

News

DO you have a
DVLA story?
See page 78SORN WARNING
LETTERS

BY NICK LARKIN

Letters aiming to help people avoid being fined for not taxing or declaring SORN on their cars are being issued by the DVLA.

Previously, no warning was issued until a letter demanding £80, or £40 if prompt payment was made, arrived.

SORN (Statutory Off Road notification) has been a particular bugbear to the owners of several classics, who are most likely to forget to SORN a car when expected. Indeed three members of the *Classic Car Weekly* team admit to having been caught out and fined.

A DVLA representative told us that the new warnings were "customer service, encouraging people who are forgetful rather than malicious to get their vehicle taxed or SORNed."

The letters – or V211 documents to give them their proper title – have the warning "Last chance" as a headline and details the numerous ways the owner can get a tax disc or make a SORN

declaration. They followed a "successful trial" in July and August 2009, and according to the DVLA representative's claims, have been around since last April.

Having said that, none of the CCW team or our colleagues on *Classic Cars* and *Practical Classics* had ever heard of the new documents, or received one in the post.

The DVLA also tells us: "It costs around 20p to issue each V211 letter and we are issuing between 200,000 and 250,000 per month. Therefore to issue 220,000 letters it costs approximately £44,000."

Added the DVLA representative: "The increased income received from vehicle excise duty following the issue of the V211 was far greater than the price of issuing the reminders, therefore these became business as usual from April 2010. It is also worth noting that the income DVLA collects from vehicle excise

duty is passed to the Treasury."

SORN was introduced on 31 January 1998. The scheme, much maligned in some quarters, means that a car must be registered annually as being off the road even if it isn't used.

The new reminder letters are sent off around two weeks after the beginning of the month in which car tax/SORN should have been declared when the liability falls due. Each is intended to prevent owners from forgetting their legal duty and gather revenue through increased taxation take-up. Once the DVLA has been notified of SORN an acknowledgment letter is sent.

An estimated 35 million vehicles are taxed or SORNed annually.





Expired
31 12
F100 SJF

Telephone: 0300 790 6805
Sun - Open Monday to Friday
Textphone: 0300 123 1279
Date: 17 January 2011
Reference: V211

Dear Customer

Last chance!

Vehicle Registration Number: F100 SJF

You have not taxed your vehicle or made a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) for it. You should have done one of these things by 01 January 2011. You must keep it off the road until you display a tax disc.

Without a tax disc or SORN you could be fined £80 or more. Even worse, we may impound and crush it!

You don't need to do anything if you have taxed your vehicle in the past few days.

If you have told us that you have sold or transferred the vehicle or made a SORN we will send you an acknowledgment letter within 4 weeks. If you have received this acknowledgment letter you do not need to contact us as this confirms we have updated our records, if you have not received it please us on 0300 790 6805.

If you don't have the vehicle anymore, or if you have changed any details on your Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C) you need to fill in the relevant section and send it to DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1BA. If you don't have the V5C, then write to us with the vehicle's registration number, the make and the model. Tell us the date you sold it and the name and address of the person you sold or transferred it to. Send this to DVLA, Swansea SA99 1BD. We cannot take this information over the phone.

Yours sincerely
John Hewson
Head of Vehicle Licensing Products & Services

To get a tax disc or to make a SORN online or by phone:

- go online at www.direct.gov.uk/taxdisc or
- phone 0300 123 4321

Use your unique reference number given below:

1087 3271 2238 2030

If you cannot or do not wish to do this online or by phone:

To get a tax disc:

- Go to a Post Office branch that issues tax discs. Take your Registration Certificate
- a valid insurance certificate or cover note, and
- the vehicle's MOT (if it needs one)

If you have a Moving Goods Vehicle go online or to your nearest DVLA local office.

To make a SORN:

- Fill in application form (Statutory Off Road Notification) (SORN) (V990) and send it to: DVLA, Swansea SA99 1AR.

You can get a V990 from Post Office or online.

If you need more information go to: www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

You will be able to find local office locations and download a range of forms from this site.

Owners take note – the DVLA's new reminder, designed to increase VED take-up

Chris Hunt Cooke has spotted this article in the recent issue of the popular paper, *Classic Car Weekly* – saying "from this article it seems that the DVLA will now issue a further reminder if SORN or VED has expired and nothing has been heard from the Registered Keeper. I have not been able to verify this from the DVLA website but it looks genuine." (Source: *Classic Car Weekly*, 2nd February 2011)