

## Optional Extras

The only brand new cars that I have owned have been those provided by my employers back in the UK. The opportunity to have extras added to the car was given and I normally had a tow bar fitted as touring in a caravan with my young daughters made this a necessity

These extras are referred to as “factory fitted” but in reality they are normally added by the supplying dealership. In the UK this is no problem, but in the land of the bureaucrats this is not so simple! I will try and explain why

### Homologation

Modern European vehicles are built to agreed standards that apply throughout the Union. To confirm this, a Type Approval Number is applied to each vehicle which is known as Homologation and follows this format e13\*97/27\*0040\*02. The detail behind the number describes the features of the vehicle exactly so when a vehicle is imported or re-registered its characteristics can be checked against the homologation

Most cars are not normally built with a tow bar; therefore the car may be out of homologation which is why in some cases a tow bar has to be removed upon re-registration. Whilst tow bars are the most common feature to fall foul of the rules, they are not unique, so what else can cause a problem? Well in principle anything bolted onto or in any way added to the car post production. Further examples are bull bars which some drivers use to scoop groups of cyclists off the road, running boards which enable those of us like me who are vertically challenged to climb aboard, laminated windows, rear spoilers, wheel spacers, hand controls allowing the disabled to drive etc.etc

### Adding extras

So how can these be made acceptable in Spain? In short, with great difficulty. Continuing with the tow bar theme; these have to be approved for use on your car by the vehicle manufacturer. The equipment must have European approval; it needs to be fitted at a recognised place that issues documents confirming that it was attached in accordance with the prevailing regulations and finally be inspected at an ITV station before being added to your ITV card (ficha reducida). Trying to do this with a tow bar fitted in the UK has proved to be impossible. The same principles apply more or less to all added extras

Bikes fall foul of these regulations as riders just love to change the exhausts, add lights, extend the forks and generally make a statement with their machine.

### Change of Residence

Oh I can hear them now! The bar room lawyers talking about their mates who run about in cars with more added extras than an ageing actress. In some cases extras can be allowed. This is where the owner can prove that he owned the vehicle before he

came to Spain. A regime known as “change of residence” allows people to import their vehicle more or less as it is. So under this regime a tow bar showing a European standard data plate is usually OK. A vehicle purchased after you came to Spain must be in its factory condition in terms of specifications

### “E” Numbers

“E” numbers are very important. This is nothing to do with those “E’s” that hyperactive kids need to avoid in order to retain their parents sanity, nor an illegal drug, but is the number which follows a circled “E” on all parts made for European vehicles and confirms their suitability. Motorists can fall foul of this when buying headlights for their vehicles in the USA or parts via the internet from Hong Kong.

Parts that are non-fixed such as sat-navs and removable bike racks do not need to be added to an ITV card, but if you are in any doubt as to what is and is not allowed, check at your local ITV station or get in touch

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