

Packard Vehicle Body Identification Numbers

This is quick reference to the various Identification numbers found on Packard bodies. This does not get into engine numbers, frame stamped numbers, or any other numbers that are not attached via a plate or stamped directly into the body shell.

Three different identification numbers may be found on Packards from 1929 and forward. These are the Vehicle Number, the Theft Proof Number, and the Briggs Body Number (1941-1954 only).

Vehicle Number

The Vehicle Number (VN), also known as the Patent Plate Number or Serial Number, not to be confused with the modern nomenclature Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), is a Packard-generated number and was used on every Packard since the very beginning.

This number was located on a metal plate which at times also served as the Patent Plate. This plate may also include the delivery date, dealer, and trim codes. This information varies based upon the year/series.

- Some early models attached the Patent Plate to the inside of the firewall near the brake/clutch pedals.
- 1937 and prior models had Patent Plate attached to the engine side of the firewall/cowl.
- 1938 models did not use a metal plate, but rather a sticker that resembled a Patent Plate.
- 1939 – 1950 models had the Patent Plate attached to the engine side of the firewall/cowl.
- 1951 – 1953 models had the Patent Plate attached to the driver's side 'A-pillar' door jam.
- 1954 – 1956 models did not have a Patent Plate, but a much smaller embossed stainless plate. This was attached to the driver's side 'A-pillar' door jam.

The Vehicle Number typically uses the following format:

###-####(#)

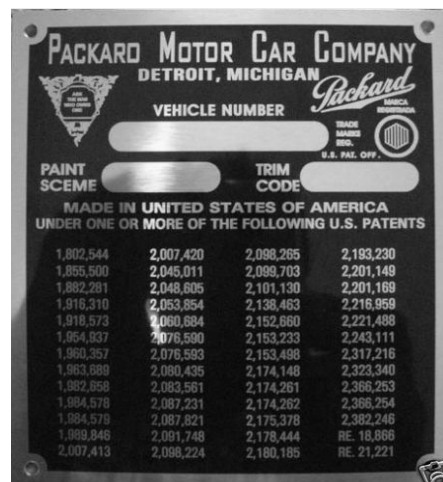
####-####(#)

(Body Type Number – Packard Sequential Production Number)

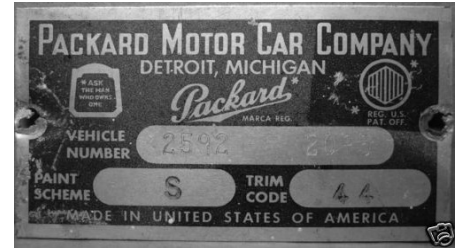
Examples:

703-1234

5492-12345



Beginning with the 9th Series the three or first four digits identify the body type which includes identifying the year, chassis (powerplant) and body style. Beginning in 1947 the body type number was rationalized to begin with the series designation (prior to that, they lagged by 4 digits), for example 5492 = 54th Series Clipper Deluxe Touring Sedan, but 703 = 11th Series Eight Sedan. The last 4 or 5 digits represent the Packard Sequential Production number for that specific model. The numbers did not start from 1, some years it started at 11, some years 1001, and some years at 2001. If the VN was 5492-2001, it would have been the first Clipper Deluxe Touring Sedan of the 54th series.



There are a couple exceptions and notes to the above format:

- For some years prior to the 9th Series, the engine serial number served as the vehicle number.
- 1949 22nd Series model use a 22##-9-#### format to differentiate them from the 22##-#### format of the 1948 22nd Series models. Also in some cases unsold 1948 22nd Series models had their original Patent Plates removed and replaced with a 22##-9-#### formatted plates so they could be sold as 1949 22nd Series models.
- 1950 23rd Series model use a 23##-5-#### format to differentiate them from the 23##-#### format of the 1949 23rd Series models. Also in some cases unsold 1949 23rd Series models had their original Patent Plates removed and replaced with a 23##-9-#### formatted plates so they could be sold as 1950 23rd Series models.
- 1955 and 1956 follow the standard format, but the engine number also matches the vehicle number. There are some cases where replacement engines were installed where this will not match.
- Custom Bodied and commercial vehicles may differ from the standard format, and are beyond the scope of this document.



Theft Proof Number

The Theft Proof Number is a large raised number stamped directly into the engine side cowl/firewall starting in 1929 with the 6th Series models. This was added to Packards to provide a tamper resistant number that could be used to identify the vehicle in the event it was stolen and all other identifying markings were altered or removed. Unfortunately only the smallest fragments of the records correlating these numbers to specific vehicles remain. The numbers can be used to identify the year of body manufacture but have no direct correlation to anything else.



The Theft Proof Number typically following the following format:

<#####> (1941 - 1950)

<X#####> (1951 - 1956)

Examples:

<4235I8>

<C22456>

A couple of comments and exceptions:

- The < and > represent raised stamped triangles that bracket the number.
- 1935-37 Juniors (120s, 115s, 110s) do not have the brackets surrounding the numbers.
- Most 1940 vehicles have been reported to have no Theft Proof number.

Briggs Body Number

The Briggs Body Number is located on a small stamped metal plate located on the engine side cowl/firewall on 1941-1954 Packards. During these years the bodies were built by Briggs Manufacturing for Packard. During construction Briggs attached the Body Number plate to the vehicle.



The Briggs Body Number typically uses the following format:

####-####(#)

Body Type Number – Briggs Sequential Production Number

Examples:

5492-1234

5492-12345

While this format is exactly the same as the Vehicle Number, the Briggs Sequential Production number may or may not match the Packard Sequential Production number. Most of the time the two production numbers are very close together. The Briggs Body Number did not follow the ####-#-#### variant used in 1949 and 1950. It maintained the standard ####-#### format. Much like the Vehicle Number, the Briggs Body numbers did not start from 1, some years it started at 11, some years 1001, and some years at 2001.

Custom Bodied, Commercial and Export vehicles may differ from the standard Briggs format, or may not have a Briggs number, and are beyond the scope of this document.

The “I”s don’t have it!

Some of the various numbers may have what looks like a capital “I” used as one of the digits. This is actual a “1” (one), but the serif style font that Packard used make it look like an “I”. For all paperwork, this should be recorded as a “1” (one). Also along those same lines, any square looking “O”s are really “0”s (zero).