

Guidelines for Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Inspections by License Plate Issuing Officials and Their Deputies

1. All vehicles not required to be titled, being registered for the first time in a new owner's name, must be physically inspected by the license plate issuing official. All vehicles required to be titled must be physically inspected by the license plate issuing official whenever that official is processing an application for first Alabama certificate of title. The physical inspection requirements do not apply to the following:
 - a. Registration renewals;
 - b. Vehicles registered pursuant to Section 32-6-56, Code of Alabama 1975 (IRP-registered vehicles);
 - c. 1975 and subsequent year motor vehicles owned by a manufacturer or dealer and held for sale or registered with dealer or manufacturer plates.
2. License plate issuing officials may appoint a government official, including a law enforcement officer, as a deputy for the purpose of inspecting a motor vehicle.
3. All vehicles, other than trailers, must have a unique VIN. It is the registrant's responsibility to ensure that the VIN is permanently affixed to the vehicle. The VIN is not required to be 17 characters on trailers or on 1980 and prior year model motor vehicles.
4. Required ownership documentation for first time registrations for non-titled trailers and 1974 and prior year model motor vehicles is a bill of sale that contains the minimum requirements established in Department of Revenue Administrative Rule 810-5-1-.246. The VIN on the vehicle must be compared to the number appearing on the ownership documentation to ensure that the correct vehicle is being registered.

General Inspection Guidelines

Where to find the VIN on the vehicle:

1. Passenger vehicles/pickup trucks – driver's side windshield or inside driver's door jam
2. Motorcycle – on front fork
3. Trailer – on trailer frame or tongue
4. Assembled vehicles – driver's door jam
5. Homemade trailers – on trailer frame or tongue
6. 1954 and prior year vehicles – inner fender well or driver's door post. Motor number is to be used as VIN if there is not a VIN plate on the vehicle.