What you need to prepare before ordering replacement number plates online

Ordering replacement number plates online is straightforward, but a few details make the difference between a set that arrives ready to fit and one that causes delays. Unlike buying a generic accessory, number plates are legal documents on your vehicle. Getting them right means checking your documents, your plate design, and your delivery details before you click "order". Here is what to have ready.

Proof of entitlement to the registration mark

Number plates are not sold like ordinary goods. The supplier must see evidence that you are entitled to use the registration mark on the vehicle. Without that proof, a reputable supplier cannot produce the plates. The most common document is the V5C logbook (the vehicle registration certificate). It shows the registration number, the vehicle details, and your name and address as the registered keeper. If you do not have the V5C, a green "new keeper" slip from when you bought the car works, provided the vehicle is in your name. For personalised plates held on a retention certificate (V778 or V750), that document serves as your proof. Keep the original document handy when you order, because the supplier will need to see a photo or scan of it. Some suppliers check the document visually; others record the reference number. Either way, having the correct document ready speeds up the process and avoids a rejected order.

Correct spelling and character spacing

A number plate that displays the registration mark incorrectly is not just an aesthetic problem. The spacing and font must match the format assigned by the DVLA. Each registration has a prescribed layout: for example, the modern format uses two letters, two numbers, and three letters, with a mandatory gap between the groups. The font must be the standard Charles Wright typeface. If you order a plate that uses a different font, or that spaces the characters in a way that makes the mark look different from the official record, the plate is illegal. Before you place an order, check the registration mark exactly as it appears on your V5C. Write it down character by character. Pay attention to the gap: some personalised plates have a space that is part of the assigned format, while others do not. If you are unsure, the supplier's design preview will show you the correct spacing. Use that preview to confirm everything before you proceed.



Plate dimensions and style preferences

Replacement plates come in a few standard sizes, but not every size suits every car. The most common dimensions for a front plate are 520 mm x 111 mm, and for a rear plate 520 mm x 111 mm or 285 mm x 203 mm, depending on the shape of the mounting area. Some vehicles, particularly imports or older models, use a different size. Before you order, measure the existing plate or the recess where the plate sits. Note the width and height, and check whether the plate needs fixing holes pre-drilled. Many suppliers offer the option to add fixing holes, and it saves time if you can specify the exact positions. The style of the plate matters too. You can choose between a standard acrylic plate, a 3D gel plate, or a 4D plate with raised characters. Each has a different look and a different thickness. The design preview on the supplier's website lets you see how the chosen style appears with your registration mark. Take a moment to review it, because once the plate is made, the style cannot be changed without ordering again.

Delivery address and checkout details

The address you provide at checkout must match the address on your proof of entitlement. This is a legal requirement for number plate suppliers. If your V5C shows your home address but you want the plates delivered to a workplace, the supplier cannot send them there unless

the delivery address is the same as the registered keeper's address. Some suppliers offer a separate delivery address for the plates themselves, but they still need to verify that the registered keeper's address matches the document. Before you start the order, decide where you want the plates to arrive. If you have moved recently and the V5C still shows the old address, update the logbook with the DVLA first. It takes a few days, but it avoids the frustration of a cancelled order. Also have your contact details ready: a phone number and an email address, because the supplier may need to confirm the order or ask about the fixing holes. A clear, accurate checkout form reduces the chance of a delay.

Fixing holes and fitting requirements

Most replacement plates arrive without holes drilled, because the supplier does not know where your existing screw holes are. If your vehicle has a plate holder that uses screws, you will need to drill the holes yourself or mark the positions and have a garage do it. Some suppliers offer a service to drill holes to your specification. To use that service, you need to provide the exact distance between the centres of the holes and the distance from the edge of the plate. If you are replacing an old plate, measure the old one before you remove it. Lay it flat and measure from the top edge to the centre of each hole, and from the side edge to the centre. Write those measurements down. If the old plate has four holes, note all four positions. The supplier can then drill the new plate to match, so it fits straight on. If you prefer not to drill, you can use adhesive pads instead. Many modern cars have a flat mounting area that works well with adhesive. Check whether your vehicle's plate holder is flat and clean, because adhesive pads need a smooth surface to hold properly. If you choose adhesive, you do not need to provide any hole positions, but you do need to clean the mounting area thoroughly before fitting.



Checking the supplier's compliance

Not every online seller follows the same rules. A compliant supplier checks your documents, uses the correct font and spacing, and provides a design preview so you can see the final plate before it is made. The site numberplatemaker.uk, for example, offers a live design preview that shows the registration mark in the chosen style and size, so you can confirm the look before you commit. That preview is a useful checkpoint: if the spacing looks wrong in the preview, it will be wrong on the plate. A compliant supplier also asks for your proof of entitlement and keeps a record of the sale. If you order from a supplier that does not check documents, you risk receiving a plate that is not legal for road use. The police can stop a vehicle with an incorrectly formatted plate, and the driver may face a fine or an MOT failure. Before you order,

confirm that the supplier is registered with the DVLA and follows the legal requirements. A quick check of their terms or FAQ page usually confirms this.

Double-check before you confirm

Once you have gathered the documents, measured the plate, chosen the style, and decided on fixing holes, you are ready to order. The final step is to review everything in the design preview. Check that every character is correct, that the spacing matches the official format, and that the plate dimensions match your measurement. If the supplier offers a choice of borders, colours, or badges (such as a national flag or a GB sticker), confirm those details too. A small mistake in the registration mark or the spacing means the plate is not legal, and you would have to order again. Take the extra minute to read the preview as if you were reading the plate on your car. If it looks right, proceed to checkout. If something looks off, adjust it before you pay. The time spent checking now saves the hassle of returning a plate or driving with an illegal one.



Ordering replacement number plates online is a simple process when you have the right information ready. The key points are the proof of entitlement, the exact registration mark and spacing, the plate dimensions and style, the delivery address, and the fixing hole positions. With those details prepared, the order goes smoothly and the plates arrive ready to fit. The supplier's design preview is your final check: use it to confirm every detail before you confirm the purchase.