

Vital Documents

A reader recently contacted the Costa News Group to enquire about the documents to be carried in her car as a non-resident of Spain. The answer is straightforward enough, but a direct answer will as always pose yet more questions, which I will try and anticipate

Identification

Those who have been resident in Spain for many years will remember the identity card which carried a photo. This was a very useful document as it could be used in various situations and accepted everywhere, even by the most meticulous jobsworth. A bunch of do-gooders one day stopped eating their muesli, slapped on their sandals and appealed to Brussels that the nasty Spanish shouldn't force us Brits to carry such a card as there is no requirement to do so in our homeland

The Spanish acceded to this, but anyone who thought that the bureaucrats over here would just lie down and forget about it was in for a shock, so what now? Well it is a requirement in many Continental countries to carry formal identification; this means for us our passport, so this is the principle document that must be carried whether driving or not. The Consulates are full daily with people who have had their passports nicked or lost, so it is prudent to carry a notarised copy instead. The current residency document is a small green card that states that it is not proof of identity nor nationality- oh well

NIE and car doc's

Those of you who do not have the residency document should carry a copy of your NIE certificate. The NIE number identifies you as an individual, in a similar way to the social security number in the UK. This number stays with you for life, but here is another little bureaucratic twist. Changes were introduced last year to eliminate medical tourism so each new NIE certificate states the following "CADUCA A LOS TRES MESES" which translates as "Expires after three months". Whilst the number remains the same, the document may need updating if it is to be presented especially at Trafico. Here is a tip; if your NIE certificate carries this notice, why not cover this statement up as many in authority are unaware of it?

The other documents that you need to carry in your car are originals of the registration document (Permiso De Circulacion), ITV card (Tarjeta ITV) and insurance cover note. Your driving licence must be with you. I also recommend that you carry your road tax receipt

So, in summary, if you are a non-resident, you should carry your passport, NIE certificate plus the above vehicle/licence documents. The same applies to residents who should substitute the green residencia for the NIE document

Residency

Residency is a hot topic and has various meanings. As a full time permanent resident, my income and other taxes are paid in Spain; the only British document that I retain is my passport as there is no need to change it whilst the UK is part of the EU. Many people prefer to be classed as UK residents for tax purposes. Fiscal residency in any EU county is defined as that country in which you spend a minimum of 183 days in any year. This means that you can obtain the green residency certificate and still remain a UK tax payer. Whilst I have sought advice regarding this, it is not my specialist area, so if unsure speak to a qualified person and definitely not a bar room lawyer. I can state however that a vehicle is classed as “resident” if it remains in Spain for more than 183 days in any year and so must be registered and taxed here

Clearly the law allows you to own a vehicle as a non-resident, for example if you have a holiday home here and with the increasing concerns over car hire, more and more part-timers are bringing a car over for use in Spain

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