

New Traffic Laws

The press is currently awash with news of new traffic laws to be introduced in the near future. This will give a field day to the chattering classes who foresee the changes as being a cash cow to bring revenue to the hard pressed treasury. Grannies will be dragged out of their bingo sessions to be interrogated as to why their young grandson was riding in the front seat. Anyone pulling away from a bar will be instantly breathalysed and thrown in the slammer. Cyclists will be given added protection and can legally ride in the middle of the road causing traffic disruption and endangering their lives- no change there then

What is odd is that the reports claim that foreign cars have only been liable for some form of tax but will now have to be registered in Spain. Foreign vehicles have always had to be re-registered here. The time scales have changed over the years, but the law has always been clear which presently is that for non residents foreign plated vehicles can remain in Spain for up to 6 months before being removed from the country for 6 months or being re-registered. A resident has one month from bringing a car into Spain but two months if he owned the vehicle in his home country before coming here

Be prepared

Several times I have had to go to police compounds to rescue foreign cars normally because the UK tax disc had expired or some other document was out of date or indeed forged so what is changing? Well the new laws whilst ostensibly designed to make the roads safer will clearly give extra opportunities to issue fines especially in the early days when police chiefs out to get brownie points or brown envelopes will be exhorting their troops to rigidly enforce the laws so we can expect a rash of fines whether applied fairly or not. It is best to be prepared so buy a crash helmet if you are a cyclist and walk, not drive, to the bar for your evening vino

Re-registration process

If you live in Spain on a permanent or part time basis and have a foreign registered vehicle either take it out of the country, scrap it, or take steps to register it here. The registration process for all vehicles follows a strict order of process. The first stage is to confirm that the vehicle can be accepted here by production of a Certificate of Conformity or more commonly having an Engineer's Report produced. The purpose of these documents is to ensure that your vehicle achieves European standards in terms of build and characteristics. The ITV (MOT) will check the roadworthiness and that is the physical aspect dealt with

Next you will need to pay the road tax which is set by your Town Hall, followed by a visit to the Hacienda in the nearest large town to pay the registration tax or gain exemption as applicable. Be careful here that you do not pay too much tax as the calculation is not straightforward and the clerks may try to maximise it. Once you have done this you will need to go to Trafico in your Provincial Capital and register the car. Finally you will need to obtain number plates from an authorised supplier and change your insurance policy. Unless you can speak the language you will need to

take a Spanish speaking friend or pay a translator to go with you. Be prepared to be asked for documents that you thought had no relevance, long waits, unhelpful jobsworths and to lose several days of your life. A packed lunch and Thermos flask may be useful. Alternately engage a professional to take care of it all for you; we exist to take away all of the above stress and there are days when we earn more than every cent!

Good luck whatever you decide to do, but ignoring the law is not a good option

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