

## Bikes and towbars

There are few things that the bar room layers are correct over but one thing they mostly get right is the issue of towbars and the potential problems with them when re-registering cars. Problems can arise with any aftermarket equipment when re-registering and as towbars are the most common after-market fit it is why they are in the spotlight

When vehicles are built the manufacturer sets out a full technical description including all fittings. For vehicles made for the EU market this data is incorporated into a document known as a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) which has essentially the same wording in most languages i.e. Certificado de Conformidad in Spanish except in Germany where it is called Konformitätsbescheinigung, what else? Many owners do not have a CoC so an engineer produces a report (ficha reducida) in lieu using available information supplied by the manufacturer

Where a towbar for example is on the original specs' it will give the specific make and approval number so if your towbar coincides no problem. The same will apply to running boards, bull bars etc. Where the towbar does not coincide it has to be removed. Exceptions are allowed if a vehicle was owned before the owner came to Spain, but this is for another day

### Does this mean that towbars are not allowed?

No, but if you want one fitting or for that matter any other part, it can be done after the vehicle is registered in Spain as a "reforma" and as you might expect is bureaucratically cumbersome. Firstly you would have to approach the vehicle manufacturer and ask which towbars are acceptable on your model of vehicle asking them to confirm this in writing. Then go to a specialist and ask him to fit the approved towbar. Afterwards the fitters will supply documents showing the approval numbers as well as drawings including the mounting instructions and a separate letter proving that they not only fitted it correctly but are authorised to do so. Finally a visit to an ITV station is needed where the towbar will be added to your ficha tecnica (ITV card). I can see why people say "stuff it; I won't fit a towbar and will continue to let people hit the rear of my car when parking"

### Bikes with trailers

A few times I have been asked to re-register a motorbike with a trailer and was told in no uncertain terms that trailers are not permitted behind bikes. Recently I was asked again, so in the full and certain knowledge that rules change in Spain by stealth and you only find out

afterwards I checked again and was astounded to be told that yes they are allowed. Of course the bike in question does not have an approved towbar so we are going through the tortuous process described above

Understandably there are restrictions. These are that the trailer must not exceed 50% of the weight of the bike, that the combination must be driven at 10% less than the normally permitted speed, so 45 KMH instead of 50 for example. It cannot be used in adverse weather conditions such as rain or fog which I imagine may cause some fun if you are half way through a long journey. Finally the trailer cannot carry people!

## Trailers

Trailers are another can of worms. Whether below or above 750 Kg in carrying capacity the trailer will need an ITV inspection which of itself is no big deal, but the trailer needs either to have been registered in another country (the client with the bike/trailer combination has his trailer registered in Norway) or be seen to be used by providing a bill of sale from say the UK. In most cases a Certificate of Conformity will also be needed to ensure that it meets the required standards and these are only available for more modern trailers

So if you are thinking of getting joined up, check first

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