

Response Form Retainagroup Ltd

07000 111333

Retainagroup provides security marking registration and verification for vehicles and other valuable property. The system provides proven protection from theft, fraud and vehicle cloning. It also greatly improves the rate of recovery for stolen vehicles. The unique benefit of the system is that any permanently applied security code is accompanied by the telephone number of the International Security Register, a 24-hour manned hotline which allows anyone – police and other crime prevention agencies as well as the public - to verify the details of a marked item without the need for specialist equipment. Our products and services are widely used and accredited to ISO 9000 – 2000 and LPS 1224 & 1225, licensed by ACPO CPI Ltd, as providing products and services meeting Police Preferred Specification and partnered with the Home Office in the “Crime – Let’s Bring It Down” campaign.

Historically this telephone number was 0181 871 1333 (previously 01 and 081). The disruption caused by the changes to London telephone numbering was immense and there was, *and still is*, a measurable loss of business caused by the fact that approximately 1.5 million vehicles have this telephone number permanently etched into the vehicle’s windows. Diverts were available from 01 to 081 and to 0181 but there can be no divert from 0181 as the number no longer exists. We retain the current version of this number (020 8871 1333) and divert from this. However, it relies on the caller making the translation (manually) from 01 (or 081) to 020 8. This rarely happens!

Recognising that numbering changes of this type are inevitable, we were advised to change to a “non-geographic” number and that the 07000 range was the most suitable as it would provide a permanent answer to this problem – given that the business model does not support a freephone number and there is no intention to supply our services on a premium rate line (indeed the requirements of the Loss Prevention Council LPS1225 standard to which we are accredited, do not permit the use of premium rate lines). In the last calendar year, 100,000 telephone calls were received on this number from vehicle owners and police officers in respect of vehicles carrying our secure code and 24 hour telephone number.

To date approximately **3.8 MILLION** vehicles have now had their windows **PERMANENTLY** marked with our 07000 telephone number and ove ½ million are being added annually. Therefore, I am sure you will appreciate that any removal of this number without the ability to inexpensively and permanently transfer to a new number would be catastrophic for our business and seriously impede the fight against vehicle crime in the UK.

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Appendix A

Vehicles manufacturers protecting their vehicles in the UK include

Alfa Romeo	Since March 95
Daewoo/Chevrolet	Up To September 2005
FIAT	Since March 95
Hyundai	Up To April 06
Kia	Since February 92
LDV	Since June 05
Lexus	Since November 97
Mazda	Since February 92
Proton	Since June 92
Renault	Up to September 2005
SAAB	Since January 94
Skoda	Since January 00
Ssang Yong	Since November 03
Suzuki	Since May 2006
Toyota	Since November 97

In addition, some 50,000 cars per year (of various brands) are marked in the automotive aftermarket.

Appendix B

A Selection of Recent Case Studies Taken From the Records of Retainagroup's International security Register (ISR) showing the value of instant verification using a telephone number incorporated into the security mark.

1. Two bikes were found abandoned in woods near Ashford, Kent and handed in at the local police station. On examination police noticed one of the bikes had been etched so contacted the ISR. It transpired that the etched bike belonged to a Retainagroup staff member and had been stolen a few days earlier, while the second bike, which had been stolen at the same time, belonged to a neighbour. Both bikes were returned to grateful owners.
2. Staff at London's Mermaid Theatre found a marked and registered Sony video camera at the end of the evening performance and the theatre manager contacted the ISR. The owner was both shocked and surprised as she had not realised she had left the camera behind. The following morning the camera was collected.
3. As part of the ongoing campaign to catch people who fail to pay their vehicle excise duty the DVLA clamp unit removed a Vauxhall to an authorised pound. Although the vehicle was not displaying a current road tax disk the records showed the vehicle was taxed, however, when the registered owner was contacted it quickly became apparent that the vehicle in the pound was a clone. A call to the ISR to check on the code etched into the glass confirmed the vehicle was on false plates and had been reported stolen.
4. During the course of a murder investigation police recovered a set of Renault keys and wished to trace to what vehicle or vehicles they related. A search of the Renault security data, held on the ISR, provided several matches and as a consequence a witness statement was provided, giving the relevant information.
5. Police officers raided a garage believed to be involved in the theft, disguise and disposal of vehicles. Amongst the vehicles on the premises was a Toyota from which the registration and manufacturer's identification numbers had been removed. An officer rang from the scene, using his mobile phone, and provided details of the glass etch code. The vehicle was identified as stolen and the information passed back to the officer, via Force Headquarters. An evidential statement was provided.
6. A marked and registered mobile phone was left in the back of a licensed taxi by a customer. The driver called the ISR and a message was left for the owner of the phone at his place of work. His secretary contacted the driver and, as the owner's office was nearby, the driver dropped it off with ten minutes of it being lost.
7. The potential buyer of a late 2003 Toyota called to verify the authenticity of the vehicle. The information given, including the etch code, did not agree with the data held on the ISR. Further examination of the records established that the vehicle was stolen and on false plates. The details were passed to both the local police, and to the station where the vehicle was reported stolen.
8. A man from Bolton was less than pleased to find his drive blocked by a parked car. On seeing the etch code and phone number he rang the ISR. An operator rang the owner shown on the record; at first the owner denied it could be her car, but on checking her garage, she found the car had been stolen overnight, and that her house had been burgled.

9. Yorkshire police stopped a Renault vehicle displaying a number plate set out in an illegal font. A check of the registration number on the PNC matched the vehicle and as no police interest was shown against the PNC record, the driver was reported for the number plate offence. While one of the officers was reporting the driver the other called the ISR. The record held on the ISR showed that vehicle was on false plates and had been reported stolen.
10. An application for key security data for a Fiat was received from a Fiat dealer. The records showed that the vehicle was stolen. Local police were informed and the vehicle recovered.
11. During the course of a search on garage premises suspected of being used for the ringing of vehicles a door from a Renault Clio was recovered. The glass had been broken but further examination revealed that the area containing the etch code had remained intact, held together by the adhesive on the window-warning decal. The door was identified as having come from a vehicle stolen in Northumbria. During the same raid a set of keys, again for a Renault, was recovered. The bunch contained not only vehicle, but also household keys. A local locksmith read the mechanical cut of the Renault key and the information was passed to the ISR. A search of the records revealed that the car key could have fitted any one of 76 vehicles. Of the 76, one car was reported stolen, the loser living close to the premises being searched. When police called on the loser he was able to identify the set of keys as his. They had been stolen from his house during the course of a burglary, following which the Renault had also been stolen. A man was subsequently charged with numerous offences under the Theft Act. He subsequently pleaded guilty at Newcastle Crown Court and was sentenced to a total of three years in prison.
12. Police from Scotland Yard investigating of a team of professional thieves involved in the theft of commercial vehicles and the export of stolen parts, raided premises in East London. Amongst the items found was a door for an Isuzu light commercial vehicle bearing an etch code and the web address of the ISR. An enquiry of the ISR established that the door came from a stolen vehicle.
13. One enterprising member of the public used an Ultra Destruct label from a Home Pack to mark his keys which he subsequently lost. A member of the public found the keys and contacted the ISR. When the owner was contacted arrangements were made for the keys to be left with a local estate agent for collection by the loser.
14. Police stopped a car displaying an altered tax-disk. A check against the ISR on the etch code identified a stolen car displaying false plates.
15. Officers from the Metropolitan Police Stolen Vehicle Squad recovered a suspect Ford Transit from which all known identification marks had been removed. A detailed and thorough examination of the vehicle revealed a Retainagroup identification label hidden inside the trim. An enquiry through the ISR gave the officers the vehicle's true identity. Although the vehicle was not stolen it had undergone an identity change as part of an attempted fraud.
16. A member of the public was concerned about a new SAAB 9-5 Estate parked near his home address for some eight weeks so contacted the ISR. He stated that he had reported the vehicle apparently abandoned to police about two weeks earlier. On checking the record it was indeed reported stolen and subsequently recovered. An ISR staff member contacted the owner shown on the ISR who was unaware that the vehicle had been found and had not been contacted by police. The owner was, with prior authority, given the finders details.
17. A Mercedes Benz dealership in the West Country rang the ISR. They had taken a BMW in on part exchange and were intending to put it through the local auction. Before doing so, however, they had contacted the local BMW dealer only to be told the car was on false plates and was showing PNC Stolen. The Mercedes dealer was advised to contact the ISR. Police in Somerset were informed and, when it was confirmed that the vehicle was still stolen, the car was seized. Enquiries are in hand to trace the 'customer' who part exchanged the car.
18. On the 15th February a member of the public contacted the ISR regarding a Fiat Doblo van advertised for sale in Autotrader. Through the etch code it was established that the vehicles

was stolen and on false plates. Greater Manchester Police were informed. As a result, and working with Autotrader, GMP identified two other ringers being advertised for sale through the same phone number. A series of raids were carried out, three people arrested and several vehicles recovered, although not the Fiat in question at the time. Since then, however, the Fiat has been traced and recovered. Two individuals are still waiting trial.

19. A police vehicle examiner attached to Charlton Car Pound, in the Metropolitan Police area, phoned regarding a burnt out Renault Megane. All the manufacturer's marks had been destroyed in the fire as had the majority of glass. However one window had survived with the etch code intact. A check on the ISR revealed the vehicles true identity and that it was reported stolen on the PNC two months earlier, in Southwark - also in the Met. The officer was more than happy with our service and expressed his satisfaction to the operator.
20. British Transport Police and the Met raided some railway arches in Bow, East London. Near by was a Toyota MR2 on trade plates but with the VIN numbers removed. An enquiry through the ISR on the glass etch identified it as a stolen car - stolen a month earlier by hi-jacking in Whitechapel, also in East London. As a result of identifying the Toyota arrests were made. The officer in the case expressed his thanks to the ISR - without whose help the Toyota would not have been identified at the scene, if at all.
21. A Kent police officer called to check a Lexus subject of an investigation by the Organised Crime Squad. The vehicle was a clone displaying a false VRM and VIN although there was no matching PNC report.
22. Thames Valley Police called on behalf of a street duty officer who had stopped a Toyota on personal plates. A check of the etch code revealed that the vehicle was reported stolen and on false plates.
23. Police in Northern Ireland contacted the ISR regarding a suspect SAAB recovered from the scene of a crime where it had been abandoned. A check revealed the vehicle to be on false plates although there was no matching PNC stolen report.
24. A call was received from a Plymouth Jewellers who had found a set of keys with the ISR registered key-fob attached. The owner of the keys, from Saltash, Devon, was registered on the ISR and when contacted hadn't even noticed that his keys were missing. Later the same day he was able to pick up the keys - a much relieved man and one satisfied customer!!
25. Towards the end of February 2006 a police officer from Norfolk Constabulary's Intelligence unit rang regarding a motorcycle that had been recovered as part of an ongoing investigation. The bike had no VIN displayed or registration plates fitted. A search on the ISR on the etch code revealed that the vehicle had been stolen in May 2004.
26. Bedfordshire Police were requested to investigate a Ford Focus motor car that appeared to have an altered identification. The VIN on the vehicle didn't match that recorded at the DVLA or on PNC and when PNC VIN searches were undertaken no matching vehicles were found for either record. (That on the V5 or that on the vehicle proper.) The investigating officer contacted the ISR and a search was made of Ford's Cupid database. The two VINS were identified and the supplying dealers details passed to the officer. At the time of writing the matter is still under investigation but an email has been received from Bedfordshire Police thanking the ISR for the prompt response and stating that considerable police time has been saved as a result.
27. Towards the end of March 2006 Police from Barn de Bretagne, France, rang re a Renault Laguna they were not happy with. Through the etch code the car was identified as stolen in Essex in August 2005.
28. March 2006 police in Norfolk stopped a vehicle carrying vehicle parts from a dismantled Toyota Hilux. An attempt had been made to remove the etched numbers on the windows but they left a couple of characters still readable. As a result it was possible to identify the parts as from a vehicle stolen in Corby in August 2003.

