

## Duplicate documents

Now there's an attention grabbing headline but the subject is one that has affected many of you lately and will more of you in the future, so keep this to hand or look it up on my website later

Motorists in Spain are understandably nervous about leaving their documents in the car or pannier of their bike. "What if the vehicle is stolen, I've lost my documents too" is a statement that almost everyone says to me when I am handing over their Spanish registration papers. So what are the solutions? You can have a notarised copy made, hide them in the car rather than keep them in the glove box or keep them in something that you always carry such as your handbag, wallet or man-bag; yes I have succumbed to this Spanish habit and now know why ladies cannot manage without one, but how do you ever find anything?

Of all of the cases that I have dealt with where documents have been lost, I cannot recall a single one where they were stolen from the car. They have all been misplaced, so where is the greater risk?

### How to get replacements

What to do when these important documents go missing? In most cases it is both the registration document and ITV card that disappear and as you would expect in Spain, getting duplicates is neither simple nor free.

Firstly, you need an Informe de Cargas which is the same background check that you obtain when considering buying a Spanish car; this proves that you do indeed own the vehicle. The next step is a visit to your local testing station requesting a duplicate ITV card. The ITV station will request from Trafico "antecedentes" which show the technical details of the vehicle. Once these are available after a few days, the car will need an ITV inspection; this is to confirm that it still matches the previous record, the fact that you recently had the car inspected is irrelevant

Now a visit to Trafico with the new ITV card, Informe, passport, NIE, Padron and proof of last payment of road tax and you should be given the new registration document. I guess that the moral of this story is to keep the documents safe and to remember where you hid them

What if your vehicle is not Spanish? Well I can't really advise if it is non-UK, but if your vehicle is registered via DVLA, then getting a duplicate depends upon the status of the car. If DVLA do not know that the car is in Spain, getting a replacement V5c should be straightforward and free but it is prudent to use your UK address for this purpose. If you have declared the vehicle exported, then you may receive a Certificate of Export instead of the V5c. If the vehicle is not registered to you, good luck

### Paper trails

I am no longer surprised that people who have inherited a vehicle from a neighbour or friend have not transferred ownership to them in the present country of registration. Sometimes this is not possible of course if you are British and obtain a German car for example, but to prove that you have title to the car, you must have a written contract between the seller and buyer showing full details of both parties and the car's details. You will also need copies of the seller's passport and NIE or DNI if Spanish. If the person selling the car is not the present registered keeper either, then he must provide paperwork showing that he has title to it before passing it to you. Driving a vehicle that you cannot prove is yours is just storing up trouble, but you would not believe how many people do this. I guess that they are just happy to get the car at a good price and worry about the paperwork later. In essence, you need a paper trail from the last registered keeper to yourself as the buyer

### Transferring ownership from the deceased

Many of we expats are past the first blush of youth; typically "baby-boomers" we all have wrinkles and grey hair, if hidden by dye. Sadly, some of us pass on to leave behind a widow or widower. When I received my first call from a lady whose husband had died with the question as to how she could transfer ownership of the family car to her, I wasn't sure. Spain being as bureaucratic as it is, I imagined visits to courts, notaries, obtaining copies of wills and eventually transferring ownership many years later by which time the car had become a classic or rotted away.

The solution suggested by my then lawyer and confirmed by my present lawyer was to proceed as if the registered keeper was still with us. I guess that the lawyers knew how long drawn out it would be otherwise. Provided that all of the usual documents required for transferring ownership are available and there is no reason why they won't be, this has proved to be a straightforward process and is one less worry for those left behind.

Duplicate driving licences need to be requested from the issuing authority. If your licence is British, you need to apply to DVLA using a UK address. If you give a Spanish address, then you will not get a replacement, instead you will be provided with a letter of entitlements allowing you to apply for a Spanish licence. If your licence is Spanish, then a visit to Trafico is required

### Number plates

Your Spanish number plates may have faded and need replacing. This is straightforward and follows the system now in use in the UK. Many garages make the plates as do Fer Vert, the Spanish equivalent of Halfords and recently Mr. Minnit the cobblers and key makers have got in on the act. You take along your vehicle documents, passport and NIE to prove that the vehicle is yours and they will make a set of plates in the time it takes to have a coffee

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