

Motor vehicle total loss

What is an insurance write-off?

If your car has suffered damage as a result of an incident and your insurer considers the cost of repairs to be uneconomical, then it will be classed as an insurance write-off.

How is the vehicle valued and how soon will I receive payment?

A QBE engineer (or one appointed by us) will inspect your vehicle, which may be a physical or desktop inspection, and place a value on it. We obtain our valuation by researching market trends and vehicle value guides.

We take into account the condition of the vehicle before the incident took place including the bodywork, mileage, interior and service history. Once the engineer has completed their report we will carry out a series of industry database checks designed to safeguard our policyholders against fraud.

To help explain how the market valuation is calculated, you can refer to the Financial Ombudsman Services website at: www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

Once these have been successfully completed, payment will be sent to you, subject to the deduction of any excess.

How is settlement of the claim sent?

Payment can be sent via a cheque or by a bank transfer. If we already hold details of your preferred bank account, we will send the funds directly to your bank. A communication will follow to confirm that payment has been sent.

If we do not hold your bank details, a cheque will be issued and sent either directly to you or via your brokers.

If you have not provided us with your preferred bank details in the past, please contact your claims handler as soon as possible so these can be added to our system.

Please note the above may not apply if your vehicle is leased or has outstanding finance. Refer to our **lease/finance FAQ** for more information.

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What happens to the vehicle once it is confirmed a total loss?

Once our engineers have confirmed the vehicle is a total loss, QBE will instruct our salvage agents to collect the vehicle and take it to one of their storage yards. Depending on the total loss category, our appointed agents will dispose of the vehicle or sell the salvage at auction.

What do I need to do with the vehicle documents?

You must notify the DVLA that you are no longer the registered keeper of the vehicle. To do this, please complete Section 4 of your V5C Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C/3), with the name and address of the salvage agent noted in your payment remittance and send this to the DVLA.

If you prefer, you can amend online using the following website;
www.gov.uk/written-off-vehicle

If this action is not taken, the registered keeper will still be liable for the vehicle under the Continuous Registration requirements of road vehicles (Registering and Licensing) Regulations 2002 and could incur a fine.

DVLA Address to send your V5C/3 to:

DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1BA

Please also send the following items to the salvage agent address which is provided on your offer letter:

- > V5C Vehicle Registration certificate (with Section 4 removed).
- > MOT Certificate, if the vehicle is over 3 years old.
- > Any spare sets of keys (Please remove any key rings).
- > Vehicle Service Book and history.
- > Any fascia's and security codes of audio equipment.
- > Please do NOT send any vehicle manuals.

What happens with the Road Fund License/Tax?

Please visit the DVLA website, which explains your obligations regarding the ongoing tax and insurance, and the Statutory off the Road Notification (SORN) requirements for your vehicle www.gov.uk/browse/driving/car-tax-discs. From here you will be able to see the procedures on how to obtain a refund in any tax that you may be entitled to. We do recommend that you declare the vehicle SORN to avoid any fines.

How can I obtain my personal effects still in the vehicle?

If any personal belongings were left in your vehicle, please call your claim handler straight away to arrange the return of your items. If the belongings are not collected within 48 hours they will be disposed of.

What will happen to my Cherished Plate?

The Cherished plate is your property and we will have no interest in keeping the number plate if you wish to retain this. Please inform your claims handler as soon as possible if you wish to keep the plate. Our claims handlers will be able to provide you with the information you need regarding how to retain the plate. For more information on this please visit <https://www.gov.uk/personalised-vehicle-registrationnumbers>. If we do not hear from you during the process of the total loss, we will assume you do not wish to retain the cherished plate and it will be disposed of with the vehicle salvage.

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What if my vehicle is on finance or leased?

If you purchased your vehicle on finance, or if the vehicle is leased, we are obliged by law to pay the finance/lease company the entire balance up to the value of the settlement, before any balance is paid to you if there is any outstanding funds against the vehicle. You should contact the finance/leasing company as soon as you are advised that your vehicle is a total loss and ask them to provide you with a settlement figure. Please pass the settlement figure to us urgently, as we will not be able to pay your claim until we have received this.

If the outstanding balance exceeds the sum due to you under the policy, you will remain liable to the finance company for the balance of the finance agreement. If you have purchased GAP insurance, this may cover the balance and you should make enquiries with the GAP insurer. GAP insurance is offered by motor dealers when the vehicle is sold. If you are uncertain whether you have cover, you should ask the dealer who sold the vehicle to you.

Am I entitled to keep my vehicle once it has been confirmed as a total loss?

Once payment has been made to you for your vehicle, the rights to the salvage of the vehicle becomes the property of QBE Insurance, who will dispose of it in accordance with industry and environmental guidelines.

Should you wish to keep the remains of your vehicle, you are legally entitled to do so, although we must warn you that there are strict guidelines for retaining salvage. It is for this reason that we would always discourage salvage retention.

If you wish to keep the vehicle, the value of the salvage that QBE would receive will be deducted from your settlement. Please note that should you wish to put the retained vehicle back on the road, you would be required to ensure it is legally compliant to do so. Please contact your claims handler immediately should you intend to retain the vehicle.

Salvage categories and retention rules.

Category A - Scrap Only. Vehicle should not return to the road. The vehicle should be disposed of by an authorised agent in accordance with environmental guidelines.

Category B - Break for spares. Vehicle should not return to the road. Any parts should be dealt with by an authorised salvage dealer.

Category S - Repairable total loss. Vehicle can reappear on the road but will require competent repair and a new MOT. The V5 should be submitted to the DVLA advising the vehicle has been deemed a Cat C and a new V5 will be issued to the registered keeper, prior to being put back on cover with your insurance company. If broken for spares, any parts should be dealt with by an authorised salvager dealer.

Category N - Repairable total loss. Vehicle can return to the road but will require competent repair and a new MOT prior to being put back on cover.

Need to claim? Report it early

Finally, a reminder that if you have an incident and need to make an insurance claim, it's important that you report it as soon as possible, ideally the same day. Reporting a claim early can save time and help you to receive any claim payments faster, as well as allowing us to help mitigate the cost of third-party claims.

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