



SURFACE VEHICLE RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

J1044™

JAN2025

Issued 1973-09
Reaffirmed 2024-03
Revised 2025-01

Superseding J1044 MAR2024

World Manufacturer Identifier

RATIONALE

Updated SAE J1044 to reflect NHTSA's requirement.

1. SCOPE

This SAE Recommended Practice establishes a procedure for the issuance and assignment of a World Manufacturer Identifier (WMI) on a uniform basis to vehicle manufacturers that may desire to incorporate it in their Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN). This recommended practice is intended to be used in conjunction with the recommendations for VIN systems described in SAE J853, SAE J187, SAE J272, and other SAE reports for VIN systems.

These procedures were developed to assist in identifying the vehicle as to its point of origin. It was felt that review and coordination of the WMI by a single organization would avoid duplication of manufacturer identifiers and assist in the identification of vehicles by agencies such as those concerned with motor vehicle titling and registration, law enforcement, and theft recovery.

2. REFERENCES

2.1 Applicable Documents

The following publications form a part of this specification to the extent specified herein. Unless otherwise indicated, the latest issue of SAE publications shall apply.

2.1.1 SAE Publications

Available from SAE International, 400 Commonwealth Drive, Warrendale, PA 15096-0001, Tel: 877-606-7323 (inside USA and Canada) or +1 724-776-4970 (outside USA), www.sae.org.

SAE J187	Truck Vehicle Identification Numbers
SAE J218	Passenger Car Identification Terminology
SAE J272	Vehicle Identification Number Systems
SAE J853	Vehicle Identification Numbers
SAE J1229	Truck Identification Terminology

SAE Executive Standards Committee Rules provide that: "This report is published by SAE to advance the state of technical and engineering sciences. The use of this report is entirely voluntary, and its applicability and suitability for any particular use, including any patent infringement arising therefrom, is the sole responsibility of the user."

SAE reviews each technical report at least every five years at which time it may be revised, reaffirmed, stabilized, or cancelled. SAE invites your written comments and suggestions.

Copyright © 2025 SAE International

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, or used for text and data mining, AI training, or similar technologies, without the prior written permission of SAE.

TO PLACE A DOCUMENT ORDER: Tel: 877-606-7323 (inside USA and Canada)
Tel: +1 724-776-4970 (outside USA)
Fax: 724-776-0790
Email: CustomerService@sae.org
SAE WEB ADDRESS: <http://www.sae.org>

For more information on this standard, visit
https://www.sae.org/standards/content/J1044_202501/

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 WORLD MANUFACTURER IDENTIFIER (WMI)

The first section of the VIN consisting of a code uniquely designating the manufacturer of the vehicle.

3.2 OTHER

For other basic definitions, refer to SAE J218, SAE J272, and SAE J1229.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 SAE does not establish the requirement for any manufacturer to apply for or use manufacturer identifiers. SAE will issue a WMI only upon application.

4.2 The WMI, once issued, will not be reissued for use by a different manufacturer for a period of 10 years following the last known production of a vehicle with that WMI.

4.3 More than one WMI may be issued to a given vehicle manufacturer.

4.4 The WMI shall consist of three characters or six characters, dependent on annual production. An example of the WMI encoding is included in Table 1.

4.4.1 For manufacturers that produce, or are scheduled to produce, in quantities of 900 or more annually, a three-character WMI shall be available for assignment.

4.4.2 For manufacturers of less than 900 vehicles annually, a six-character WMI shall be available for assignment. For a six-character WMI, the number 9 in the third character shall be used, and VIN positions 12 through 14 will identify the specific manufacturer.

4.5 For manufacturers assigned a six-character WMI, request of a new, three-character WMI is required as production exceeds the 900-unit level.

Table 1 - WMI encoding within the VIN

Field Name	WMI			VDS					Check Digit	VIS							
VIN Position	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
3 Character WMI	X	X	X														
6 Character WMI	X	X	9									X	X	X			

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Procedures for SAE

5.1.1 SAE shall maintain a bank of WMIs.

5.1.2 Assignment of blocks of WMI shall be made by SAE upon receipt of a written request for such assignment by a national organization.

5.1.3 Assignment of blocks of WMI shall be honored, provided the national organization has completed the requirements of 5.2.3.