BMW VIN DECODER

How to **decode a BMW VIN** position by position: every BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad prefix, plant codes and model years, **BMW options, build sheet, window sticker and paint code by VIN**, recall and warranty checks, and how **Carfax BMW** reports compare.

Free	93	$14.99
BMW VIN decoder at carcheckervin.com	BMW, MINI & Motorrad VINs decoded with NHTSA data	full VIN report when you need history

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ABOUT THIS BMW VIN DECODER GUIDE

A **BMW VIN decoder** turns the 17 characters on a BMW into plain facts: which BMW Group company built it, in which plant and model year, with which body and engine. This guide shows you how to **decode a BMW VIN** yourself, what a free **BMW VIN lookup** can and can't tell you, and where the details owners ask about most (options, build sheet, window sticker, paint code) are really kept.

It is published by **CarCheckerVIN (carcheckervin.com)**, which runs a free BMW VIN decoder and sells full vehicle history reports. Every VIN in the decode tables was run in November 2026 through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's free vPIC database, the manufacturer-reported data behind most decoders. The example VINs have valid check digits; their serial numbers are illustrative. Plant facts come from BMW Group's plant pages, warranty terms from BMW of North America's booklets, and VIN rules from 49 CFR Part 565. CarCheckerVIN is independent and not affiliated with BMW.

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FREE BMW VIN DECODER

Decode a BMW while you read

Paste any 17-character BMW or MINI VIN into **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/bmw** to see the model year, model, engine, drive type, body and assembly plant, plus a free preview of how many history records exist for that car. No card, no sign-up. A full vehicle history report is $14.99.

How to use this guide

Buying a used BMW
Read Chapters 1, 12, 13 and 14, then decode every car on your shortlist before you pay for a report.

Owner or enthusiast
Chapters 2, 9, 10 and 11 cover plant codes, options, window stickers and paint codes.

MINI or motorcycle
Chapters 7 and 8 decode MINI and BMW Motorrad VINs, which have their own prefixes and plants.

BUYER'S SHORTCUT

WHERE TO DECODE A BMW VIN & WHERE TO BUY THE REPORT

Decoding a BMW VIN is free. Finding out what *happened* to that BMW is not, and BMW's own records (options, in-service date) stay with BMW. Here is where each answer lives.

OUR PICK

CarCheckerVIN · www.carcheckervin.com

- **Free BMW VIN decoder** at **/vin-decoder/bmw**
- **Free history preview** for the same VIN, with no credit card
- **Full vehicle history report: $14.99**, no subscription
- **Packs:** 3 for $35.99, 5 for $54.99, 10 for $89.99 ($9 a report)
- Title brands, odometer readings, owners and NMVTIS title records
- Liens, impounds, total-loss records and auction sales with photos
- Recalls, service records, factory specs and market value
- Search by VIN, by U.S. license plate, or a whole list of VINs

BMW VIN lookup options, compared

Where	Cost	Best for
CarCheckerVIN BMW decoder	Free; report $14.99	Specs plus a free preview of record counts, then the full report
NHTSA vPIC decoder	Free	The official manufacturer-reported specs, plant and check-digit verdict
BMW USA recall lookup	Free	Open safety and emission recalls on one BMW VIN (Chapter 12)
A BMW Center	Ask the Center	The warranty's in-service date and the factory equipment record
Carfax report	$44.99 (widely quoted)	Service history; many dealers include one free
NICB VINCheck	Free, 5 searches a day	Theft and total-loss records from participating insurers

Which one do you need?

Just a BMW VIN decoder…
…when you own the car and need the model year, engine or plant, when you're ordering parts, or when you want to check that an ad's “M3” or “xDrive” matches the VIN.

A history report…
…when you're about to buy. A decoder can't show salvage titles, rolled-back mileage, liens or auction damage. Buy a report at **carcheckervin.com/vehicle-history-report**.

Need the factory options or the paint code? They aren't in the VIN; Chapters 9 to 11 show where they are. Comparing several cars? Decode them all free, then buy reports for the shortlist: a 3-pack ($35.99) costs less than one Carfax. Dealers get wholesale pricing, bulk API access and white-label reports at **carcheckervin.com/dealers**.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT A BMW VIN DECODER TELLS YOU

A **BMW VIN number decoder** reads the vehicle identification number and translates each section into what BMW filed for it. It answers one question precisely: *what is this BMW, as it was built?*

BMW VIN decoder, VIN lookup, VIN check: the difference

Term	What it does	Example output
BMW VIN decoder	Translates the 17 characters using the codes BMW filed with NHTSA	2019 BMW X5 xDrive40i, 3.0 L 6-cylinder, built in Greer, South Carolina
BMW VIN lookup / BMW VIN search	Decodes the VIN and searches records tied to it	Specs plus open recalls and a count of history records
BMW VIN check	Looks for problems in the car's records	Salvage brand, total loss, odometer problem
Vehicle history report	A dated timeline of what is on record	Titles, owners, mileage, liens, auctions, service

What the decoder reads

Directly from the 17 characters

- The BMW Group company and vehicle type (positions 1–3)
- Model, body and engine (positions 4–8)
- Model year (position 10)
- Assembly plant (position 11)

From what BMW filed for that pattern

- Model name and variant, such as "xDrive40i"
- Displacement, cylinders, fuel, electrification
- Drive type and transmission, on newer models
- Airbag locations and safety systems

> **"Standard" and "Optional" are about the model, not your car**
> For our 2019 X5 xDrive40i, NHTSA's decoder lists forward collision warning and blind spot monitoring as **Standard**, and adaptive cruise control, lane keeping and park assist as **Optional**. That is what BMW offered on the model, not what this X5 was ordered with. Individual options are not in the VIN (Chapter 9).

What no BMW VIN decoder can show

- Packages and options this car was ordered with
- Paint and upholstery colors
- The warranty start (in-service) date
- Service and repair visits
- Salvage, flood, rebuilt or lemon-buyback title brands
- Odometer readings and rollbacks
- Liens, impounds and auction sales
- Owner names or addresses (protected by federal privacy law)

Is it free? Yes. Decoding needs only the data manufacturers must send NHTSA, which NHTSA publishes, so you should never pay just to decode a BMW VIN. What costs money is history: title, mileage, lien and auction records gathered from states, insurers and auctions.

CHAPTER 2

A BMW VIN, POSITION BY POSITION

Here is a BMW X5's VIN decoded with NHTSA's vPIC database: a 2019 X5 xDrive40i with a 3.0-liter six-cylinder engine and all-wheel drive, built in Greer, South Carolina.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
5	U	X	C	R	6	C	5	7	K	L	L	1	2	3	4	5
WMI BMW SUV, USA			VDS X5 xDrive40i, 3.0 L six					Check digit	Year 2019	Plant Greer	Production sequence					

Position	Value	Section	Decoded meaning
1	5	Country code	United States (part of the WMI)
1–3	5UX	Manufacturer / type	BMW Manufacturer Corporation / BMW North America, multipurpose passenger vehicle
4–8	CR6C5	Vehicle descriptor (VDS)	X5 xDrive40i, 4-door SUV, 3.0 L 6-cylinder gasoline, AWD, GVWR Class 2E (6,001–7,000 lb)
9	7	Check digit	Valid: NHTSA reports “VIN decoded clean”
10	K	Model year	2019 (position 7 is a letter, so the 2010–2039 cycle applies)
11	L	Plant	Greer, South Carolina (BMW Group Plant Spartanburg)
12–17	L12345	Sequence	Production number (illustrative in this example)

Where to find the VIN on a BMW



Behind the windshield
Bottom of the driver's side, readable from outside



Door-opening labels
BMW lists nameplates on both sides; the certification label is by the driver's door



My BMW App & paperwork
Vehicle tab, Vehicle Information; also the title and insurance card

BMW USA's owner FAQ also lists the VIN **engraved on the right-hand side of the engine compartment**. Federal rules require the windshield VIN to be readable from outside (49 CFR 565.13), and the door-area certification label carries the VIN plus the month and year of manufacture (49 CFR 567.4).

The “last seven”

You will sometimes be asked for only the last seven characters of a BMW VIN: the plant code plus the six-character serial. BMW Motorrad USA's recall page, for one, accepts “either the full 17 or last 7 characters”, while MINI USA's asks for all 17. A decoder can't read seven characters: NHTSA's returned “Incomplete VIN” when we tried.

CHAPTER 2 CONT.

POSITIONS 1–3: EVERY BMW GROUP WMI

The World Manufacturer Identifier names the company that built the vehicle. NHTSA's vPIC database lists 18 WMIs under BMW company names (queried November 2026). Here is each one, with what our decodes returned for it.

WMI	NHTSA lists it under	Type	What our decodes returned
WBA	BMW AG · Germany	Car	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 Series, Z4 and a 2013 X1, from six plants
WBS	BMW M GmbH · Germany	Car	M3, M4 and M5; also a 1999 Z3 M built in South Carolina
WBY	BMW AG · Germany	Car	i3, i8, i4, i5 and i7
WBX	BMW AG · Germany	SUV (MPV)	X1 and X2 from Regensburg; a 2004 X3 from Graz, Austria
WB5	BMW AG · Germany	SUV (MPV)	iX from Dingolfing
5UX	BMW Manufacturer Corp. / BMW North America · USA	SUV (MPV)	X3, X4, X5, X6 and X7, all from Greer, South Carolina
5YM	BMW Manufacturer Corp. / BMW North America · USA	SUV (MPV)	X3 M, X5 M and XM from Greer
4US	BMW Manufacturer Corp. / BMW North America · USA	Car	2000 Z3 and 2003 Z4 roadsters from South Carolina
5UM	BMW AG · Germany	Car	2007 Z4 M, built in Greer
3MW	BMW AG · Germany	Car	330i and 230i from San Luis Potosí, Mexico
3MF	BMW AG · Germany	Car	2023 M2 from San Luis Potosí
WMW	BMW AG · Germany	Car	MINI Hardtop, Convertible, Clubman, Paceman, 2012 Countryman
WMZ	BMW AG · Germany	SUV (MPV)	MINI Countryman, model years 2017 to 2025
WB1	BMW AG Motorcycles · Germany	Motorcycle	R, S and R 18 models from Berlin
WB3	BMW AG Motorcycles · Germany	Motorcycle	G 310 R; plant decoded as Chennai, India
WB4	BMW AG Motorcycles · Germany	Motorcycle	C 400 X and C 400 GT scooters; plant decoded in China
WZ1	BMW AG · Germany	Car	Decodes as a Toyota GR Supra, built in Graz, Austria
WAP	BMW of North America, LLC · Germany	Car	Not decoded for this guide

“Type” is NHTSA's vehicle type for the WMI: passenger car, multipurpose passenger vehicle (MPV) or motorcycle. The country is the one on NHTSA's entry for that manufacturer, not necessarily where the plant is.

The first character is a code, not a birthplace

W is Germany's country code, 5 and 4 belong to the United States and 3 to Mexico. But the first character goes with the WMI, and a WMI can travel. Our WBA decodes include a 2016 328i and a 2017 330i built in **Rosslyn, South Africa**, and 5 Series sedans and a Z4 built in **Graz, Austria**. A WBS-coded 1999 Z3 M was built in **Greer, South Carolina**. Every WMW MINI starts with Germany's W, yet most decoded to **Oxford, England**. BMW's South Carolina plant, meanwhile, turns up under five prefixes: 5UX, 5YM, 4US, 5UM and WBS. To know where a BMW was built, read position 11 (page 9), not position 1.

CHAPTER 2 CONT.

POSITIONS 4–8: BMW'S VEHICLE DESCRIPTOR

Characters 4 through 8 say what the vehicle is. The federal VIN rule says what must be decipherable from them; BMW chooses the code, and rewrites it with each new generation.

What the VIN rule requires in positions 4–8

Vehicle type	What must be decipherable (49 CFR 565.15, Table I)
Passenger cars (3 Series, MINI Hardtop)	Make, line, series, body type, engine type, and all restraint devices and their location
MPVs (X models, MINI Countryman)	Make, line, series, body type, engine type and gross vehicle weight rating, plus restraint devices at 10,000 lb GVWR or less
Motorcycles (BMW Motorrad)	Make, type of motorcycle, line, engine type and net brake horsepower

Real BMW descriptors, decoded

WMI	VDS	What NHTSA's decoder returns
`WBA`	`8E9G5`	2016 BMW 328i sedan, 2.0 L 4-cylinder gasoline
`WBA`	`5R7C5`	2019 BMW 330i xDrive sedan, 2.0 L 4-cylinder, all-wheel drive
`5UX`	`CR6C5`	2019 BMW X5 xDrive40i SUV, 3.0 L 6-cylinder, all-wheel drive
`WBS`	`53AY0`	2021 BMW M3 sedan, 3.0 L 6-cylinder
`WBY`	`73AW0`	2022 BMW i4 eDrive40, battery electric, rear-wheel drive
`WMW`	`XP7C5`	2015 MINI Hardtop Cooper S, 2.0 L gasoline
`WB1`	`0J930`	2020 BMW R 1250 GS motorcycle, 1,254 cc twin

Same model, new code

Model	VDS by model year
330i xDrive	`8D9G5 (2017) → 5R7C5 (2019)`
330i	`5R1J0 (2020) → 69FF0 (2024)`
X5 xDrive35i	`ZV4C5 (2012) → KR0C5 (2015)`
X5 xDrive40i	`CR6C5 (2019) → 23EU0 (2024)`

A code chart from one generation is useless on the next, so decoders match by model year.

Position 7 dates the car

Since model year 2010 the rule requires a **letter** in position 7 on cars and light SUVs. Every 2010-or-later BMW and MINI car we decoded has one, and every earlier one has a digit.

What the descriptor leaves out

Options, packages and colors are not among the items the rule lists, and no decode in this guide returned them.

ONLY 10 CHARACTERS DECIDE THE DECODE

NHTSA's decoder reports a "vehicle descriptor" for each VIN, such as 5UXCR6C5*KL: positions 1–8, 10 and 11. The serial plays no part, so two X5s that differ only in their last six characters decode identically. Try yours at **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/bmw**.

POSITIONS 9 & 10: CHECK DIGIT AND MODEL YEAR

Every BMW VIN decoder starts by recalculating position 9. If the math fails, the VIN was mistyped or isn't genuine. Here is the calculation on our X5, 5UXCR6C57KLL12345.

Letter	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J	K	L	M	N	P	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	7	9	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Pos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
VIN	5	U	X	C	R	6	C	5	7	K	L	L	1	2	3	4	5
Value	5	4	7	3	9	6	3	5	–	2	3	3	1	2	3	4	5
Weight	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	10	0	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2
Product	40	28	42	15	36	18	6	50	0	18	24	21	6	10	12	12	10

Sum of products: **348**. Divide by 11: 348 = 31 × 11 + **7**. The remainder must equal position 9, and it does: 5UXCR6C5**7**KLL12345. A remainder of 10 is written as **X**, as on our 2021 430i, WBA53AP0**X**MCF12345 (sum 274 = 24 × 11 + 10).

What it catches: almost any single mistyped character, and most invented VINs. **What it doesn't:** a VIN copied from another real BMW, which passes perfectly. The check digit is a U.S. requirement, so a BMW built for another market may not pass it.

Position 10: the BMW VIN year chart

Code	7th = digit	7th = letter	Code	7th = digit	7th = letter	Code	7th = digit	7th = letter
A	1980	2010	L	1990	2020	Y	2000	2030
B	1981	2011	M	1991	2021	1	2001	2031
C	1982	2012	N	1992	2022	2	2002	2032
D	1983	2013	P	1993	2023	3	2003	2033
E	1984	2014	R	1994	2024	4	2004	2034
F	1985	2015	S	1995	2025	5	2005	2035
G	1986	2016	T	1996	2026	6	2006	2036
H	1987	2017	V	1997	2027	7	2007	2037
J	1988	2018	W	1998	2028	8	2008	2038
K	1989	2019	X	1999	2029	9	2009	2039

Never used in position 10: I, O, Q, U, Z and 0. The 7th-character rule covers passenger cars, and MPVs and trucks of 10,000 lb GVWR or less. It does not apply to motorcycles.

Examples: WBAAB5**4**06**H**9123456 has a digit in position 7, so H is **1987**. 3MW69F**F**07**R**8E12345 has a letter, so R is **2024**. The model year is BMW's designation, not the build date: the month and year of manufacture are on the door-area certification label.

POSITION 11: BMW PLANT CODES & THE SERIAL

The 11th character names the plant, in BMW's own code. These are the codes NHTSA's decoder returned for our VINs, next to what BMW Group says each plant builds today.

11th	Plant decoded	Seen on (model years)	BMW Group's own account
A, F, K	Munich, Germany	3 and 4 Series, M3, M4, i4 (2003–2024)	Builds 3 Series, 4 Series Gran Coupé, i4 and the new i3
B, C, D, G	Dingolfing, Germany	5, 7 and 8 Series, 4 Series, M4, M5, iX, i5, i7 (2003–2024)	Builds 4, 5, 7 and 8 Series and the iX
E, J, P, 5	Regensburg, Germany	3 Series and M3 (1995–2015); X1, X2 (2017–2023)	Builds the X1 and X2
V, 7	Leipzig, Germany	1 and 2 Series, i3, i8, 2013 X1; 2025 MINI Countryman	Builds 1 Series, 2 Series Gran Coupe and Active Tourer, MINI Countryman
L, 0, 9	Greer, South Carolina	X3 to X7, XM (2006–2024); Z3, Z4 (1999–2007)	Builds X3, X5, X6, X7 and XM
8	San Luis Potosí, Mexico	330i, 230i, M2 (2020–2024)	Builds mainly the 2 Series Coupé and M2
N	Rosslyn, South Africa	328i, 330i (2016–2017)	Builds the X3, including the plug-in hybrid
W	Graz, Austria	5 Series, Z4, 2004 X3, MINI Countryman and Paceman	Not on BMW Group's list of its own plants
T, 2	Oxford, England	MINI Hardtop, Convertible, Clubman (2003–2025)	Builds MINI Cooper 3-Door, 5-Door and Convertible
3	Born, Netherlands	MINI Convertible, Countryman (2016–2021)	Contract manufacturer VDL Nedcar (BMW, 2017)
Z, 6	Berlin, Germany	WB1 motorcycles (2014–2025)	Builds BMW Motorrad motorcycles
R · S	India · China	WB3 G 310 R · WB4 C 400 scooters	–

Codes are those returned for our example VINs. Codes get reused: our 1987 325 decoded “9” as Dingolfing, while 9 on a 2020s X model is Greer. NHTSA prints the Dutch plant as “BOM” or “BORN”.

Spartanburg or Greer?

Both. BMW calls its U.S. factory **Plant Spartanburg**, and the plant's own page gives its address as 1400 Highway 101 South, **Greer**, South Carolina. NHTSA's decoder printed “Greer” for most of our South Carolina VINs and “Spartanburg” for a 2003 Z4. BMW says the plant has assembled more than 7.3 million vehicles since 1994.

Why the plant matters

The new-car window sticker must state the final assembly point (15 U.S.C. § 1232); position 11 gives the same answer years later. One model can come from several plants: our 330i decodes came from Rosslyn, Munich and San Luis Potosí.

Positions 12–17: the serial

The last six characters are the production sequence number. On cars and light SUVs the rule requires the final five to be digits. Together with the plant code they form the “last seven”.

CHAPTER 3

25 BMW CARS, DECODED

Every row was decoded in November 2026 with NHTSA's vPIC decoder and came back “VIN decoded clean”. Serial numbers are illustrative; the check digits are valid.

VIN	Year & model	Engine & drive	Body · plant
WBAAB5406H9123456	1987 BMW 325 / 325eS	2.7 L 6-cyl gas	2-door sedan · Dingolfing
4USCH9346YLF12345	2000 BMW Z3 2.3	2.5 L 6-cyl gas	Convertible · Greer, SC
WBAEV33473KL12345	2003 BMW 325i	6-cyl gas	Sedan · Munich
WBADT63443CK12345	2003 BMW 530iA	6-cyl gas	Sedan · Dingolfing
WBANU53568CT12345	2008 BMW 528i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Sedan · Dingolfing
WBAPH7C56BE123456	2011 BMW 328i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Sedan · Regensburg
WBAUP7C57BVK12345	2011 BMW 128i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Coupe · Leipzig
WBA3A5C50DF123456	2013 BMW 328i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas	Sedan · Munich
WBA3D3C55EK123456	2014 BMW 328d	2.0 L 4-cyl diesel	Sedan · Munich
WBA8E9G58GNT12345	2016 BMW 328i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas	Sedan · Rosslyn, South Africa
WBA7E2C57GG123456	2016 BMW 740i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Sedan · Dingolfing
WBA8D9G59HNU12345	2017 BMW 330i xDrive	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD	Sedan · Rosslyn, South Africa
WBAJA5C59JWA12345	2018 BMW 530i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, automatic	Sedan · Graz, Austria
WBA2J1C54JVD12345	2018 BMW 230i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas	Coupe · Leipzig
WBA5R7C53KAJ12345	2019 BMW 330i xDrive	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Sedan · Munich
WBAJE5C53KWW12345	2019 BMW 540i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, RWD, automatic	Sedan · Graz, Austria
WBABC4C56KBU12345	2019 BMW 850i xDrive	4.4 L 8-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Coupe · Dingolfing
WBAHF3C53KWW12345	2019 BMW Z4 sDrive30i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, RWD, automatic	Convertible · Graz, Austria
3MW5R1J01L8B12345	2020 BMW 330i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, RWD, automatic	Sedan · San Luis Potosí, Mexico
WBA5U7C09LFH12345	2020 BMW M340i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, automatic	Sedan · Munich
WBA73AK00L7F12345	2020 BMW 228i xDrive Gran Coupe	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD	Sedan · Leipzig
WBA53AP0XMCF12345	2021 BMW 430i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, automatic	Coupe · Dingolfing
WBA33EJ0XPCK12345	2023 BMW 760i xDrive	4.4 L 8-cyl gas, AWD	Sedan · Dingolfing
3MW69FF07R8E12345	2024 BMW 330i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas	Sedan · San Luis Potosí, Mexico
WBA63AV02RFR12345	2024 BMW 430i Gran Coupe	2.0 L 4-cyl gas	Sedan · Munich

Model names are printed as NHTSA returns them (it files the four-door Gran Coupes as sedans). Details left out were not returned by the decoder.

YOUR TURN

Decode your own BMW the same way, free, at **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/bmw**.

CHAPTER 4

BMW X MODELS: DECODING X1 TO X7

Many BMW SUVs carry an American VIN. BMW assembles the X3, X5, X6, X7 and XM at its South Carolina plant, and those decodes start with 5UX or 5YM; our recent X1 and X2 decodes came from Regensburg, Germany, and start with WBX.

VIN	Year & model	Engine & drive	Plant
WBXPA93454WA12345	2004 BMW X3 3.0i	6-cyl	Graz, Austria
5UXFA13526LY12345	2006 BMW X5 3.0i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Greer, SC
5UXZV4C58CL123456	2012 BMW X5 xDrive35i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD	Greer, SC
WBAVL1C51DVR12345	2013 BMW X1 xDrive28i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD	Leipzig
5UXKR0C50F0K12345	2015 BMW X5 xDrive35i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD	Greer, SC
5UXKS4C55F0N12345	2015 BMW X5 xDrive35d	3.0 L 6-cyl diesel, AWD	Greer, SC
WBXHT3C39H5F12345	2017 BMW X1 xDrive28i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Regensburg
WBXYJ5C3XJEF12345	2018 BMW X2 xDrive28i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Regensburg
5UXCR6C57KLL12345	2019 BMW X5 xDrive40i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
5UXCW2C56KL012345	2019 BMW X7 xDrive40i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
5UXTY9C04L9D12345	2020 BMW X3 M40i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
5UX2V1C04L9B12345	2020 BMW X4 xDrive30i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
5UXCY6C03L9B12345	2020 BMW X6 xDrive40i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
5UXCX6C00M9D12345	2021 BMW X7 M50i	4.4 L 8-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
5UX53DP06N9J12345	2022 BMW X3 xDrive30i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Greer, SC
WBX73EF03P5V12345	2023 BMW X1 xDrive28i	2.0 L 4-cyl gas, AWD	Regensburg
5UX23EU09R9S12345	2024 BMW X5 xDrive40i	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD	Greer, SC

What the X decodes show

- **The plant letter moved.** Greer was L on our 2006–2019 X models, 0 (zero) on 2015 ones and 9 from 2020 on.
- **Not every X is a 5UX.** Our 2013 X1 is a WBA car from Leipzig; the 2004 X3 is a WBX built in Graz.
- **Weight class is in the decode.** NHTSA returned GVWR Class 2E (6,001–7,000 lb) for the X5 and Class 1D (5,001–6,000 lb) for the X3.
- **Diesel and plug-in versions decode by name** (xDrive35d, xDrive45e), with the fuel type to match.

xDrive, sDrive and a decoder slip

Every xDrive model in this guide decoded as all-wheel drive, and our sDrive Z4 as rear-wheel drive. But for two 2018–2019 X3 patterns NHTSA returned the name “sDrive30i” together with all-wheel drive, a contradiction in the filed data, so those two are not in the table. When a decode contradicts itself, check the badge and the window sticker, and decode with a second source.

BMW calls these models Sports Activity Vehicles; NHTSA files them as multipurpose passenger vehicles. Either way the VIN works the same. Check one at **carcheckervin.com/bmw-vin-lookup**.

CHAPTER 5

BMW M VIN DECODER

A genuine M car is the easiest BMW to confirm by VIN, because BMW M has its own manufacturer entry. NHTSA lists WBS under BMW M GmbH, and our M SUVs decoded under 5YM.

VIN	Year & model	Engine & drive	Body · plant
WBSBF9326SEH12345	1995 BMW M3	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Coupe · Regensburg
WBSCK933XXLC12345	1999 BMW Z3 M	3.2 L 6-cyl gas	Convertible · Greer, SC
WBSBL93402JR12345	2002 BMW M3	3.2 L 6-cyl gas	Coupe · Regensburg
5UMBT93567LE12345	2007 BMW Z4 M	6-cyl gas	Convertible · Greer, SC
WBS3C9C58FP123456	2015 BMW M3	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Sedan · Regensburg
WBS4Y9C50JAC12345	2018 BMW M4	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, manual	Coupe · Munich
WBSJF0C58JB123456	2018 BMW M5	4.4 L 8-cyl gas, automatic	Sedan · Dingolfing
5YMTS0C04L9B12345	2020 BMW X3 M	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, automatic	SUV · Greer, SC
5YMJU0C02L9B12345	2020 BMW X5 M	4.4 L 8-cyl gas, automatic	SUV · Greer, SC
WBS53AY03MFK12345	2021 BMW M3	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, RWD	Sedan · Munich
WBS83CH06MCF12345	2021 BMW M5 / M5 Competition	4.4 L 8-cyl gas, automatic	Sedan · Dingolfing
WBS43AZ00NCJ12345	2022 BMW M4 Competition xDrive	3.0 L 6-cyl gas, AWD, automatic	Coupe · Dingolfing
3MF13DM00P8D12345	2023 BMW M2	3.0 L 6-cyl gas	Coupe · San Luis Potosí
5YM23CS04P9P12345	2023 BMW XM	4.4 L 8-cyl	SUV · Greer, SC

Is it a real M? Four VIN checks

1. **The decode names an M model.** M3, M4, M5, X5 M: the model field says so. A badge on the trunk doesn't count; the decode does.
2. **The prefix fits.** Every M3, M4 and M5 we decoded was WBS, and every M SUV was 5YM. Two exceptions show why you decode instead of guessing: our 2023 M2 is 3MF and our 2007 Z4 M is 5UM.
3. **An M in the name is not an M car.** The M340i, X3 M40i and X7 M50i in this guide decoded under the ordinary WBA and 5UX prefixes, not WBS or 5YM. Decode before you pay an M-car price.
4. **The engine matches.** The decoder returns cylinders and displacement. A car sold as an M5 whose VIN decodes to a four-cylinder is a 5 Series with badges.

M prices, new and used

BMW USA lists the 2027 M4 Coupe from $82,200, the M4 Competition from $86,600 and the Competition xDrive from $91,700 (starting MSRP, November 2026). Current M4, M3 and M2 pricing is tracked at **carcheckervin.com/bmw-m4-price**.

Track use and the warranty

BMW's 2026 warranty booklet says the new-vehicle warranty is void if the vehicle “has been used in any competitive event”. No VIN decode shows that. On a used M car, add an inspection to the history report.

CHAPTER 6

BMW I, PLUG-IN HYBRID & DIESEL VINS

Electric and plug-in BMWs use the same 17-character VIN as any other car. What changes is the decode: an electrification level instead of, or alongside, cylinders and liters.

VIN	Year & model	What the decoder returns	Plant
WBY1Z4C57EV123456	2014 BMW i3 Range Extender	Plug-in hybrid: electric + 0.6 L 2-cyl gasoline	Leipzig
WBY2Z2C54FV123456	2015 BMW i8	Plug-in hybrid: electric + 1.5 L 3-cyl gasoline	Leipzig
WBA8E1C50HK123456	2017 BMW 330e	Plug-in hybrid: electric + 2.0 L 4-cyl gasoline	Munich
WBAJA9C59JB123456	2018 BMW 530e	Plug-in hybrid: electric + 2.0 L 4-cyl gasoline	Dingolfing
5UXTA6C08M9G12345	2021 BMW X5 xDrive45e	Plug-in hybrid: electric + 3.0 L 6-cyl, AWD	Greer, SC
WBY8P2C09M7J12345	2021 BMW i3	Battery electric (BEV), RWD, 1-speed automatic	Leipzig
WBY73AW01NFG12345	2022 BMW i4 eDrive40	Battery electric (BEV), RWD	Munich
WB523CF00PCK12345	2023 BMW iX xDrive50	Battery electric (BEV), AWD	Dingolfing
WBY53EJ0XPCM12345	2023 BMW i7 xDrive60	Battery electric (BEV), AWD	Dingolfing
WBY33FK03RCR12345	2024 BMW i5 eDrive40	Battery electric (BEV)	Dingolfing
WBA3D3C55EK123456	2014 BMW 328d	Diesel, 2.0 L 4-cyl	Munich
5UXKS4C55F0N12345	2015 BMW X5 xDrive35d	Diesel, 3.0 L 6-cyl, AWD	Greer, SC

NHTSA prints the iX trim as “xDrive50i”. For every battery-electric row the decoder returned no cylinders or displacement, which is correct: there is no engine.

How to read an electrified decode

- **Primary fuel “Electric”** with level **BEV** means battery only.
- **Level “PHEV”** with a secondary fuel of gasoline means a plug-in hybrid. The engine fields describe the gasoline engine.
- **The prefix won't tell you.** Every WBY and WB5 VIN we decoded was a BMW i model, but the 330e and 530e are WBA cars and the X5 xDrive45e is a 5UX.
- **The name helps.** BMW's 2026 booklet says an **i** prefix marks a battery-electric model and an **e** suffix a plug-in hybrid. Diesels carry a **d** and decode with the fuel “Diesel”.

Battery warranty by model year

For 2026 models, BMW of North America warrants the high-voltage battery of its electric and plug-in hybrid models against defects for **8 years or 100,000 miles**, whichever comes first. Battery-electric models are also covered for capacity loss below **70 percent** state of health over the same period.

The VIN's model year tells you which booklet applies, not when coverage started or what the battery's state of health is today. BMW defines state of health as current capacity compared with original capacity; ask the seller for a BMW Center reading.

A used electric BMW needs the same paperwork check

BMW's battery warranty is void if the vehicle has been declared a total loss or sold for salvage. A decode can't show that; a history report with title brands and insurance total-loss records can: carcheckervin.com/vehicle-history-report.

CHAPTER 7

MINI VIN DECODER

MINI is a BMW Group brand, and a **MINI VIN decoder** reads BMW's filings. NHTSA lists both prefixes, `WMW` for cars and `WMZ` for the Countryman SUV, under BMW AG in Germany, although our MINIs were built in four countries.

VIN	Year, model & series	Engine & drive	Plant
`WMWRE33493TD12345`	2003 MINI Cooper S	–	Oxford, England
`WMWRH33526TG12345`	2006 MINI Cooper S Convertible	–	Oxford, England
`WMWMF33509TW12345`	2009 MINI Cooper	1.6 L gas	Oxford, England
`WMWZC5C51CWL12345`	2012 MINI Countryman Cooper S ALL4	1.6 L gas, AWD	Graz, Austria
`WMWSS5C57DWN12345`	2013 MINI Paceman Cooper S	1.6 L gas	Graz, Austria
`WMWXM5C56ET123456`	2014 MINI Hardtop Cooper	1.5 L gas	Oxford, England
`WMWXP7C55F2A12345`	2015 MINI Hardtop Cooper S (3-door)	2.0 L gas	Oxford, England
`WMWXU3C5XF2B12345`	2015 MINI Hardtop Cooper S (5-door)	2.0 L gas	Oxford, England
`WMWLN5C59G2B12345`	2016 MINI Clubman Cooper	1.5 L gas	Oxford, England
`WMWWG5C50G3A12345`	2016 MINI Cooper Convertible	1.5 L gas	Born, Netherlands
`WMZYS7C3XH3B12345`	2017 MINI Countryman Cooper	1.5 L gas	Born, Netherlands
`WMZ83BR03M3M12345`	2021 MINI Countryman Cooper S ALL4	2.0 L gas, AWD	Born, Netherlands
`WMW13DJ09N2R12345`	2022 MINI Hardtop Cooper SE	Battery electric, FWD	Oxford, England
`WMW23GD01S2A12345`	2025 MINI Hardtop Cooper S	2.0 L gas	Oxford, England
`WMZ23GA09S7A12345`	2025 MINI Countryman S ALL4	2.0 L gas	Leipzig, Germany

Four plants, four codes

Position 11 sorts MINIs by factory. T (through 2015) and 2 decode to **Oxford**, which BMW Group calls the home of the MINI Cooper 3-Door, 5-Door and Convertible. 3 is **Born, Netherlands**, where contract manufacturer VDL Nedcar built the Convertible and, from November 2016, the Countryman. `W` is **Graz, Austria**, on our 2012 Countryman and 2013 Paceman. 7 on the 2025 Countryman is **Leipzig**, where BMW Group builds it today. NHTSA files the three- and five-door hatchbacks as “Hardtop” and puts the version (Cooper, Cooper S, Cooper SE) in the series field.

MINI recalls and warranty

MINI USA's recall lookup at miniusa.com asks for the full 17 characters. Its 2025 warranty booklet gives new MINIs a limited warranty of **4 years or 50,000 miles** and 12 years of rust-perforation coverage.

> **Cross-check the cylinders.** One MINI decode returned a cylinder count that didn't match other years of the same 1.5-liter engine, so this table prints displacement only, and a dash where none was returned.

FREE MINI VIN DECODER

Decode any MINI at **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/mini**. In Canada, use **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder-canada/mini**.

CHAPTER 8

BMW MOTORCYCLE VIN DECODER

BMW Motorrad bikes carry a 17-character VIN under the same federal rule as cars, with three prefixes of their own. A **BMW motorcycle VIN decoder** returns the model, engine size and plant.

VIN	Year, model (series)	Engine	Type · plant
WB10A1107EZ123456	2014 BMW R 1200 GS (K50)	1,170 cc, 2-cyl	Dual-sport · Berlin
WB10A1606EZ123456	2014 BMW R nineT (K21)	1,170 cc, 2-cyl	Street · Berlin
WB30G1103JR812345	2018 BMW G 310 R (K02)	313 cc, 1-cyl	Street · Chennai, India
WB40C1906KS812345	2019 BMW C 400 X (K09)	350 cc, 1-cyl	Street · China
WB10J9308LZJ12345	2020 BMW R 1250 GS (K50)	1,254 cc, 2-cyl	Dual-sport · Berlin
WB10J5309LZF12345	2020 BMW R 1250 GS Adventure (K51)	1,254 cc, 2-cyl	Dual-sport · Berlin
WB10J7300LZG12345	2020 BMW R 1250 R (K53)	1,254 cc, 2-cyl	Street · Berlin
WB10L2308M6E12345	2021 BMW R 18 Classic (K34)	1,802 cc, 2-cyl	Street · Berlin
WB10E2306N6G12345	2022 BMW S 1000 RR (K67)	999 cc, 4-cyl	Sport · Berlin
WB30G4303NRA12345	2022 BMW G 310 R (K03)	313 cc, 1-cyl	Street · Chennai, India
WB40C6306PS912345	2023 BMW C 400 GT (K08)	350 cc, 1-cyl	Street · China
WB10P2307S6K12345	2025 BMW S 1000 RR (K67)	999 cc, 4-cyl	Berlin

Series codes in brackets are returned by NHTSA's decoder. It prints the WB4 plant city as “Loncin”, with China as the country.

Three prefixes

NHTSA lists WB1, WB3 and WB4 under “BMW AG Motorcycles”. In our decodes WB1 is the Berlin-built range, WB3 the G 310 R from India and WB4 the C 400 scooters from China. The Berlin plant, which BMW Group says has built motorcycles since 1969 and turns out up to 900 a day, appeared as Z on our 2014–2020 examples and as 6 on our 2021–2025 ones.

What differs from a car VIN

- Positions 4–8 must identify the type of motorcycle, line, engine type and net brake horsepower.
- Position 7 does **not** date the bike. Our 2014 R 1200 GS has a digit there. Rely on position 10 and the title.
- Only the last four characters must be digits, not five.

Where the VIN is

Federal rules put a motorcycle's certification label, which carries the VIN, on a permanent part of the bike as close as practicable to where the steering post meets the handlebars (49 CFR 567.4). Decode the VIN from the bike and match it against the title before you buy.

Recalls and warranty

BMW Motorrad USA's recall lookup at bmwmotorcycles.com takes the full 17 or the last 7 characters; recalls issued before 1999 are not included. Its 2025 warranty booklet covers new motorcycles and scooters for **36 months or 36,000 miles**.

MOTORCYCLES

CarCheckerVIN's motorcycle decoder is at **carcheckervin.com/motorcycle-vin-decoder**.

Before you buy a used BMW bike, decode the VIN from the frame, confirm that the model, engine size and year agree with the title and the bike itself, then run the VIN through BMW Motorrad's recall lookup and a history check.

CHAPTER 9

BMW OPTIONS & BUILD SHEET BY VIN

This is the question behind most BMW VIN searches: what did this car leave the factory with? The honest answer is that the 17 characters don't say. Options live in BMW's build record.

What a “BMW VIN decoder options” result really is

Search for **BMW options by VIN** and most free tools return some version of the list below. It is what NHTSA's decoder holds for our 2019 X5 xDrive40i pattern. Read the right-hand column carefully.

Equipment field	NHTSA's decoder returns
Anti-lock brakes, stability control, traction control	**Standard**
Forward collision warning, lane departure warning, blind spot monitoring, pedestrian automatic emergency braking	**Standard**
Adaptive cruise control, lane keeping system, park assist, adaptive driving beam	**Optional**: offered on the model, not confirmed on this car
Air bags	Front and knee, first row; side and curtain, both rows
Seating, transmission, tire-pressure monitoring	5 seats in 2 rows; 8-speed automatic; direct TPMS

That is useful: it confirms the model's safety equipment and powertrain. It is not a list of what one particular X5 was ordered with. Packages, wheels, upholstery and individual options are not in the VIN or in NHTSA's data.

Where a BMW’s real build record is

BMW’s own records

BMW keeps the factory record against each chassis number. For historic models it says so in public: since 2024 BMW Group Classic has offered a **digital birth certificate** with the chassis and engine numbers, production and delivery dates and, for vehicles from the 1980s onward, the special equipment and transmission number. Owners order it with a form on bmwgroup-classic.com.

A BMW Center or BMW itself

For a modern BMW, ask a BMW Center for the equipment record on the VIN, or contact BMW of North America's Customer Relations at 1-800-831-1117.

The original window sticker

Federal law requires the new-car label to price every optional accessory separately, which makes the original sticker the best public record of a BMW's options (Chapter 10).

The car itself

An option the first owner paid for is physically there: the seats, the roof, the wheels, the driver-assistance buttons. Walk around the car with the seller's list. Missing equipment can point to repairs; extra equipment can be a later retrofit. Then check the history.

WHAT OUR BMW PAGES DO

CarCheckerVIN's **BMW options by VIN** and **BMW build sheet by VIN** pages run the VIN through the decoder and lay the result out as a spec sheet: model, body, engine, plant, model year and the safety equipment on file. They are free and good for confirming identity. They do not return BMW's own option-code list, package names or prices; no VIN decode can.

CHAPTER 10

BMW WINDOW STICKER BY VIN

The window sticker is the one document that spells out a BMW's options with a price beside each. What you get when you search for a **BMW window sticker by VIN** depends on where it comes from.

What the label must show

The Automobile Information Disclosure Act of 1958 requires a label, known as the Monroney label, on every new car offered for sale. Under 15 U.S.C. § 1232 it must disclose:

- Make, model and identification number
- The final assembly point
- The dealer the car was delivered to
- The manufacturer's suggested retail price
- The price of each optional accessory not in the base price
- The transportation charge to the dealer, and the total
- NHTSA crash-test ratings, where the model has them

A manufacturer that willfully fails to affix it can be fined up to $1,000 per car, and anyone who willfully removes or alters it before the car reaches its first buyer faces a fine of up to $1,000, up to a year in prison, or both (15 U.S.C. § 1233). After that first sale nobody is required to keep it.

Three things sold as a “BMW window sticker by VIN”

	The original label	A paid reproduction	A free replica
Where from	The first owner's or selling dealer's files	Third-party label services that hold data for that VIN	A decoder's spec sheet, laid out like a label
MSRP, options, packages	Yes	When the service has that VIN's data	No
Model, engine, plant	Yes	Yes	Yes, from the VIN decode
Cost	Free if the seller kept it	A fee; coverage varies by model year	Free

WHAT OUR BMW STICKER PAGE DOES

carcheckervin.com/bmw-window-sticker-by-vin explains where BMW stickers can be found and offers a free replica you can complete yourself. The replica is filled from decoded VIN data, so it carries the model, engine, body, plant and model year. It is not BMW's original sticker and does not contain the factory MSRP, option list or colors.

The “base price” some decoders show

NHTSA's decoder returns a base-price field for some BMW patterns: $60,700 for our 2019 X5 xDrive40i and $73,900 for the 2019 X7 xDrive40i. That is a starting price filed for the model, not the total on one car's sticker. It leaves out every option and the transportation charge, and for many patterns it is blank.

How to get the real one

Ask the seller for the original, and check that the VIN printed on it matches the car. If the car is on a BMW dealer's lot, ask for the equipment record on the VIN. Before paying a label service, confirm it has data for that exact VIN and model year, and look at a sample first.

CHAPTER 11

BMW PAINT CODE BY VIN

You can't read a BMW's color from its VIN. Color is not something the federal rule asks a VIN to identify, and none of the VINs decoded for this guide returned a paint, color or upholstery field.

So where is the paint code?

On the car

The paint code is printed on the car, not in the VIN. We could not find a BMW-published list of label positions to check for this guide, so we don't print one here. CarCheckerVIN's BMW paint page walks through where to look: **carcheckervin.com/paint-code-lookup/bmw**.

Not from a decoder

A search for **BMW paint code by VIN** only works where someone holds BMW's own record for that car. A free decoder holds what BMW filed with NHTSA, and color is not part of it.

Through BMW's parts channel

BMW's U.S. parts shop sells genuine touch-up paint sticks and asks for your VIN before you order, "the best way to ensure the product fit your BMW", and says your dealer can then use the VIN to identify the parts you need. Ask a BMW Center parts desk to match touch-up paint to your VIN the same way.

On the paperwork

If the seller has the original window sticker or order confirmation, check whether it names the exterior color, and compare that with the car.

Why the paint code matters on a used BMW

A color label that is missing, painted over or different from the car's actual color is a reason to ask questions, because a respray can be a sign of body repairs. Pair what you see with the records: a vehicle history report shows insurance total-loss records, title brands and auction sales with photos, which can show how the car looked when it was sold at auction.

What is and isn't in a BMW VIN

Detail	In the VIN?	Where to get it
Model year, assembly plant	Yes, positions 10 and 11	Any BMW VIN decoder
Model, body, engine	Yes, positions 4–8	Any BMW VIN decoder
Options and packages	No	BMW's build record; the original window sticker
Paint code and color name	No	The color label on the car; a BMW Center parts desk with the VIN
Build month and year	No	The certification label in the driver's door area
Tire size and pressures	No	The tire information placard
Title, mileage, liens, auctions	No	A vehicle history report (Chapter 14)

Even labels get recalled: in May 2024 BMW recalled certain 2024–2025 X5 xDrive40i vehicles because the tire placard could show the wrong tire size and pressure (NHTSA campaign 24V327000).

CHAPTER 12

BMW RECALL CHECK BY VIN

A **BMW recall check by VIN** is free, takes a minute and belongs on every used BMW, because recall repairs cost the owner nothing. There are two official lookups; run both.

OFFICIAL · FREE

NHTSA recall lookup

At nhtsa.gov/recalls you can search by VIN or license plate. It does not show recalls more than 15 years old unless the manufacturer offers more, and a very new recall may not be loaded yet. Recall repairs are free at franchised dealers.

BMW OF NORTH AMERICA · FREE

BMW USA recall lookup

BMW USA's "Safety and Emission Recalls" page checks one VIN. BMW notes that recalls issued before 1999 are not included, and that a completed repair can take up to 30 days to show. Recall hotline: (800) 525-7417.

MINI USA and BMW Motorrad USA run the same kind of lookup on their own sites. For an imported BMW, BMW USA points owners to its global recall site.

What recent BMW recalls look like

CarCheckerVIN's recall data includes a sample of NHTSA campaigns for the 2022–2024 X5, X7 and M3, pulled in September 2026: 17 campaigns. Three of them:

NHTSA no.	Filed	What BMW reported	Vehicles named
26V422000	Jul 2026	Brake system may malfunction, causing a loss of power brake assist	Certain 2023–2025 BMW models, 2025 MINI Cooper S and Countryman S ALL4, 2024 Rolls-Royce Spectre
24V138000	Feb 2024	Instrument panel may not have been manufactured properly, affecting air bag deployment	Certain 2024 X5 sDrive40i, X5 xDrive40i and X7 xDrive40i
23V821000	Dec 2023	Transmission oil can leak into the control unit; dealers replace the mechatronics module	Certain 2023 models including BMW 3, 4, 5 and 8 Series and the Toyota GR Supra

What the sample shows

- **One campaign, several brands.** BMW of North America files for BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, and one campaign names a Toyota model that NHTSA decodes under BMW AG's WZ1 prefix.
- **"Certain" means by VIN.** A campaign covers a production range, not every car of that model. All 17 notices printed BMW customer service at 1-800-525-7417.

Before you buy

- Run the VIN at NHTSA and on BMW's own lookup.
- Ask the seller for the repair invoice for each recall shown as open.
- Book any open recall at a BMW Center; the repair is free.

In Canada, Transport Canada's Vehicle Recalls Database listed 304 BMW light-vehicle campaigns in its August 2026 export, 166 of them since 2016.

FREE BMW RECALL CHECK

CarCheckerVIN's free preview shows how many open recalls it finds for a VIN, next to counts of damage and auction records: **carcheckervin.com/bmw-recall-check**.

CHAPTER 13

BMW WARRANTY CHECK BY VIN

A **BMW warranty check by VIN** has two halves. The VIN gives the model year, which tells you which warranty booklet applies. Only BMW has the other half: the date the clock started.

What BMW covers, in its own words

Coverage	Term	Source
New Vehicle Limited Warranty	4 years / 50,000 miles	BMW NA, 2026 booklet
High-voltage battery, electric and plug-in hybrid	8 years / 100,000 miles	BMW NA, 2026 booklet
Battery capacity below 70%, battery-electric models	8 years / 100,000 miles	BMW NA, 2026 booklet
Rust perforation	12 years / unlimited miles	BMW NA, 2026 booklet
BMW Ultimate Care scheduled maintenance	36 months / 36,000 miles	BMW NA, 2026 booklet
BMW Certified pre-owned protection plan	1 year / unlimited miles after the new-vehicle warranty ends	BMW USA, Certified page
MINI New Vehicle Limited Warranty	4 years / 50,000 miles	MINI USA, 2025 booklet
BMW Motorrad motorcycles and scooters	36 months / 36,000 miles	BMW Motorrad USA, 2025 booklet

Each term ends at the time or the mileage, whichever comes first. Terms are for the model years shown and for U.S.-specification vehicles; other model years have their own booklets on BMW's owner pages.

When the clock starts

BMW's booklet says coverage begins “on the date of first retail sale or the date the vehicle is first placed into service as a sales demonstrator, Aftersales Mobility Program (AMP) Vehicle or company vehicle, whichever is earlier.” That in-service date is not in the VIN.

It follows the car

The warranty is given “to the first retail purchaser, and each subsequent purchaser”. Buying used does not reset or cancel it.

What ends it early

The same booklet says the warranty “shall be null and void” if:

- the vehicle has been declared a **total loss** or sold for **salvage**;
- the **odometer** has been replaced or altered and the true mileage cannot be determined;
- the **VIN** is altered or cannot be determined;
- the vehicle has been used in any competitive event.

The first three are exactly what a history report checks.

How to check: decode the VIN for the model year; ask a BMW Center for the in-service date and compare it and the odometer with each term; then run a history report for total-loss records, salvage brands and odometer readings. For a Certified car, get the protection plan in writing: BMW limits the program to cars 5 years old or newer with under 60,000 miles.

BMW WARRANTY & LEMON CHECKS

Start at **carcheckervin.com/bmw-warranty-check**. BMW's booklet also describes a dispute settlement program for lemon-law claims in several states; our BMW lemon page is at **carcheckervin.com/lemon-check/brand/bmw**.

CHAPTER 14

BMW VIN CHECK: WHAT TO RUN BEFORE YOU BUY

A clean decode proves only that the VIN is real. A salvage-titled 5 Series with a rolled-back odometer decodes exactly like a clean one. A **BMW VIN check** looks at the records.

Check	Cost	Shows	Doesn't show
BMW VIN decode	Free	Year, model, engine, drive, plant	Anything after the factory
NHTSA and BMW recall lookups	Free	Open safety recalls on that VIN	Title, mileage, damage
NICB VINCheck	Free; 5 searches per 24 hours	Stolen-and-not-recovered and total-loss records from participating insurers	NICB says it is not a full history report
CarCheckerVIN free preview	Free	How many damage records, auction records, open recalls and photos exist	The records themselves
CarCheckerVIN full report	$14.99	Title records and brands, NMVTIS title records, odometer readings, owner count, total-loss records, lien and impound records, auction sales with photos, service records, recalls, specs, market value	Records no source has reported

- **A title event can cancel the warranty.** BMW voids coverage on a vehicle declared a total loss or sold for salvage (Chapter 13).
- **BMW checks history itself.** For its Certified program BMW says it reviews each car's CARFAX or AutoCheck report, and accepts only cars 5 years old or newer with under 60,000 miles.
- **Mileage fraud is common.** NHTSA estimates that more than 450,000 vehicles are sold each year with false odometer readings, and federal odometer disclosure is not required for a vehicle 20 years old or older, or of model year 2010 or older.

The seven-step BMW VIN check

1. **Read the VIN from the car.** The windshield and the door-area label must match each other and the title.
2. **Decode it.** Year, model, engine, drive and plant should match the ad. An “M3” that decodes as a 330i is a 330i.
3. **Check recalls** at NHTSA and on BMW's own lookup.
4. **Run NICB VINCheck** for theft and insurer total-loss records.
5. **Look at the free preview** at **carcheckervin.com/vin-check** to see whether damage or auction records exist.
6. **Buy the full report** on the cars that pass: $14.99, or less in a pack.
7. **Inspect the winner.** Have an independent shop look it over, and ask a BMW Center for the in-service date.

BMW VIN LOOKUP

Decode and preview any BMW at **carcheckervin.com/bmw-vin-lookup**, see what a full report contains at **carcheckervin.com/vehicle-history-report**, and compare packs at **carcheckervin.com/pricing**. Model-year pages such as **the 2018 BMW 3 Series** collect NHTSA complaint and recall data.

CHAPTER 15

CARFAX BMW REPORTS, COMPARED

Search for **Carfax BMW** and you find two things: Carfax's own report on a BMW VIN, and BMW dealers offering a free Carfax. Here is how it compares with cheaper and free options.

CARFAX BMW REPORT

Carfax

A Carfax report on a BMW is a paid vehicle history report, widely quoted at **$44.99** for a single report. Its strength is service records, and it also offers a license-plate search. Carfax's Buyback Guarantee pays when a report missed a DMV-issued title brand; it does not cover accidents, it has deadlines, and the payout is capped.

FREE CARFAX ON A BMW

Dealer listings and BMW Certified

Many dealers include a free Carfax with a listing, because the dealer pays for it. BMW's Certified program goes further: BMW says each car's CARFAX or AutoCheck report is reviewed during certification, and lists a vehicle history report "provided at no cost" among the benefits. (AutoCheck is Experian's report, known for auction data and the AutoCheck Score.) Ask for it before you buy your own. AAA Premier members can also get one free Carfax a year by phone; Classic and Plus members get a discount that varies by club.

CARCHECKERVIN.COM

CarCheckerVIN

A free BMW decode and a free preview of record counts, then a full report for **$14.99** with title records and state title brands, NMVTIS title records, odometer readings, owner count, insurance total-loss records, lien and impound records, auction sales with photos, service records, open recalls and a market value estimate. See how the decoders compare at **carcheckervin.com/carfax-vin-decoder**.

	Carfax	CarCheckerVIN	Free official tools
Price	$44.99 a report (widely quoted)	$14.99; 3 for $35.99	Free
Best at	Service records	Title brands, NMVTIS title records, auction photos, liens	Recalls (NHTSA, BMW); theft and total loss (NICB)
NMVTIS title data	Not available to consumers through Carfax, per the U.S. DOJ, which runs NMVTIS	Includes NMVTIS title records	–

1. **Decode every BMW free** and drop any whose year, model or engine doesn't match the ad.
2. **Run the free checks:** recalls, NICB VINCheck and the CarCheckerVIN preview.
3. **Buy $14.99 reports** on the two or three cars that pass. A 5-pack ($54.99) costs less than two Carfax reports.
4. **Ask the dealer for the Carfax** on your final choice, and compare it with the service invoices.

CHAPTER 16

BMW VIN ERRORS, IMPORTS & BULK DECODING

When a decoder complains about a BMW VIN it is usually telling you something useful. These are the answers NHTSA's decoder gave when we fed it broken BMW VINs on purpose in November 2026.

What we entered	NHTSA's answer	What to do
Our X5 VIN with the last digit changed	Code 1: “Check Digit (9th position) does not calculate properly”. It still named the X5.	Re-read the VIN from the car. One wrong character is the usual cause.
A 2015 X5 VIN with the letter O typed for its two zeros	Code 400: “Invalid Characters Present”, pointing at positions 6 and 11	Replace O with 0. No VIN contains I, O or Q.
A VIN with the last character missing	Code 6: “Incomplete VIN”	Count the characters. There must be 17.
Only the last seven characters	Codes 6, 7 and 11: incomplete, no registered manufacturer, no valid model year	Enter the full VIN.
The letter I in position 10	Code 11: “Incorrect Model Year”	Position 10 never uses I, O, Q, U, Z or 0.
A 2001-coded VIN whose pattern is not on file	Code 8: “No detailed data available currently”	Decode with a second source, or ask a BMW Center.
A descriptor NHTSA doesn't recognize	Code 14: “Unable to provide information for some of the characters in the VIN”	Check positions 4–8 against the car.

Zero or letter O? A real BMW trap

BMW's South Carolina plant code was `0` (zero) on our 2015 X5 decodes, and those VINs have more zeros nearby: `5UXKR0C50F0K12345`. Typed with a letter O, the VIN fails at once. If a BMW VIN won't decode, check every O-shaped character first; it is always a zero.

Imported and Canadian BMWs

A BMW built for another market may not follow the U.S. VIN rule, so it can fail the check digit and decode only in part. Three facts to know:

- BMW of North America's warranties “apply only to U.S.-specification BMW vehicle models”.
- BMW USA's recall lookup sends imported vehicles to BMW's global recall site.
- Under 49 CFR 565.14, an imported car certified by a Registered Importer whose VIN doesn't comply gets a plate reading “SUBSTITUTE FOR U.S. VIN”; cars built to Canada's VIN standard are exempt.

For a BMW in Canada, start at **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder-canada/bmw**.

Decoding BMWs in bulk

NHTSA's free vPIC API decodes up to **50 VINs** in one batch request; every decode in this guide came from three such requests. NHTSA applies automated traffic rate control, so send batches.

On **carcheckervin.com** you can paste a whole list of VINs to decode and preview several BMWs at once. Dealers who need history at volume get wholesale pricing, bulk API access and white-label reports at **carcheckervin.com/dealers**.

Other makes on the lot? The general decoder at **carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder** handles every manufacturer.

REFERENCE

BMW VIN DECODER GLOSSARY

ALL4
A MINI model-name tag; our ALL4 Countryman decodes from 2012 and 2021 returned all-wheel drive.

BEV
Battery electric vehicle. The decoder's electrification level for the i4, iX, i5, i7 and MINI Cooper SE.

BMW AG
The company NHTSA lists most BMW and MINI prefixes under; owner of the BMW and MINI trademarks.

BMW M GmbH
The BMW Group company NHTSA lists as manufacturer for the WBS prefix.

BMW Motorrad
BMW's motorcycle brand; its VINs start WB1, WB3 or WB4.

Build record
BMW's own record of a car's factory equipment, kept against the chassis number.

Certification label
The door-area label with the manufacturer, month and year of manufacture, GVWR and VIN.

Check digit
VIN position 9; calculated from the other 16 characters to catch errors.

Digital birth certificate
BMW Group Classic's document for historic BMWs, offered since 2024.

GVWR class
Gross vehicle weight rating band, such as Class 2E (6,001–7,000 lb) for our X5.

In-service date
The date a BMW was first sold or put into service; the start of its warranty. Not in the VIN.

Last seven
VIN positions 11–17: the plant code plus the serial.

Monroney label
The federally required new-car window sticker, with the price of each option.

MPV
Multipurpose passenger vehicle; NHTSA's type for the 5UX, 5YM, WBX, WB5 and WMZ prefixes.

NMVTIS
The National Motor Vehicle Title Information System, run by the U.S. Department of Justice.

PHEV
Plug-in hybrid electric vehicle: the 330e, 530e, X5 xDrive45e, i8.

Plant code
VIN position 11. On a BMW, the only reliable guide to where the car was built.

Plant Spartanburg
BMW's U.S. factory in Greer, South Carolina; home of the X3, X5, X6, X7 and XM.

sDrive / xDrive
BMW model-name tags. Every xDrive model we decoded returned all-wheel drive.

State of health (SoH)
A battery's current capacity compared with its original capacity, in BMW's words.

Title brand
A mark a state puts on a title, such as salvage, rebuilt, flood or lemon buyback.

VDS
Vehicle Descriptor Section: positions 4–8, plus the check digit.

vPIC
NHTSA's Product Information Catalog and Vehicle Listing: the official decoding database and API.

WMI
World Manufacturer Identifier: positions 1–3. NHTSA lists 18 under BMW company names.

BMW prefixes at a glance

WBA · BMW cars · **WBS · BMW M** · **WBY · BMW i cars** · **WBX · X1, X2** · **WB5 · iX** · **5UX · X3 to X7** · **5YM · M SUVs** · **3MW · 3 and 2 Series, Mexico** · **3MF · M2** · **4US · Z3, Z4** · **WMW · MINI cars** · **WMZ · MINI Countryman** · **WB1, WB3, WB4 · motorcycles**

As returned by NHTSA's decoder for the VINs in this guide; a prefix can cover other models too.

ANSWERS

BMW VIN DECODER FAQ

Is there a free BMW VIN decoder?

Yes. CarCheckerVIN and NHTSA both decode BMW VINs free. Only history reports cost money.

How do I decode a BMW VIN?

Enter all 17 characters at carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/bmw, or read it by hand: positions 1–3 company, 4–8 model and engine, 9 check digit, 10 year, 11 plant, 12–17 serial.

Can a BMW VIN decoder show options?

Not the options one car was ordered with. A free decode shows equipment as standard or optional for the model. The real list is in BMW's build record and on the original window sticker.

How do I get a BMW build sheet by VIN?

Ask a BMW Center for the equipment record on the VIN. For historic BMWs, BMW Group Classic offers a digital birth certificate. Free online "build sheets" are spec sheets rebuilt from the decode.

Can I get a BMW window sticker by VIN?

The original comes from the seller or dealer. Paid label services reproduce stickers for VINs they hold data on. Free versions are replicas without the MSRP or options.

Can I find a BMW paint code by VIN?

Not with a decoder; color isn't in the VIN. Read it from the color label on the car, or give a BMW Center parts desk your VIN.

How do I do a BMW recall check by VIN?

Enter the VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls and on BMW USA's recall page. Both are free, and so is the repair.

How do I check a BMW warranty by VIN?

Decode the model year, then ask a BMW Center for the in-service date. New BMWs are covered for 4 years or 50,000 miles from that date.

How many characters are in a BMW VIN?

Seventeen, on every BMW since the 1981 model year. The letters I, O and Q are never used.

What does WBA mean on a BMW VIN?

NHTSA lists WBA under BMW AG, Germany, for passenger cars. It does not prove the car was built in Germany.

What does WBS mean?

NHTSA lists WBS under BMW M GmbH. Our M3, M4 and M5 decodes all carry it.

What do 5UX and 5YM mean?

Both belong to BMW's U.S. company. In our decodes 5UX covered the X3 to X7 and 5YM the M SUVs, all built in Greer, South Carolina.

Where was my BMW built?

Read position 11, not position 1. Decoders translate it into the plant.

What year is my BMW?

Position 10 is the model year: L is 2020, P is 2023, R is 2024, S is 2025. The chart is on page 8.

Does a BMW VIN lookup work for MINI?

Yes. MINI VINs start WMW or WMZ and decode the same way. Use carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/mini.

Is there a BMW motorcycle VIN decoder?

Yes. BMW Motorrad VINs start WB1, WB3 or WB4 and decode to the model, engine size and plant in NHTSA's database.

Can I decode a BMW with only the last 7 digits?

No. The last seven hold the plant and serial only. BMW Motorrad USA's recall page accepts them, but a decoder needs all 17.

Is a Carfax BMW report worth it?

For service history, often yes, and many dealers and BMW Certified cars include a history report. Screen cars first with free checks and a $14.99 CarCheckerVIN report.

Does a BMW VIN check show accidents?

A decoder shows none. CarCheckerVIN reports show insurance total-loss records, title brands and auction sales with photos; for theft, use NICB's free VINCheck.

FREE BMW VIN DECODER

Decode any BMW in seconds.

Year, model, engine, drive and plant, free, plus a free preview of the car's history records. Full report $14.99.

carcheckervin.com/vin-decoder/bmw →

Scan to decode a BMW VIN free

Sources

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How we made this guide: written by CarCheckerVIN with AI assistance, from the public sources listed above; figures, prices and links checked November 2026.

More free tools at carcheckervin.com

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BMW recall check
BMW warranty check
BMW window sticker by VIN
BMW options by VIN
BMW build sheet by VIN
BMW paint code lookup
MINI VIN decoder
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