Bermuda to Put RFID in All Vehicles on Island

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Bermuda is using RFID technology to automate vehicle registration, compliance and enforcement.

Cars in Bermuda are getting chipped. RFID chipped that is.

Bermuda's Transport Control Department, a division of the tiny string of island's Ministry of Tourism, announced May 7 that it plans to automate vehicle registration, compliance and enforcement with an island-wide deployment of EVR (electronic vehicle registration). The EVR system is made up of RFID tags, antennas, readers and a database system.

Over the next five years, the program is expected to generate over $11 million in lost fees from unlicensed and uninsured vehicles, according to a press release. At the same time TCD expects to reduce the number of non-compliant vehicles on the island's roadways to less than 1 percent, officials said.

The program kicks off this month.

Here's how the whole system will work, from tag issuance to back-end data collection. A unique identification number will be established for each vehicle registered on the island; each number, or code, is then linked to a record in a centralized vehicle database.

As car (truck, van or SUV) owners have their vehicles inspected or registered they will receive a windshield sticker embedded with an RFID

tag (the sticker is tamper-resistant to dissuade any removal of the tag). The tag, when read by a specially equipped RFID reader, will send off information to TCD's database.

On the backend, each vehicle code is linked to a record in the vehicle database. To quell any concerns over privacy and security of data, Bermuda officials have encrypted the code on the RFID tags, which store no actual personal data.

The vehicle database itself identifies vehicles, not drivers, according to the release, which also states that the EVR system retains only photo images of non-compliant or criminal vehicles. A back-office VPS (violation processing system) will automatically generate citations, while the EVR system itself will validate commercial vehicle registration and issue violations for trucks operating in restricted areas, during rush hour, without a permit, officials said.

On Bermuda's highways and byways throughout the country a network of fixed reader points will be established to verify vehicle registration and compliance. In sting-like operations transportable, tripod-mounted readers and handheld readers will be used for screening vehicles at random locations.

"Bermuda is a country with 21 square miles of land, 63,000 people and 47,000 moving vehicles. We're the sixth largest population per square mile. Bermuda has the world's highest density per square mile of motor traffic on its roads," said Randy Rochester, director of Bermuda's Transportation Control Department.

"Consequently we needed a system to facilitate compliance and lessen the burden on law-abiding citizens and our civil servants. EVR will expedite enforcement and ticketing of those not in compliance and recover lost fees more efficiently than our current manual system."

3M, which develops vehicle registration systems, is designing and implementing Bermuda's RFID-based system. In addition to tracking down errant registration and vehicle inspections, the system will automate emissions and insurance compliance as well.

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