

ITV- Periodic inspections

Funny how things happen in threes. Recently I have spoken to customers who all have had problems relating to periodic ITV inspections. The periodic inspection as you can probably guess is the regular inspection that takes place when your car or other vehicle is Spanish. This is slightly less rigorous and certainly less expensive than the inspection required for re-registration

The core inspection consists of those items designed to ensure that your vehicle is safe for you to drive and is not a danger to other road users. Yep, like you I have seen some sheds on wheels, bikes that make an airliner seem quiet and trucks held together with rope, but bear in mind the inspection is an examination on the day and some of the aforementioned could be coming up to their next day under scrutiny

What to expect

The first thing checked is the paperwork (come on what did you expect; this is often far more important than pieces of machinery). Next in line are the lights. I still find it incredible that so many cars turn up at the ITV station with half of the lights not working; don't drivers check these beforehand? This leads me onto the first of the three stories. I bumped into a customer at an ITV station that I do not use very often whose car I had re-registered exactly two years previously. He had just put the car through its first periodical and it failed; his car was deemed unroadworthy because the brake light was not bright enough. The bulb had gone and was changed beforehand, but the wrong one fitted

This is by far the most trivial reason I have ever come across for a failure and quite frankly beggars belief. Whilst there was cause for failure surely a word in the shell-like or even a formal warning would have sufficed. Even more astounding is that it happened at the same station where about 3 years ago I witnessed the most slapdash inspection ever when the car that I was responsible for had its lights switched on, driven through and given a pass in less than 5 minutes; I guess that brandy-break time was coming up

The same station boasts the kind of little bloke that gives us little blokes a bad name. Covered in self-inflicted love bites, he is young and I imagine received a supervisory position due to connections as he has the charm and grace of a basking alligator combined with the social skills of a wheel-clamper. It was this little sh*t that failed my customer's car

The brakes, ball joints and exhausts are checked along with the tyres plus general condition, specifically signs of leaking oil. Wipers are moved, washers sprayed, horns sounded, seat belts tugged etc.etc. Just as you would expect whether here in Spain or back in the UK or Ireland

Nice number plates

The second call was from a customer whose son had just been fined as his number plates had faded; probably couldn't be read by a speed camera. The name of my business may have something to do with it, but I do receive quite a few calls from people asking where to get new plates, so to save yourself from wondering they are obtained from similar places as in the UK. Many garages sell plates as do motor factors such as Serca. The closest that we get to Halfords here is Feu Vert with concessions at many large supermarkets, and dear old Mr. Minute is now on the bandwagon so there is bound to be a supplier near you. To make sure that you are not in the game of making up plates to put on any old car that you have nicked, you have to take the vehicle documents, your NIE number and proof of ID such as your passport; the transaction will be recorded. Plates are normally made up there and then in the time it takes to have a coffee

The problems with failure

What happens if your vehicle fails the ITV? You will be given the inspection report showing one or two classes of failure. "Leve" which is a mild infraction allowing you to have a pass, but advising that the problem needs to be addressed or "grave". Now this infraction is serious and in some cases this means that your car belongs in that great graveyard down the road. The ITV card will be stamped on the back with the word "desfavorable" which is the opposite of what you wanted to see.

This is where the problems start and brings me onto the final tale in this trilogy. The Guardia were coming in the opposite direction, did a U-turn, pulled the lady over and asked for her papers. "You have a desfavorable on your ITV card" they rather cleverly noticed. "Yes" she replied, "but the defective tyre has been changed". "Well the ITV is not current, so cop this fine of 200 euros" they rejoined

The story here is that if your car has received a desfavorable it can then only be driven to a place of repair or back to the ITV station, meaning that you have to act quickly. Even if your ITV inspection was undertaken before the due date, a desfavorable means that the vehicle cannot be used until it has passed a subsequent ITV inspection. Maybe a pre-ITV test could come in handy here

By the way, she was pulled because she was not wearing a seat belt. Why invite trouble?

If a car fails, you have two months to return to the ITV for a re-test at a nominal charge; after two months you will pay for another full inspection

Note that all of the above applies to Spanish cars. A British car that fails the ITV as part of the re-registration process can still be driven, as those items that come in threes i.e. UK registered, taxed and MOT'd are still in force as with all British cars in Spain!

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