

Creating a 17-Digit VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) & Issuing a Secure C of O (Certificate of Origin)

The US Department of Transportation (DOT), under the auspices of NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration), assigns vehicle manufacturers a certain configuration of letters and numbers known as the WMI (World Manufacturer Identity). These NHTSA assigned digits are added to other manufacturer data to form a unique 17-digit VIN containing a check digit that verified that the numbers and letters are properly formatted and correctly entered into the state's database files. This information must be properly formatted and verified before most of the DMV agencies will issue a state title. If not properly configured, the check digit will alert the DMV clerk, the title will not be issued and the documentation (the C of O or MCO [Manufacturer's Certificate of Origin]) would be returned to the dealer. The dealer would then return it to the manufacturer to be corrected.

While not required in every state (but accepted in every state) manufacturers are encouraged to obtain and use the AAMVA (American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators) recommended C of O or MCO. No matter what you call it this document serves as a "birth certificate" for a vehicle – issued by the manufacturer of record. This document is printed by a Bank Note Company (a list is provided) using many security features that make it virtually impossible for the document to be changed, copied, or duplicated without being spotted as fraudulent. Manufacturers using plain letterheads as their C of O could have their documents easily duplicated and might be held responsible for contributing to the possibility of a duplicate document being used to fraudulently obtain ownership rights. Before releasing any blank documents the Bank Note Company overprints the manufacturer's name, logo and address, making it unusable by anyone other than the designated firm. The C of O shows the chain of ownership from the manufacturer to the ultimate user/first purchaser. It also allows for the establishment of a financial lien and relates the selling price used to compute state sales tax.

Financial firms that provide floor-planning loans to dealers often retain the C of O while their loan is outstanding to guarantee that the unit cannot be sold and/or titled without the bank being asked to release the document. After the lender has been financially satisfied they will return the C of O to the selling dealer who can then use it to obtain the customer's title from the states DMV.

The Basic Structure of a 17 Digit VIN For a Recreational Park Trailer is as follows:

Section Title	1 st			2 nd					3 rd	4 th							
	WMI			Vehicle Descriptors					Check Digit	Year	Plant	Sequential Production Numbers					
CHARACTER*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Type (See below)	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	N	N	N	N
A-Alphabetic N-Numeric B-Alpha / or Numeric	World Manufacturing Identifier			To Detail: Trailer Type, Body Type, Length in Feet, and # of Axels					Check Digit is Calculated and is never assigned	Model Year Usually changes in August	Location of the Plant that affixes this VIN	Sequential Production Number					
				Suggestions 4 = A - Incomplete Trailer Chassis 5 = A - Recreational Park Trailer 6 & 7 = Body Length Example 34 (Feet) 8 = Number of Axels					Calculate with the Excel document created by RPTIA	8 2008 9 2009 A 2010 B 2011 C 2012 D 2013 E 2014 F 2015 G 2016 H 2017 J 2018 K 2019		If Manufacturer produces less than 999 units in a model year - use the three WMI Extension Numbers	Sequential Production Numbers (001 – 999) Reset these number to 001 when your model year is reset.				

***Use only Capital Letters in Sans Serif type: ABCDEFGHJKLMNPRSTUVWXYZ and 1234567890
(Never Use the Letters I, O or Q as they could be confused with numerical values)**

RPTIA created a free Excel document that takes the VIN as it is configured in the above matrix with every character assigned except for the 9th digit (the check digit) and by inserting that incomplete number into this document it will apply a mathematical manipulation that will determine the correct check digit and will complete your VIN.

VINs if properly compiled are unique and will not be duplicated except for once every 30 years.

VINs can be used to track down a vehicle or a series of them to identify and notify the current owner of a potential defect. This procedure could save a life if a recall was necessary.

Manufacturers are encouraged to stamp the VIN on the lower inside base of the street side frame just behind the hitch-bar attachment using 1/4 inch letters in san serif type with stamping tools and also on the unit data sheet in or near the electrical box.

AAMVA Certificates of Origin May be purchased from the following firms.

American Bank Note 7345 West 100th Place, suite 101 Bridgeview, IL 60455
Phone: (800) 261-9196; Fax (708) 599-0808; Patrick Sheerin / Bill Warner - bwarner@abncompany.com

American Bank Note 357 Riverside Drive, Suite 230C; Franklin, TN 37064
Phone: (800) 261-9196; (615) 261-0610; Fax (615) 261-0611; R Gray – rgray@abncompany.com

Certificate Press, 19138 Otley Road, Purcellville, VA 20132

Phone: (540) 338-1652; Joseph Vill

Colonial Bank Note Company, 225 Varick Street, 12th floor New York, NY 10014
Phone: (212) 229-6665; Fax: (212) 229-2194 Gene Roberts

De La Rue Security Print, 100 Powers Court, Dulles, VA 20166
Phone: (703) 450-1300 x 248; Fax: (703) 450-4206 Danielle Southerland – danielle.southerland@us.delarue.com
Phone: (703) 450-1300 x 223; Fax: (703) 450-4206 Cliff Nelson – cliff.nelson@us.delarue.com

Master Press, Inc. 1810 4th Avenue, Jasper, AL 35501
Phone: (205) 387-0047; Fax: (205) 387-0832

Midwest Bank Note Company, 46001 Five Mile Road, P.O. Box 701398, Plymouth, MI 48170
Phone: (734) 451-2222; Fax: (734) 451-2249
North Miami Beach, FL (305) 945-8075
San Rafael, CA Phone (415) 454-1841
San Francisco, CA Phone (415)-512-1133

Pacific Banknote Company, Eleven G Street, Suite 200, San Rafael, CA 94901
Phone: (415) 454-1841, Fax: (415) 454-9936 Tom O'Toole Phone (877) 468-2456 Tomo2L@aol.com

Pacific Banknote Company, 12439 Cambridge Boulevard, South Lyon, MI 48178
Phone: (248) 486-2585, Fax: (248) 486-4590 Donna Rae jdrae@cablespeed.com