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How to decode your Volkswagen Camper or Bus Chassis Plate (VIN number).

The Chassis (VIN) Plate & VIN Number:

Type 2 to 31st July 1964

The first Chassis (VIN) numbers were made up of 5 digits and after sales reached the 5 digit limit they were expanded to 6 prefixed by the digits 2 & 0. Example: 20-535 634. From the 1st January 1956 this format was scrapped and changed to a sequential numbering system. Example: 252 041.

The location of the chassis (VIN) number on Type 2 vehicles for the first 3 months was on a steel plate on the centre of the engine bulkhead. After which and until November 1963 it was located on the right in the engine compartment. During November 1963 the plate was moved again, but we don't know where. The number was also stamped on the engine mounting plate between the engine and the battery. This is the case for all dates prior to 31st July 1964

Type 2, 1st August 1964 to 31st July 1979

From the 1st August 1964 to 31st July 1969, Chassis (VIN) Numbers were nine digits. Three of these were identification numbers and the other six were serial numbers i.e. 215 019 888. The first three digits of this prefix (215), were made up of the first two digits were the model type (21), and the third digit was the model year (5).

From the 1st August 1969 to 31st July 1979 Chassis (VIN) Numbers were ten digits. Three of these were identification numbers and the other seven were serial numbers i.e. 2152 023 156. See below for the format:

The chassis number can be broken down as follows:

First digit the vehicle type: "2" Type 2.

Second digit the model:

1. Panel van
2. Micro Bus
3. Kombi
4. Micro Bus Deluxe
5. Micro Bus Deluxe 7 Seater
6. LHD
7. Ambulance
8. Pickup, also Micro Bus

Third digit defines the year that the vehicle was made i.e. 5 (1965) between 1st August 1964 and 31st July 1965.

Fourth digit only for production after 1st August 1969 is 2. So the fourth (Extra), digit just denotes that the vehicle was built in the 1970s rather than the sixties. We think they ran out of numbers! The remaining digits are the serial numbers.

The Location of the chassis (VIN) number remains on the identification plate on the right side of the air duct until the July 31st 1967. From 1st August 1967 to 31st July 1971 the Chassis number is on the engine cover below the air filter. After 31st July 1971 the Chassis (VIN) number was moved to the rear right side of the engine bay.

UK & Ireland Chassis Plate:

VOLKSWAGENWERK AG MADE IN GERMANY		
Vehicle Type		2
Engine Type		Petrol
Serial Number		2472513527
Number of axles		2
Maximum axles weight	front	1008kg
	rear	1300kg
Maximum gross weight		2300kg
Maximum train weight		3100kg

German Chassis Plate:

VOLKSWAGENWERK AG WEST GERMANY	
Typ 24	Fahrgest.-Nr. 1537432
Heizg Typ 2/225A Prutz~~~S45	
Zul. Gesamtgew. kg. 2300	Baujahr
Zul. Achslast vorn kg. 1020	hinten kg 1150

How to read the Chassis Plate:

Whilst the UK based Chassis Plates can relatively easily be read and understood the German based plates are a little more difficult. One thing to note is that the most important information on a Chassis Plate is the actual Chassis number. This will tell you what year the bus was built, what type of bus, i.e. Crew Cab and then the unique six figure serial number for the vehicle. Perhaps a table might help with translating the German Chassis Plate:

VOLKSWAGENWERK AG WEST GERMANY	
Typ: 23 2 digit model type. Sometimes suffixed by another 2 digit code such as AF which is the engine code. So the code 23/AF is a Type 2 Kpmbi with a 1600cc engine.	
Heizg. Typ 2/255A Prutz ~~~S45 This is supposed to refer to the heating system and we believe that its a German requirement.	
Fahrgest.-Nr. CCCCCCCC is the chassis number, often called the VIN Number	
Zul. Gesamtgew. kg. 2300 Maximum gross weight of the vehicle	Baujahr Build Year (Before 1954)
Zul. Achslast vorn kg. 1020 Maximum axle weight - front	hinten kg 1150 Maximum axle weight - rear

So, above we have told you everything you need to know about the Chassis Plate and VIN numbers of your bus. But to clarify the points above the following table represents how to decode your Chassis (VIN), number:

Sample Chassis Number: 2142 167 180.

There is basically five parts to this number and if we label them 2(A), 1(B), 4(C), 2(D), 167 180(E).

A (2) = Vehicle Type, in this instance its a "2", so the vehicle is a Type 2.
B (1) = Model Type, in this instance its a "1", so the vehicle is a Panel Van
C (4) = Second letter of the year of manufacture, in this instance its a "4" so the van was built in 1954, 1964, 1974.
D (2) = Built after August 1969, in this instance its a "2" (cant be anything else), so we know the van was built in 1974.
E (167 180) = The unique 6 digit serial number.

Hope this helps Class Campers