

The Engineer's Report

Most drivers and riders in Spain are aware that a vehicle needs to have the ITV (MOT) test when their vehicle is re-registered/imported, however we at Re-Platemate have received many calls from drivers over the years who thought that after an ITV test, their vehicle would be issued with Spanish plates!

Have you ever known anything that easy in Spain? Think Residencia!!

Most drivers are not aware that prior to the ITV inspection, the car first has to be approved for use on Spanish roads, no matter that it already has registration in another EU country

There are two ways of doing this. One is by a document called a "Certificate of Conformity". The more common method is by obtaining an "Engineer's report". What's the difference?

Did you know that when a type of vehicle is made, it has to incorporate the latest standards as issued and approved by our friends in Brussels (Or Strasbourg where more expenses can be claimed). The most obvious of these will be braking systems, lights and particularly fashionable at the moment emissions, especially the CO2.

A new car has to undergo stringent tests; including testing to destruction and all of the components, measurements, type and capability of products etc is listed in a manual. The main features are condensed into a piece of paper called a Certificate of Conformity, abbreviated to CoC.

Most drivers do not see this document as it costs money to produce and is rarely needed by regular guys, but if you are lucky enough to have a Mercedes, then they are issued as standard

A vehicle made for sale in the EU will be given a European Type Approval number, sometimes referred to as "Homologation"

The CoC means that the car is acceptable for use anywhere in Europe and the document can be used in lieu of the Engineer's report, thereby saving you a few euros. Unless, (well there had to be a but), the car has undergone any changes to the standard laid down in the CoC, such as tow-bars, spoilers, tinted windows, sports exhaust and go faster stripes. Where such changes have been made then the Engineer's report is the only and easiest option if you want to keep the changes

The Engineer's report (Ficha Reducida to give it its proper title) contains details of the car including all external measurements and types of suspension, transmission, engine, brakes, lights, tyres etc etc. Now if you have had a tow-bar, spoilers and tinted windows fitted, these are normally included in the report. This means that when your car eventually gets its ITV document, they are incorporated into this bit of paper, making all of your extras fully legal thereby keeping the boys in green off your back

Please do not assume that all changes to your vehicle can be incorporated, each case is individual and will need to be examined

The Engineer's report is a one-off and never needs repeating unless you make other changes to the vehicle.

So, to summarise. A Certificate of Conformity is issued for all modern cars. These can be obtained from main dealers, but they will charge you for it and if the vehicle has had any changes, it is no use when re-registering

The Engineer's report produces a document similar to the CoC, and can also incorporate most changes to the vehicle

The most common changes to a vehicle are:

The addition of tow bars. The approval plate must still be in position on the tow bar mechanism; it's a bit small, and so you may not have noticed it, but no plate, no tow bar

Tinted windows. Very useful in Spain to keep the hot August sun from fighting the air-con and to stop other motorists seeing you belting the kids when they ask just once too often "are we nearly there?" Tints are never allowed on the driver and passenger doors nor windscreen (no I don't know why anyone would have a tinted windscreen either). Unless you have approved tints fitted, approval will need to be sought, but this is cheap

Bull bars which come in very handy on those trips to Pamplona, normally no problem

Extra headlights for driving off road and trying to scare rabbits, normally not accepted

Sports exhausts on bikes. Sorry Harley riders, your bikes sound fantastic, but unless the exhaust is an approved and certified retro fit, the original may have to be fitted. What you do afterwards is your business, I won't argue

Finally, we have had a few drivers who were somewhat surprised and out of pocket to find that their car could not be re-registered at all. Why??

If you are registered as living in Spain as determined by the Padron, Residencia, etc, then any vehicle you buy AFTER registration is classed as a pure import. The vehicle may have UK, French or Romanian plates, but this does not mean that it reaches European Type Approval. It may have been registered in the UK for example under the regime known as SVA and means that the vehicle is "unique". The SVA is not transferable

Whilst the Spanish equivalent can be obtained, it will only be granted if the car meets the current standards, particularly in relation to emissions. Even if it does meet the standards a Spanish SVA is very expensive, so before buying a cheap car in the UK, check that it has Type Approval

An example of a Type Approval number is this: e13*97/27*0040*

For those of you are into detail, this is broken down as follows

'e = Europe, 13 is for Luxembourg, 97/27 is the law and its inception date, 0040 is the car, in this case a Ford Focus

The country number indicates where the laboratory that approved the car is, not necessarily where the car was made

OK, thought you may wish to know, UK is e11, Spain is e9, Germany e1 (How did they get the top spot?), France is e2, *mmmmm*. Italy e3

For further information, please see our ad' in the motoring section