Scottish market today.

For more information on Secureplate and how to purchase call 0141 336 8161 or log onto www.secureplate.com