

BACKGROUNDER: RETAINAGROUP AND THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY REGISTER

Retainagroup

- Retainagroup is the country's leading manufacturer and supplier of vehicle glass and component security etching, marking and registration systems.
- Retainagroup has marked and registered more than nine million vehicles in the UK. Over 55 million vehicle windows have been marked.
- Retainagroup marking and registration systems are used as original equipment by 12 manufacturers: Alfa Romeo, Fiat, Hyundai, Kia, LDV, Lexus, Mazda, Proton, Saab, SsangYong, Skoda, and Toyota. Other Retainagroup customers include BMW, Ford, Harley-Davidson and Subaru.
- The Retainagroup system is a very effective theft deterrent. A Retainagroup marked and registered vehicle is 55 per cent less likely to be stolen than an unmarked one. Unique code marking is also a powerful tool in detecting vehicle 'cloning,' acting as an independent cross check against other vehicle details such as the registration number and VIN. The chances of recovery are 50 per cent better if a stolen vehicle is marked and registered.
- Retainagroup security marking and registration systems use state-of-the-art laser technology, stencils with chemical etching, and ultra-destruct and anti-tamper stickers to mark and register around 600,000 vehicles a year.
- Since 2001, Retainagroup has been authorised to receive Police National Computer (PNC) stolen vehicle data.
- The Retainagroup security marking and registration system is Thatcham Q listed.
- Retainagroup has been marking and registering vehicles in the UK since 1982.
- www.retainagroup.co.uk

The International Security Register

- Details of marked vehicles with owner information are held by the International Security Register (ISR), operated by Retainagroup.
- Retainagroup markings include a 24-hour phone number (07000 111333) for the ISR which is used by police, manufacturers, dealers, insurers, used car buyers and the public to check vehicle and ownership details.
- Each year, the ISR handles around 100,000 incoming telephone calls.
- If a vehicle owner's details change, or the marked vehicle is sold, ISR records can be quickly and easily updated by calling the 24-hour number, by going to www.theisr.org or by post.
- A dedicated web site is available to the police, where an etched code can be checked against VIN and registration number to detect cloning.
- www.theisr.org

How does it work?

- Retainagroup markings and ISR registration deters thieves by making marked vehicles and components much more difficult and riskier to sell. A single call to the ISR can quickly and easily determine whether the seller is the rightful owner. If they can't sell it, they are less likely to nick it!
- Vehicle glass and plastic or metal body parts and components can be discretely but effectively marked by advanced laser technology in just 40 milliseconds per mark. The system also uses stencils with advanced chemical etching where the use of lasers is not possible. Ultra-destruct and tamper-proof stickers are also used. For example, the new and very rare Ford GT is marked in 15 different places.
- If, for example, you are offered a used car with Retainagroup markings, you should contact the ISR 24-hour number in order to check on its ownership and whether it is of interest to the police. Dealers can carry out similar checks, and even the police often use the ISR to verify the etch code against other vehicle details.
- Each marked vehicle will have a unique code that can be used to match to a registration number, a key code or VIN. If anything's not quite right, it will quickly be apparent.

Some facts and statistics

- Despite the standard fitment of better locks, alarms and immobilisers, vehicle theft and fraud is still a major problem, costing owners, insurers, finance companies and the police around £3.5 billion every year.
- Home Office figures for 2003 show that 282,816 cars were stolen in England, Scotland and Wales. That's nearly two cars every minute.
- The most recent Home Office figures on motorcycle theft, estimate that 36,822 were stolen in 2000 – equivalent to one motorcycle stolen for every 40 on the road. The recovery rate for motorcycles was only 32 per cent.
- In 2004, 92 per cent of unrecovered vehicles were not marked and registered.
- In 2004, stolen Toyotas that were not marked had a recovery rate of 42 per cent. Stolen Toyotas that were marked had a recovery rate of 64 per cent.
- The British Crime Survey 2004/5 estimates that there were 1,886,000 vehicle-related crimes in England, Scotland and Wales. Of these, 738,531 were thefts of and from vehicles.
- Interestingly, the BCS estimates that [only] 49 per cent of vehicle-related thefts were reported to the police, of which [only] 88 per cent were recorded. The BCS points out that *'stolen cars were...less likely to have central locking, tracking devices or window etching.'*

Did you know that....

Vehicle crime has been falling because vehicle security has improved and owners are much more aware of vehicle crime; for example, they know not to leave

valuables in a car and are more careful about where they park. But vehicle crime is still endemic in this country. Although the figures have been going down, it is still a major problem. The Retainagroup system continues to be an excellent deterrent – especially where a vehicle has been stolen after first obtaining the keys. Its secure key management system makes it very difficult for a thief to obtain a replacement key through normal channels. If the keys as well as the vehicle have been stolen, a single call to the ISR will establish this. Alarms and immobilisers are just not enough and the Retainagroup system is one of several measures designed to protect vehicles and deter crime.

The latest system has been specially developed to mark engines and transmissions, but will also mark iron, sintered cobalt steel and chrome vanadium.

Retainagroup laser systems are completely safe. Even the chemical etching process is fast and totally safe and is harmless on the skin.

Vehicle crime has changed over the years and arguably, the Retainagroup system is more relevant than ever. We've all heard about criminals increasingly breaking into people's homes in order to steal keys and drive vehicles away, or simply mugging people for their keys. We have also heard about criminals tying empty beer or tin cans under cars in car parks. When the owners drive away and then stop to get out and investigate the noise, the criminal suddenly jumps in and drives away! Alarms, immobilisers and dead locks are not much use in cases like these. So the Retainagroup system remains a strong deterrent even under these circumstances, because the vehicle will be much harder to sell-on. It also makes it much more likely to be recovered.

Window etching is recommended by The Home Office; ACPO; Thatcham; The AA and RAC; the National Insurance Crime Bureau; the DVLA and several insurance companies.

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MARK IT – REGISTER IT – RETAIN IT