

## What to carry in the car

Reader Chris Poole recently attended a meeting with the Guardia Civil which discussed what paperwork needed to be kept in the car. Chris thought that this should be shared with other readers and contacted Dave Jones of the Costa News, so as this subject hasn't been covered in this column for a while here goes.

If requested by a police officer you need to show your registration document (Permiso de Circulacion) or log book as we oldies call it, your ITV card (ficha tecnica) and driving licence. Your details are held on a data base so the officer may not ask for your insurance papers, though if you are involved in an accident you will need these to hand so they should be in the car anyway. Your road tax receipt (IVTM) may be requested also

Natives need to carry their DNI (identity card) but as we are not lucky enough to have these, foreigners should carry a passport plus NIE certificate or Residencia. Losing your passport creates grief and expense, so a notarised copy is a good idea. Spare spectacles should also be carried, though I know of no-one who has ever been asked to produce these.

### Paperwork aside

Motor manufacturers have made it nigh on impossible to change a light bulb on modern cars unless you are a contortionist with a degree in automotive engineering. Perish the thought that this is so you have to visit their overpriced workshops to undertake what should be a simple task. For this reason it is no longer a requirement to carry a spare set of bulbs

Also to be carried are a minimum two hi-viz vests to be worn in the event of an accident or in any other situation where you may be at risk of being hit by passing traffic so perhaps their use on pedestrian crossings should be made compulsory. Two warning triangles should be deployed in similar circumstances, one behind the car and the other in front if the traffic is two-way

What else could we carry? A first aid kit is a good idea if only to use the sticking plaster to silence back seat drivers, as is a fire extinguisher in case you drop a fag on the carpet. A bottle of water will stave off dehydration in the event of a delay or breakdown.

Being an old-school motorist my boot is replete with a tow-rope, jump leads and torch, all of which have been used in the past couple of years on my own car or when assisting other drivers. The spare starting handle and the hurricane lamp that we had to use when parked on a side street are probably at the back of the shed and my foot pump has disappeared, so now would be a good time to get one of those aerosols to inflate a flat tyre in an emergency, like when suffering a puncture on the motorway

### Modern technology

Sat-nav is the best invention ever in terms of finding your way around; so much more convenient than the maps and road atlases that I used to use when driving all over the UK many years ago. I still cannot get why technophobes don't use them; if nothing else they will guide you home if lost. I wonder though if in-car TV's prevent modern day kids from wailing "are we nearly there yet?"

One modern gadget that may be of use to expats who leave their cars in Spain for months on end is a small solar panel behind the windscreen which trickle charges the battery to prevent it from getting flat, though not much use in a garage or underground car park I suppose. When I hired a car in the UK over Christmas it not only had seat warmers which I had forgotten existed, but a heated steering wheel too- ah sheer luxury

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