

Obscuring the Number Plate

The ability for a numberplate to be read is covered by Statutory Instrument 1971 No 450 - The Road Vehicles (Registration & Licensing) Regulations 1971. Part III - Exhibition of Licences and Registration Marks states the following:

(1) The provisions of this regulation shall apply to vehicles, other than works trucks and agricultural machines, first registered on or after 1 October 1938.

(2) The registration mark of the vehicle shall be fixed and displayed on both the front and the back of the vehicle, so that in normal daylight the letters and figures are easily legible from every part of the 'relevant area', the diagonal of the square governing the 'relevant area' being 75 feet.

(3) For the purposes of this regulation, the expression 'relevant area' in relation to a registration mark on a vehicle means the area contained in a square described on the ground, either in front of or behind the vehicle, where one corner of the square is below the middle of the registration mark and the diagonal of the square from that corner is parallel to the longitudinal axis of the vehicle, but excluding any part of the square within 10 feet of the vehicle.

It is an offence to allow the numberplate to be obscured. This is now a fixed penalty offence, and therefore more likely to be policed. Obviously, this is of some concern to towbar fitters and to drivers of vehicles with towbar attachments.