



VTS CLOUD - SERVICE BULLETIN No. 51 - 2022-09-28

PLEASE PRINT THIS BULLETIN AND GIVE IT TO YOUR OPERATING STAFF

Topic – Using a Vehicle Plate to run an MVR can/will cost you MONEY!

This is yesterday's story... It's a repeat of a Service Bulletin I wrote 20 years ago when software was new to the towing industry and we had a prior generation of VSF operatives. Often unable to translate handwritten tow tickets and to keep life simple, operators often entered a convenient plate number to run a Motor Vehicle Record, (MVR) rather than the VIN.

Why should you use the VIN as your primary vehicle reference? The answer is simple, licence plates get stolen or often missing, there is no guarantee that the plate on the vehicle, actually belongs to that vehicle. Why do VSF operators run MVR using the plate and not the VIN? Again the answer is simple, more people transpose letters and numbers in a 17 digit VIN than a 6 or 7 digit plate.

Why Should You Worry?

Accuracy and pride in the VSF work ethic is very important! Manually entering a licence plate and especially the VIN are often subject to operator error, the transposition or misreading of letters and numbers is quite common. No matter how meticulous and careful you are, errors occur, and this is often a very costly \$\$\$ mistake. **There is a better way!**

What happens if you transpose VIN numbers and/or do not enter the correct plate. So often VSF operators are stressed by workload or if the vehicle is a non-consent LEA impound, and the officer wrote "MISSING or NONE, etc" or some other abbreviation as the plate identifier such as NA (short for not available) or NO PLATE. When running an MVR through the state database, the primary software search is the VIN, if there is a VIN match, it will then override/enter the plate associated with that VIN and downloaded to the VSF computer/terminal. If there is no VIN match (incorrect VIN entry) the state database will then run a secondary search on the PLATE. If there is no match from the VIN, but a match from the entered PLATE, the state of record it will push down the registered owner and lienholder information associated with the entered PLATE to the VSF computer/terminal. **VTS CLOUD software does not manage or interpret MVR information downloaded from state record it merely places the data sent into the correct locations.**



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In line with the training your operatives received, VTS CLOUD SOP strongly suggests that the MVR be run within one hour of vehicle impoundment, giving the VSF operator plenty of time to error check the information pushed down from the state database. **During the next 23 +/- hours and before you push the button to run the automated notification/lien letter process, DOUBLE CHECK against the photo images that you have the correct information entered and that you have not transposed any of the numbers or letters in both the VIN and the plate.**

It is suggested that you develop a mental checklist... Is the VIN correct, (yes/no) is the vehicle make model, et cetera correct, (yes/no) is the vehicle plate information correct, (yes/no).

IF AN ERROR IN THE DOWNLOADED MVR INFORMATION IS FOUND, AND YOU CORRECT THE SOURCE INFORMATION (VIN OR PLATE), BEFORE YOU RUN A SECOND MVR, IT IS CRITICAL THE OPERATOR DELETE THE PREVIOUS STATE MVR DOWNLOAD. Failing to do so, will result in multiple letters being sent to all of the MVR addresses held in the VTS CLOUD database for that vehicle. (Yes, it happens and it can be very expensive.)

CAREFULLY READ WHAT COMES BACK FROM THE STATE DMV. REMEMBER COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE ARE OBEDIENT, DUMB, AND STUPID... THEY DO EXACTLY WHAT YOU TELL THEM!

As the VSF operator you are responsible for checking the accuracy of the information. If the VIN or PLATE entry errors are not caught before mailing, the first and second notification/lien letters will go to the wrong person or persons who are not the registered owner/lien holder of the vehicle!

If the MVR is run by the plate, such as NA and NO PLATE (**Please Note: NA and NO PLATE and others are TxDMV approved Texas custom/vanity plates**), the owners of these custom/vanity plates receive so many incorrectly addressed notification/letters, they frequently just trash the letter. More important the VSF is in violation of statute and TDLR rules as the legally registered owner and lien holders were not notified. Hence, selling the car 30 days days after the final notice is sent is a violation and TDLR citation offence. This is just the start of your problems! Apart from having to try and recover the sold vehicle from a very frustrated new owner who has already experienced DMV problems trying to obtain title, the VSF will most likely be cited by TDLR, suffer financial loss on the vehicle and may be subject to public prosecution and can third-party litigation claims from lien holders.

How to Develop a Full Proof System!

When your operators were trained by VTS Systems Tech support, they were advised to use the VIN as the primary and the PLATE, if available as the secondary identifier. **DO NOT USE THESE**

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ABBREVIATIONS - NO PLATE, NA, or MISSING or others, but instead, use the VTS CLOUD default plate entry **TXPLATE** this default is approved by TxDMV/TDLR and is not a custom or vanity plate.

TXPLATE

As part of your SOP: When a vehicle is impounded, using the VTS CLOUD/App, take a minimum of six photographs and upload these images to the company's VTS CLOUD program/database. Beginning with the **1st Image**, licence plate and the rear trunk, walk around the vehicle taking images as you go, make sure you get the vehicle make, model, and color in the image. **2nd Image**, Left side rear, **3rd Image** left side front, **4th Image** front, **5th Image** right side front, **6th Image** right side rear. If there is paint or panel damage to the vehicle, the photo operator should also take images of the damage and add them to the image portfolio. Most important, take a **CLEAR AND READABLE** photograph of the VIN, either through the windshield/windscreen, (check for SUN reflection) another VIN location is on the "B" pillar. If the drivers door is unlocked/operable, this is often the best/clearer image.

Sample Images



1.R



2. RR



3. FR



4. F



5.FL

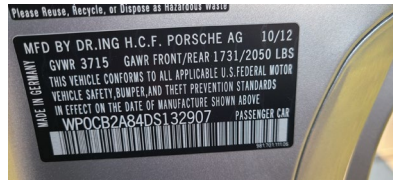


6.RL

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7. VIN W



8. VIN B Pillar



9. FR Damage

It is good work practice (SOP) to read the VIN directly off the photographic image, do not try to decipher the often illegible handwritten VIN from the tow ticket, making sure that it is checked a second time for keyboard accuracy. The same applies for the licence plate attached to the vehicle.

When the state DMV returns the information associated with the VIN, again open the impoundment record and check that the information returned relates to the impounded vehicle before sending the first notification/lien letter.

If you are unsure of how to proceed and need additional help, please go to www.vts-help.com enter a tech support ticket.