

Correct as at 16th May 2026. It may be superseded at any time.

Extract taken from: Entry certification > Pre-registration and VIN > Vehicle records > Finding vehicle records

1-1 Finding vehicle records

When a vehicle is presented for pre-registration, the vehicle must be inspected and the chassis or frame number, or vehicle identification number (VIN), must be located on the vehicle.

([Table 4-1-1](#) describes permitted VIN locations).

The entry certifier must then check to see if a record of the vehicle already exists in the LANDATA computer system. If a vehicle record does exist, the entry certifier must ensure that the record is correct. If no record exists, and the vehicle is a used import, the owner must apply to NZTA for a border check exemption before the entry certifier can create a record in LANDATA for that vehicle.

If assistance is required in determining which is the correct record to use, or if a record cannot be found when there should be one, contact NZTA on 0800 804 580.

- Vehicles registered in New Zealand prior to 1996 or vehicles that have undergone a border inspection only will often be recorded with a vehicle identifier that does not match the vehicle. In such cases, care must be taken to use the search procedures to find these vehicle records.
- Always ensure that the correct VIN, chassis or frame number has been keyed.

1 VIN, chassis and frame numbers

To have a vehicle record, a vehicle must have a vehicle identifier. This will be a vehicle identification number (VIN), or a chassis or frame number.

A VIN is a series of digits and letters structured so that every vehicle has a unique identifying number, according to an international standard (ISO 3779). The VIN always contains exactly 17 characters and never contains the letters O, Q or I.

1.1 Recording vehicle identifiers

Spaces should never be keyed for VIN, chassis or frame numbers. Some may exist in historical records; these should be corrected wherever possible.

A VIN may physically have punctuation characters but these must never be recorded or keyed.

A dash may be recorded in a frame or chassis number.

1.2 Vehicles with two identifiers

Occasionally, a vehicle may be presented with two vehicle identifiers (ie two VINs, or a VIN and a chassis number).

For example:

A European vehicle sourced from the United States of America (US) may have two VINs assigned if the original European VIN does not meet US standards.

A vehicle previously registered in Japan may have a Japanese chassis number assigned in addition to the original manufacturer's identifier.

In such cases, an entry certifier must note what the identifiers are and must explain why there are two identifiers in the Notes screen.

1.2.1 Recording a vehicle with a VIN and a chassis number

Enter:

- the VIN in the VIN field, and
- the chassis number in the chassis number field.

Important: The chassis number can only be keyed after all the attributes have been recorded using the VIN number as the identifier.

1.2.2 Recording a vehicle with two legally affixed VINs

Record:

- the VIN from the previous registration record in the VIN field, and
- the other VIN in the chassis number field.

In cases where this may cause confusion (eg the previous registration record VIN is not as visible as the other VIN, or would not be used in a manufacturer's recall), the opposite may be recorded if approval is given by the Vehicle Certifiers Registers team.

1.3 VIN, chassis or frame number removed or damaged during repair

For all vehicles, if the VIN, chassis or frame number has been damaged or removed during repair >or the vehicle has two identifiers as a result of the repair, an entry certifier must:

1. complete a [VIN approval request form \(CA01\)](#) and attach specific information relating to the repairs. Send it to:

Exemptions and Registers Integrity

NZ Transport Agency

Private Bag 11777

Palmerston North 4442

Email: assessments@nzta.govt.nz

2. verify the VIN or chassis number from other sources (eg the original parts, registration papers, purchase receipts, insurance documentation), and key all details in LANDATA using this number

3. verify that any vehicle identifiers on discarded parts have been erased/destroyed

4. always record an explanation in the notes screen.

1.4 VIN, chassis or frame number not found, or modified/tampered with

For all vehicles, if the VIN, chassis or frame number cannot be located or the identifier that has been located appears to have been modified, removed, tampered with, or appears to be a reproduction, an entry certifier must:

1. complete a [VIN approval request form \(CA01\)](#) and send it to:

Exemptions and Registers Integrity

NZ Transport Agency

Private Bag 11777

Palmerston North 4442

Email: assessments@nzta.govt.nz

2. attempt to find a VIN or chassis number from other sources (eg registration papers, purchase receipts, insurance documentation), and key all details in LANDATA using this number
 3. if an identifier still cannot be found, access the VIN screen without entering an identifier. A blank screen will display. All details are to be keyed and a record created for the vehicle
 4. always record an explanation in the notes screen
 5. do not approve the vehicle for registration until approval is given by Waka Kotahi.
- Used vehicles imported from Japan with a vehicle identifier that has been partially or totally removed cannot be processed for entry into New Zealand unless the vehicle has been re-identified by the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) and issued with an authentic export certificate that lists the new identifiers. See Reference material 76 for an example of the method used by the MLIT to re-identify vehicles that have been stolen and recovered.

[Reference material 76](#)

1.5 Vehicle matched on the vehicle of interest database

When a vehicle identifier is specified in the LANDATA system, the system also searches against the 'vehicle of interest' (VOI) system on the enforcement database to determine whether a vehicle with the same identifier has been reported stolen.

If a match is found on the VIN screen, the following warning message will display, along with the details of the vehicle(s) found: 'Vehicle identifier matched on external system'.

This message may be displayed even if the vehicle details are not available on the LANDATA database. The warning message is deliberately vague, so it does not raise any suspicion if the vehicle owner or dealer happens to see the message.

1.5.1 What to do if a match is found

If the warning message is displayed, or if there are any doubts regarding a vehicle's identity, proceed with the VIN allocation without arousing suspicion.

If a 'Vehicle report' form (Reference material 54) has not already been submitted for the vehicle, one should be completed and emailed to the NZ Police immediately. If you are unable to email the report immediately, do it as soon as possible. If, for any reason, you are unable to complete a 'Vehicle report' form or forward it to the NZ Police, contact NZTA as soon as possible to report the event. Try to note all details that may help identify the vehicle and any person(s) associated with it. Do not place yourself or your colleagues at risk. You should continue with all phases of the certification process, except approving the vehicle for registration and printing the MR2A registration form. In such cases, approval for registration can only be carried out if the vehicle match is removed, or approval is granted by NZTA.