

Where To Find The VIN And Engine Number

A search checklist for the VIN, frame number, engine number and emission label — including the places people look last and should look first.

Work down the list with a torch. Tick each place as you check it, so that when you get to the end you know whether the number is genuinely missing or you simply have not found it yet.

BEFORE YOU START

You will need a torch, a rag, and something to clean with. Most of these stampings are shallow, filled with paint or road dirt, and sit in shadow. Light held at a low angle across the surface makes a stamping readable when light held straight on does not.

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER — SCOOTERS AND MOPEDS

- ☐ Steering head, front of the frame under the front bodywork
The most common location. Often needs the front panel or legshield removed.
- ☐ Inside the front legshield, behind a small rubber bung or access flap
- ☐ Under the seat, on the frame rail beside or behind the storage bin
Sometimes on a riveted plate rather than stamped
- ☐ Under the floor pan, on the main frame tube
- ☐ On a metal plate riveted to the frame near the steering head
- ☐ On a sticker or barcode label inside the storage bucket
- ☐ Behind the rear bodywork on the frame above the shock mount

VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER — ATVS, UTVS AND GO-KARTS

- ☐ Left-hand frame rail near the front A-arm or footwell
- ☐ Under the front bumper on the frame cross-member
- ☐ On the frame beside or under the rear axle housing
- ☐ On a plate riveted inside the wheel arch or under the seat
- ☐ Steering column tube, visible with the front plastics removed

ENGINE NUMBER

- ☐ Left-hand crankcase near the CVT cover
The usual place on a scooter engine
- ☐ Top of the crankcase behind the cylinder barrel
- ☐ Right-hand crankcase below the kickstart shaft
- ☐ On the machined pad next to the oil drain plug
- ☐ Cast into a raised boss rather than stamped flat

EMISSION CONTROL INFORMATION LABEL

This label carries the engine family number, which is the strongest identifier on the machine — it ties the vehicle to a specific federal certificate rather than to a badge. It is the one thing worth removing bodywork for.

WHERE TO FIND THE VIN AND ENGINE NUMBER

- ☐ Inside the under-seat storage bin, on the wall or the floor
- ☐ On the frame under the seat, visible only with the bin removed
- ☐ On the airbox lid or the side of the airbox
- ☐ Inside the legshield, facing rearward
- ☐ On the underside of the seat itself
- ☐ On the frame near the rear shock mount
- ☐ For ATVs and UTVs: under the seat, on the frame near the airbox, or inside a fender

WHEN A NUMBER WILL NOT READ

1. Clean the area with degreaser and a rag, then dry it. Paint sitting in a stamping is the usual culprit.
2. Hold a torch almost flat against the surface so the light rakes across the characters and throws shadows into them.
3. Take a pencil rubbing: hold paper over the stamping and rub the side of a soft pencil across it. This often reads better than your eyes do.
4. Photograph it with the flash off and the torch raking. Zoom in on the photograph rather than squinting at the metal.
5. Write down the characters you are sure of, and mark the ones you are not with a question mark rather than guessing.

CHARACTERS THAT GET MISREAD

8 and B. 5 and S. 0 and O. 1 and I. 2 and Z. 6 and G. A VIN lookup that returns nothing is far more often a transcription mistake than a machine that is genuinely unrecorded. Before concluding the number is unknown, try the alternatives.

SIGNS A NUMBER HAS BEEN INTERFERED WITH

Uneven character spacing, characters at different depths or angles, a filed or ground area around the stamping, fresh paint over one small patch of frame, or a riveted plate whose rivets look newer than the machine. If you see these on a machine you are considering buying, walk away and do not hand over money. Report it if you have reason to think the vehicle is stolen.

TRANSCRIPTION BLOCK

Copy the numbers here so they leave the garage with you.

VIN

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
world manufacturer								check	year							

ENGINE NUMBER

ENGINE FAMILY NUMBER

FRAME NUMBER IF SEPARATE

DATE CHECKED

LOCATIONS CHECKED WITH NOTHING FOUND

Need to work out what you actually own?

The Scooter Parts Registry is a free public record of the Chinese factories behind US-market scooters, ATVs and go-karts — brand, engine family, VIN prefix, factory and related machines. No account, no email.

[**thescooterparts.com/identify**](https://thescooterparts.com/identify)