

Obtaining a Spanish driving licence

Generally speaking driving licenses issued in other EU countries remain valid in Spain but local exceptions apply. For example, in Spain the minimum age for driving a car is 18 years, so if you have 17 year olds in your family with a UK licence, they cannot drive here until their next birthday

It has been law since 2009 that holders of a non-Spanish driving licence need to exchange it within two years of obtaining residency. As of 19th January 2015, this requirement is to be reinforced by the issuing of denuncias and fines. As you can imagine a purge in order to squeeze more money from us will surely follow, so now is the time to act and ensure at the same time that all of your papers which the boys in green will wish to see are in order

To exchange your licence you should make an appointment at Trafico in your Provincial capital or engage the services of a specialist gestoria (to help retain your sanity!). The process should be simple but is complicated by appalling communications between Trafico and DVLA which can make the process drag on for months; so don't delay because if your licence expires whilst you are waiting for a new one you cannot drive

The following documentation is required

1. Application form, TASA 2.3
2. Proof of identity and residence, which are:
 - a/ Passport
 - b/ Residencia
 - c/ Padron, which must have been renewed within the last 3 months
3. Driving Licence: Original and photocopies of both photo licence *and* paper counterpart.
4. Passport style photograph
5. Form Modelo 2.67 containing your signature which will appear on the licence
6. Written statement that you have not been banned by law from driving in another country
7. Written statement that you do not hold any other driving license or permit, issued in Spain or in another EU country, other than the one being exchanged

Medicals

Normally, no medical is required for the first issue of a Spanish driving licence unless you are 70 or older; medicals are required when the licence is subsequently renewed irrespective of age

However, drivers with a disability that does, or may in the future affect their capability to drive, will require a medical upon first application

Classes of licence in Spain are the same as those throughout the rest of the EU and will be carried over from the original licence to the new Spanish one. A number of people myself included noticed that their Spanish licence missed off certain entitlements, in my case for motor bikes, so check your license upon receipt and have any errors corrected. My photo looks like it was taken in a morgue, but don't suppose they will change this

Licence categories

Category B on the licence is the most widely used and corresponds to those vehicles with a weight less than 3500 kg specifically including cars. Presently, this category has a term of ten years or until the age of 70 from date of issue

Categories other than "B" may have different renewal periods for both the licence and medical. For instance like many drivers of mature years I am allowed to drive vehicles up to 7.5 Tonnes despite not having had a test for a truck of this size. This was granted under "grandfather rights" when the need for a vocational test was introduced in January 1997. These are renewed every 5 years. Owners of motor homes with a weight in excess of 3.5 tonnes must possess such a licence

The old style paper licences are not standard EU issue so need to be changed without delay for the card licence showing your photograph; this applies whether you are going to exchange your licence to a Spanish one or not

You will not be able to complete the process by January 15th but proof of application should keep the police happy

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