

ITV facts and myths

Recently the press has been full of stories about drivers being fined for having an inadequate ITV inspection. The stories focused on drivers living in the Valencian Community, having an ITV inspection in Murcia. The test in Valencia Region includes a noise test to ensure that your exhaust is less loud than a boy racer's boom box; in Murcia and other regions this test is not conducted. The conclusion drawn was that the Murcian test was inadequate for Valencianos and your vehicle had not been properly inspected

One report seemed to have been well researched and gave examples of drivers being fined. I have no reason to doubt the validity of the reports, but the stories flew in the face of my understanding and indeed logic, so I set off to check it out

The law regarding ITV

I have participated in the ITV inspection of over 1200 vehicles, mostly at one particular station so my first approach was to the boss of my regular station, a man whose knowledge and integrity I admire. His view was that the Murcian inspection was inadequate for those who live in Valencia. Blimey this shook me, so onto my gestoria

A gestor is a professional practicing the administration of law; the firm that I collaborate with specialise in motoring matters. Their view did not coincide with that of the ITV manager, so they checked with the College of Gestors whose role is to arbitrate the law. The college stated that minimum standards apply throughout the whole of Spain. So long as the test complies with these standards, the inspection undertaken is valid anywhere. A Region or Province can add additional requirements (such as measuring noise levels) but a test undertaken in a Region which tests only the minimum standards is still valid wherever you live.

However, if a noise test for example applies where you live and your vehicle has not been subjected to this test, the police can insist that it is tested. If the vehicle fails the test, you can then be sanctioned

Yeah great Graham, so why have I got a fine? Many of us have noticed that Spanish law is not subject to joined up thinking; the furore over asset declaration is an example. Confusion arises, but interpretation by individual police officers is where the rubber hits the road. So if you have been fined and believe that you shouldn't have been you can appeal to the interior ministry.

ITV documents

Non-Spanish vehicles can have a voluntary ITV inspection, but this has no legal standing and is more of a courtesy. Imported vehicles are subject to more stringent tests with the vehicle also being compared to its Certificate of Conformity or engineer's report which describe the full specification

The ITV card (ficha tecnica) is not only a permanent record of all ITV tests undertaken, but also describes the characteristics of your vehicle completely; this is why when you add a tow bar for instance it needs to be added to the card. The ITV sticker shows the month and year of next inspection and should be displayed on the right side of the windshield (kerb side) so any passing boy in green or blue can see that you are in date.

Inspection frequency

All brand new vehicles in Spain are issued with an ITV card. The next inspection is due on the 4th anniversary of first registration. Subsequent inspections are every two years until it is 10 years old and then annually, though bikes continue with biennial inspections; commercial vehicles are tested twice as often as private ones. Inspections can be carried out well before the due date. An ITV sticker is not provided for new vehicles until its first periodic inspection. It is the custom to issue ITV stickers for vehicles being re-registered, but some stations do not issue one until the first periodic inspection, irrespective of the vehicle's age

Good luck with your next test, wherever it may be

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