

Engine emissions

Most motorists have a preference for either petrol or diesel engines. Both types have their pro and cons, but our choice is influenced by various factors and our own prejudices. We have not been helped by governments chopping and changing their minds as to which is best, especially regarding higher taxation often dressed up as benefiting the environment

Diesel vs. Petrol

Diesel engines were at one time slow, noisy, smelly and deemed to be lethal to flora and fauna, but they have improved substantially over the years to such an extent that I have driven clients' cars thinking that they were petrol powered only to discover at the ITV station that they were super quiet turbo diesels. Maybe I'm just thick or perhaps am comparing them with my older and noisier diesel powered Mercedes E class

Not so long ago we were all encouraged to buy diesel powered cars. Now that this has happened the tax on diesel fuel increases. Conned by our masters or what?

Apart from personal preference a major factor is cost. Diesel cars are more expensive to buy than petrol cars but give better fuel economy especially over long distances and tend to last longer (mine has completed over 300,000 Km) but petrol is perceived to be economically better for smaller cars

Manufacturers have striven to drive down the poisonous emissions that are emitted from all engines and have done so spectacularly. Taxation based upon emissions has contributed to this as not many people want to be penalised through the wallet by driving a high polluting car. This also affects the taxes on cars being re-registered in certain countries, such as Ireland, Portugal and of course Spain whereby the registration tax is based upon the vehicle's CO₂ emissions as well as its value. Over my years in re-registering I have seen the levels plummet and am cynical enough to believe that the government will change the tax bands to try and keep pace and obtain more tax

So what are the tax bands?

The CO₂ emissions are expressed as g/Km (the amount of grams per kilometre that spews from your exhaust). The higher the figure the higher the percentage tax levied against your vehicle's value.

120 g/Km or less = 0 tax

121-159 g/Km = 4.75%

160-199 g/Km = 9.75%

200 g/Km or more = between 14.75% and 16.9 % depending upon your region

So, a car with a value of €5000 will be taxed at €237, €487 or up to €845 upon re-registration, though exemptions can apply

For bikes it is

100 g/Km or less = 0 tax

101-120 g/Km = 4.75%

121-140 g/Km = 9.75%

141 g/Km or more = between 14.75% and 16.9 %

Bikes below 250 CC are tax free

Spain is the only EU country that demands to see the CO2 level on bikes as part of the tax calculation. This means that unlike for cars the emissions level is generally not shown on registration documents or indeed on Certificates of Conformity which show the full characteristics of vehicles. However some manufacturers will provide the data if it is available

On all registration documents throughout the EU, the CO2 level should be shown in section "V". The exception again is Spain where it is shown on the ITV card (ficha tecnica)

If you bring the family car over here to re-register it, you can have no influence on its CO2 level, but if you are thinking of buying a car from outside of the country where they are generally less expensive, then your choice should be influenced by the emissions. I have just been tasked by a Spaniard to ask my sources for the purchase price of the recently launched Jaguar XE with a 2 litre turbo diesel engine providing 180 Horsepower. The CO2 is 111 g/Km, so no registration tax! Amazing

If you want to know what the tax on your vehicle would be, just ask, but please look for the emissions level first

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