



Competent authority:

[Préfectures](#) (as well as some «sous-préfectures»), and in Paris, the «Préfecture de police»

What documents do I need to present to register a car?

For new cars:

- The **application form** («demande d'immatriculation») which is available [online](#) or at the «Préfecture»;
- The **Certificate of conformity** (COC) ("certificat de conformité"). Specific car types may not be listed in France (camping cars, imported cars from other continents, modified cars, etc.). You will then need an "attestation d'identification à un type CE" which also certifies conformity with EU standards. So if you want to buy any of these specific car types, ECC France strongly recommends that you check beforehand that registration is possible;
- The **contract of sale or invoice** ("contrat de vente", "facture d'achat");
- Your **identity card or passport**;
- **Proof of residence** in France (electricity/gas/phone bill less than 6 months old, housing insurance, rental agreement...);
- The **tax clearance certificate** ("quitus fiscal"), issued by the VAT authority;
- **A cheque, cash or credit card to pay the registration taxes**: Be aware, cash payments at local government finance offices are limited to EUR 300.

For second hand cars, the following are also needed:

- The **foreign registration certificate/s**;
- A **roadworthiness certificate** valid for at least 6 months for cars older than 4 years. **If the car was sold with a valid vehicle inspection certificate from another Member State, this should be accepted in France.**

Where do I get the COC or equivalent if the seller doesn't provide one?

You can ask the manufacturer in the Member State where the car was bought for a duplicate or their representative in France for an «attestation d'identification». Bear in mind, however, that certain manufacturers will charge up to EUR 160 for this document.

If the car was produced before 1997 or if the manufacturer is unable to provide a duplicate COC or an «attestation», depending on the «préfecture», you may have to file for a specific national [approval](#) certificate from the [DREAL](#) (Directions Régionales de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement et du Logement).

The cost of filing this request is about EUR 90. The DREAL may require further tests for which you will be redirected to UTAC-OTC near Paris (the only French technical service on the European Commission [list of approved services](#)). The entire procedure can last up to 6 months

Is it mandatory to show proof of insurance to the registration service?

Every driver and car must be covered by insurance allowing them to drive or be driven on public roads, but at the time of publication of this report, the registration service does not ask for proof.



To whom should VAT be paid?

A car is considered new if no more than 6 months have passed since the date on which it was first registered or if its mileage does not exceed 6 000 km. For intra-EU transactions, **new cars are VAT exempt**. Thus, the supplier should not charge VAT. Instead, if you have bought a new car in another EU Member State with the intention of importing it to and registering it in your country of residence, you must pay VAT in your own Member State at that country's rate.

All other cars are considered second hand (more than 6 months since the date of first registration and mileage of more than 6 000 km). They are generally sold inclusive of VAT if the supplier is a taxable person for VAT purposes. You don't have to pay VAT in your country of residence.

For both new and second-hand cars, you need to ask the tax authorities for a **tax clearance certificate** («quitus fiscal») within 15 days of purchase/delivery. For new cars, you will pay 20 % of the purchase price to the authority in charge of VAT payments for new cars («Service des impôts des entreprises»). For second-hand cars bought in another EU Member State no VAT is due in France.

Documents to be presented to obtain the tax clearance certificate:

- The invoice or [Cerfa n°13754*02](#);
- Your identity card/passport;
- The car registration certificate;
- Proof of residence in France (electricity/gas/phone bill from the previous 6 months, housing insurance, rental agreement...).
- Be aware that cash payments at local government finance offices are limited to EUR 300.

Before final registration, can I drive in France with temporary plates?

Normally, valid transit plates from other EU Member States should be recognised provided that the driver carries Part I of the registration certificate (article 4.2 of Commission Communication 2007/C 68/04 on procedures for the registration of motor vehicles originating in another [Member State](#)).

However, you should check in advance with the French customs/police or your local authorities whether the plates are recognised outside their country of origin.

Whom do I contact in the event of difficulties with the registration authority/administration?

You can contact the [SOLVIT Centre France](#) for help with any difficulties.

If you have a question linked to your consumer rights when purchasing a car cross-border, contact your local ECC: www.europe-consommateurs.eu