

BULLETIN

Industry Divisions



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Car Cloning

VACC has received reports from members who have been issued with toll infringements, speeding fines or other traffic fines/ isolations where the cloning of plates/cars has eventuated.

What is car cloning?

The practice of "car cloning" is best described as passing off a car with the identity of another (using the car registration number). Usually, this is done using the same make / model / color of the original vehicle.

It's done by either having number plates made up (e.g. 3D Printing) or by stealing number plates from someone else's car. Perpetrators have a smorgasbord of opportunity to identify target registration numbers via avenues such as carsales.com. identification of target by idle car at dealership or simply observation in other public areas.

Anyone's car can be cloned. Members are usually unaware of the issue until they receive a parking/toll/speeding fine or are contacted by the police about (perhaps) a more serious crime such as fuel theft etc.

Car cloning is now causing considerable stress and expense to VACC members. The administrative and financial imposts placed upon VACC members' businesses as a result of car cloning has now reached noticeable proportions.

Who clones cars?

Cars are cloned by criminals to commit a variety of offences. It has been an area of some focus for the retail petrol industry as it aids in the instances of fuel theft. Crimes can also include selling stolen cars by making them look like legitimate cars.

How do you know if your car has been cloned?

Typically, members are left perplexed when investigating the fines as they can find no record of the vehicle either being in use or the person who the vehicle was in custody vehemently denies being responsible for the infringement. It is common practice of many members to not fully investigate infringements that occur because of cloning and simply pay any fines because they are unaware, unwilling or do not have the capability to resolve and tackle the Infringements in Court. This is an unacceptable approach that can cost many thousands of dollars and result in other court sanctioned measures.

Currently a new car dealership in Melbourne is in receipt of \$18,854 of traffic infringements as a result of cloning. The member can and has provided the Infringements Office with evidence of the whereabouts of their vehicle at the time of the violations and has forwarded notices of fine revocation to the Infringements Registrar. Those revocation notices have been refused. This member is now forced to have the issue dealt with in the Magistrates Court.

What you can do to protect your business from cloning?

VACC understands that currently there are preventative technological solutions being devised that will assist in reducing instances of cloned vehicles. VACC is still in dialogue with Government as to how this solution may look and how it will be rolled out. VACC will advise industry on any outcomes of this dialogue.

In the interim VACC recommends the following courses of action:

- Revisit your internal processes to ensure you can verify the exact location of any of your company vehicles at any stage.
- Treat all infringement notices with urgency and ensure you respond to the infringements notice well before the due date.

- When in receipt of any infringement notice obtain photographic evidence by visiting www.fines.vic.gov.au . Look for any vehicle or driver discrepancies.
- If suspicious of cloning activity report the instance to your local police station and cancel the vehicle registration.
- Advise VACC of any instance of cloning.

Your immediate attention to infringement notices could save your business from fines and further interruption. Do not wait until it is too late.

Please email any evidence of car cloning to mmckenna@vacc.com.au

Regards



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