

Historic Technical Passports and FIA Heritage Certificates Questions and Answers

In February 2004, the FIA published on its website a Question and Answer paper dealing with some of the more common enquiries it had received relating to the new system of Historic Technical Passports and FIA Heritage Certificates. The web page was well received and has led to some further queries, which are addressed here.

Have there been any developments since the first Q and A was issued on 18 February?

Yes, it has become clear that we need two databases, one for chassis numbers, the other for car specifications.

Why do you need a database of car specifications?

We need this in order to make sure that an HTP is only issued to a car which has the specification of the car it purports to be. The HTP is a sporting document. In order to ensure fairness in competitions, it is essential that an HTP is not given to a car which has, for example, a wholly inappropriate braking system or suspension geometry. Either of them might give it a significant and unfair advantage over a car with the correct period specification. This is just as true for an original car as for a replica.

But surely this is what an HC is for?

No, the HC deals with the authenticity of the car – it states that in the opinion of the FIA this is the original car. But you could have an original car to which, eg, a modern braking system has been fitted. This would give it an entirely unfair advantage when racing or rallying against cars of the same type (or even the same period) which had not been modified in this way.

So what are the essential differences between an HTP and an HC?

The HTP is essentially a sporting document. It is intended to ensure that a car complies with the specification of the car it purports to be. Whether that car is wholly original, partly original, assembled wholly or partly out of period components or a copy or replica built recently does not matter. The essential thing is that it is not, say, a 1968 Formula One car (genuine or replica) fitted with a modern braking system. The HC, on the other hand, is primarily an historical document, concerned solely with the authenticity of the car. It certifies that, in the opinion of the FIA, the car is the real thing, having existed as a complete car with an original chassis/VIN number since it was built in the period to which it belongs. In practice it is unlikely that a car with an HC would have been modified so as to make it ineligible for an HTP, but there will be many cars which are to specification – so eligible to hold an HTP – but not authentic and original and thus entitled to an HC. The HTP allows all these cars to compete, provided the organiser wants them, but ensures they do so on a fair and equitable basis, irrespective of their origins.

Appendix K for pre-1966 GTS cars allows them to be rebodied as replicas of Period cars e.g. low-drag E types. Will these cars whilst original and genuine get HCs?

Cars which are genuine and original will be eligible for HCs but there will be a rider on any HC issued identifying the change in bodywork from new .

You have already said that the chassis number database will be confidential. Will this also apply to the specification database?

No, it is intended to include this database on the FIA website and allow anyone to look at it. There will be technical details and photographs to assist competitors, ASNs and scrutineers. Further, it is intended that there will be detailed DVDs available of all the popular cars.

How will the specification database be assembled?

It will be relatively easy to deal with cars which have been homologated, because we can start with the original homologation papers. Other cars such as racing cars which were never homologated but were simply built to conform to the relevant technical regulations, will be more difficult, particularly those which were already being modified during their original competition period. In these cases we will have to rely on the help of the experts.

Why not just leave all this to scrutineers or organisers as at present?

We are trying to set up a system to preserve the heritage of motor sport. At present there are many experts with first-hand knowledge of the 1950s and 1960s, some even of the 1930s. It is essential that we get a proper database set up while these people are still around and before historic motor sport is swamped by the sheer number of historic cars.

How will you settle disputes when experts disagree about the period specification?

By looking at all the available evidence. Again, the sooner this is done the better. It will be of great help to ASNs to have a database of specifications on line to back up their expert inspectors. It will also help to eliminate the inevitable differences between the levels of expertise available to our various ASNs.

26.5.04

**Correspondence between the president of the FIA and
Mr Robin Stainer, AC Owners' Club (ACOC) Cobra registrar**

Dear Mr Mosley

Historic Technical Passport

I write to you, as the AC Owners' Club (ACOC) Cobra registrar, seeking clarification of the principles the FIA will use in granting a vehicle an Historic Technical Passport.

I have read the 'Information' paper dated February 18th, but am uncertain what principles apply to cars not qualifying for a Heritage Certificate, being imitations, replicas or forgeries. A useful starting point is the paper's observation that 'There is no motor sport reason not to have several replicas of a single car, provided everyone knows exactly what they are'. I use a particular case I have been dealing with as an example:

1. How will a replica of a 1964 AC Cobra (chassis no COB 6040) made in 1995 by Adams/Ketts be described on the HTP? Will it be a:
 - 1964 AC Cobra
 - 1964 AC Cobra-Replica
 - 1964 AC Cobra-1995 Replica
 - 1964 AC Cobra-1995 Replica, manufacturer Adams/Ketts
 - 1995 Adams/Ketts-Replica of a 1964 AC Cobra
 - Some other variant?
2. Will the car be able to adopt the period chassis number COB 6040:
 - Without the permission of the original manufacturer (or its successors)
 - With the permission of the original manufacturer (or its successors)?
3. Will more than one replica be able to adopt the period COB 6040 chassis number? (In this case, there are two replicas of COB 6040, albeit owned by the same person)
4. If the period car still exists, will a replica be allowed to use its chassis number? Under what conditions? (In this case, the original COB 6040 exists, with a different owner and in a different country from the replicas)
5. Will a modern replica of an historic car have to be manufactured according to current EU standards, or to those pertaining at the time the car it replicates was made?
6. Will a modern replica have to accord with current ASN safety regulations, or will it qualify for historical exemptions?

Your early reply would be most helpful as I am attending panel session on Monday 24th May to explore HTP/HC issues.

Someone currently building a race car, using a period chassis, is also questioning me. The chassis was discarded when a Cobra was rebuilt in 1983, following a fire. The constructor wishes to apply for an FIA HVIF/HTP. The ACOC regards:

- The race car as a replica, even though it has an original chassis and an original body (from another car)

- The car rebuilt in 1983 as the original, with chassis and body replaced, as it has continuous history.

Clarification of FIA principles will help him decide how to describe and register the car so he can obtain FIA papers for racing.

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Dear Mr Stainer

Thank you for your letter of 13 May, which has only just reached me here in Monaco.

In reply to your questions.

1. The HTP will merely confirm that the car has the specification of a 1964 AC Cobra (assuming this to be the case). It would therefore be described as a "1964 AC Cobra" (or simply "AC Cobra" if "1964" does not describe a particular model).
2. As far as the HTP is concerned, the question does not arise, because the HTP deals only with the specification of the car. Issues relating to the chassis number or the authenticity of a car come under the Heritage Certificate. On the basis of the facts you provide, "COB 6040" would appear not to be the "Vehicle Identity Number" requested by the HTP, but to be the number of a different car. Quite apart from the HTP, in most countries there would be legal implications if someone were to ascribe to a car a chassis number which was or could be misleading, particularly if this were done for gain.
3. As 2.
4. As 2.
5. The purpose of the HTP is to allow a car to take part in competitions. As far as I am aware, there are no EU standards for competition cars.
6. For international events the car would have to meet the safety regulations for cars of the relevant specification when racing today. This is because we should not have different cars attributable to a given period racing under different conditions. To insist on different standards for the same class of car would not accord with our duty to administer international motor sport fairly. The whole purpose of the HTP is to try to ensure that cars accord with the authentic specification and can therefore compete with one another fairly. Competitors would, however, be free to add modern safety features, provided they gained no competitive advantage is so doing.

The important point to understand is that an HTP says nothing about the authenticity, provenance, origins, etc, of a car. It is concerned only that the car's specification is that of the particular model it purports to be. Anyone interested in the authenticity or provenance of a car would ask for its Heritage Certificate.

The case you mention in your penultimate paragraph would be entitled to an HTP and could compete, provided the car's specification were that of the original car. It would not be eligible for a Heritage Certificate, because it would not have existed as a complete car for the entire relevant period.

The fundamental point we need to get across is that it is the FIA's function to facilitate and encourage motor sport, not to put obstacles in the way of competitors. A car should always be allowed to compete provided it can do so safely (within the limitations of its period) and without any unfairness to other competitors.

May we have your consent to put your letter and this reply in the Q and A section of our website?

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Dear Mr Mosley

Historic Technical Passport

Thank you for your recent letter setting out clearly the FIA's position. You do of course have my consent to place the correspondence in the Q and A section of your website.

I am copying this letter to the Chairman of the HSCC (my principal motor sport club) and John Grant, who are in touch on the matter. It would probably be better if Mr Grant were to pick up the points that follow in his reply to the HSCC, and copy me on that reply.

I use the same example as in my letter of 13 May.

Make

The HTP will show 'Make: AC', even though AC was clearly not the maker. The MSA will then need to certify as follows: "We, the MSA, have checked the information given on this form and, to the best of our knowledge, consider the car to be correctly described and categorised as above".

I find it strange that the MSA considers it satisfactory to state that a vehicle it knows not to be made by AC is correctly described as: 'Make: AC'.

Year of manufacture or period of car

Although you do not directly address how this should be completed, your answer to question 1 could be taken to imply 1964. Although the wording of the information being sought is unclear, it could be taken to mean that a car made in 1995 is 'correctly described' as having a 1964 'year of manufacture'.

Current EU standards

As you know many FIA cars (particularly GT and GTS cars) were road registered in period and remain so to this day. It is hoped that replicas continue this tradition, and one respected manufacturer has confirmed to me his desire that this be the case. The principal requirement is Single Vehicle Approval (SVA), which mainly concerns safety. I am not aware of any SVA requirement that affects performance one way or another. However, as I understand it the HTP's exact replica requirement will call upon the MSA to certify that all SVA changes to period specification have been removed, even though there is no performance reason for removing them.

I am not a lawyer but I sense difficulty in this area, particularly with certain sections and schedules of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Obstacles in the way of competitors

I am not for one moment suggesting that obstacles should be put in the way of competitors. I am only suggesting that:

1. Cars should be correctly described (or not knowingly incorrectly described)
2. HTP requirements should not run counter to SVA and any other EU requirement pertaining at the time the replica was made.

Once again, I think this matter is now best taken up with my ASN and so no reply is needed. Thank you once again for considered response to my first letter.

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Dear Mr Stainer

Thank you for your letter of 7 June, again making some very helpful points.

What emerges is that there are ambiguities in the HTP form, which we must eliminate.

Thank you very much for your help in this matter.