

Registering your Kit Car – SB100

Hopefully you withstood the trials and tribulations of the DMV on January 2nd and are the proud holder of a SPCNS Certificate of Sequence. To complete the registration process you will now need to survive the three “trials of mechanism” which will test your will to complete your ride.

Before you even attempt to start the inspection process you must have a vehicle that is “road worthy” meaning you believe it is ready and SAFE for operation on the highway. It can be short allot of the finishing (mine only had half the interior done and the passenger seat was missing) but must have fully functional lights, brakes that don’t leak, seat belts, DOT approved windshield, mirrors, and a running engine.

Trial number one – is it safe?

First stop is to a registered “Light, Brake and Safety” inspection station – you can look it up in the phone book or Google it on line to find the nearest one. What they will be looking at is the general safety items required by law and their proper installation and operation. Sounds serious but they really are just going to check the following:

- Operation of all the running lights, brake lights, turn signals
- Operation and condition of the brakes – this may entail inspecting the brakes for proper mounting and the entire system for leaks along with the condition of the parts
- Operation of the horn (you did remember to put one in didn’t you?)
- They will adjust the headlight alignment
- Condition of the tires and general condition of the car

This all takes about an hour and will cost you somewhere less than \$100 depending on the inspection station. Since most of our cars are brand new builds the inspection is fairly straight forward and should result in two certificates – one for Brakes and safety, another for lights.

Trial number two – Got any hot parts buddy?

The second stop on your quest is with the local Highway Patrol Inspection station. You must make an appointment with your nearest CHP office that has an inspection capability. You can find the nearest office at the CHP website http://www.chp.ca.gov/depts_divs_offs/offices.html . What the Highway Patrol Inspection officer is going to be looking for in a nutshell is – did you purchase all of your parts legally. They will want to see your receipts for the kit - body and frame, engine, transmission and your Manufacturer’s Certificate of Origin. They will verify the manufacturer’s serial number on your Certificate of Origin matches what is stamped on your frame. Finally they will enter the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) into the Sacramento database. The VIN could be what was issued to your kit from the manufacturer and is clearly stamped on the kit’s frame or they can give you a new one from the system which then requires a label to be riveted to your frame. This process will take one to two hours and may require your car to be taken into the CHP garage for inspection. There is no fee collected for this process – you already paid for it in your taxes. Donut’s

or Bagels go a long way in your relationship with the CHP office – think of it as insurance against future infractions – they really are a great group of people and really appreciate a nicely built car (my inspection officer had a Backdraft Cobra at home in his garage!)

The third and last trial - I've got no stinkin' smog man!

If you've got your Certificate of Sequence in hand this should not be giving you any nightmares. For your Smog inspection you must also make an appointment. The number should be on your registration paperwork or you can look it up at the DMV web site

<http://www.dmv.ca.gov/vr/spcnsreg.htm>. Both of the Bureau of Automotive Repair (BAR) Smog Test Stations in my area happen to be at community colleges and are part of their Automotive Repair program there. Just as the CHP inspection establishes your VIN number, the BAR inspection establishes your Smog baseline for the car and future registration requirements. They will require proof of the previous two inspections and your original Certificate of Sequence document. They will record into the BAR computer in Sacramento the particulars of your car including the make, year, displacement and carburetion of the engine. The process will also require a "baseline" run on the Dyno of your car for their records. The run is not a "pass/fail" but a baseline for data only. With an SB100 certificate in hand you will be given a model year, for Smog purposes, of 1960 which makes you exempt for future smog testing. Since the BAR inspections are at schools, expect a lot of grinning students hanging around asking you about your car. Again, donuts or bagels are much appreciated by the testing staff and students. This inspection is also free – again you paid for it with your taxes.

All that is left is one last trip to the Department of Motor vehicles to turn in all the inspection forms so you can complete the registration process and get your plates.

Congratulations! Your ride is now street legal.

A couple of additional notes...

Temporary operating Permits – You are typically issued one in January that will last anywhere from 2 to 3 months depending on the clerk at DMV. If your car is "road worthy" and ready for inspections, this is plenty of time to actually drive it to the inspections. If you're not ready yet, you will either need to go back to the DMV and beg for another temporary – they are not very keen on this by the way as your car is not yet legally registered so it technically should not be on the road – or you'll have to trailer it to the inspections. I didn't start the inspection process until August so I ended up trailering it to the Safety and CHP inspections. The State budget crisis shut down the BAR stations so I was able to get another temporary license until they re-opened in October.

Insurance – Whether you are legally registered or not you must have insurance to be on the street – it's the law in California. Most insurance companies will not insure "kit" or collector cars so you will need to go to a company that specializes in policies for your specific car. Companies like Parish/Heacock can help you out with a collector car policy that meets your needs and driving habits. Most of these policies are mileage limited and are based on the value of the car. In some cases an appraisal of your car will be needed to establish value.