

Certificates of Conformity

To many Brits, the EU Certificate of Conformity is a mystery as it is not widely provided with UK plated cars, so what is it?

When a vehicle is built, the manufacturers have to conform to EU regulations regarding acceptable build standards and specifications for the entire vehicle and its components. When finished, the vehicle receives a certificate of conformity. The title is long winded so it is commonly referred to as a CoC which confirms the build spec' otherwise known as that tongue twister "homologation"

For vehicles being imported into one EU country from another this document, or similar, is required so that the ITV stations who will inspect the vehicle can confirm that it is acceptable in their country. A CoC can be ordered through the manufacturer either directly or from a franchised dealer. The costs vary from around €100 to €300 which is a bit of a con as the information is on a data base and merely needs printing off. However, if the vehicle has been changed in any way, the document may be worthless

Items such as tow bars, bull bars, running boards, aerofoils etc. are generally not part of the original spec' and are fitted after the car leaves the production line as they are optional extras or bolt-ons. So, you turn up for an ITV only to be told that the tow bar must come off as it is not homologated, great news when you have a caravan parked in your drive, so what to do?

The engineer's report

The more flexible report and one that I use for the majority of vehicles that I re-register is called an engineer's report, in Spanish a ficha tecnica reducida. This report replicates the CoC but can also add the above "bolt- ons" in many cases, so that you end up with a document showing the details of the car as it actually is

Now, here's the rub. Components bolted on which are not on the manufacturer's original specification will not be allowed even if they are on the engineer's report unless the vehicle is being imported by the person that owned it before he "moved to Spain". Therefore, a tow bar approved in another EU country can remain on the car only if the owner can prove that the vehicle had this before he brought it to Spain. In most cases this is simple. However, if the owner bought the car after he moved to Spain and the tow bar is not on the original spec' it has to be removed. Now you may understand why there is so much confusion and misinformation regarding this issue

Non- EU vehicles

Cars made for the non-EU market, the USA for example, will not be EU type approved and a CoC will never be available for such vehicles, so an engineer's report will always be required when these are imported, even if the vehicle is presently registered in the UK or another EU country. The cost of the report is around €100-€120 in all cases. Where a non-EU spec'

vehicle is being imported by a Spanish resident it must undergo an inspection as if it were unique. The cost of this report is €1600!!

It is vital when importing a vehicle that varies from its original specification that expert help is sought from someone that understands the whole process of re-registration and not just a part of the procedure. It is highly unlikely that a gestor, car dealer or you mate down the pub will know the intricacies even though you may expect them to

Well that was a bit heavy, so have a smile at this

Jonnie was driving home when his car phone rang. Answering, he heard his wife's voice urgently warning him, "Jonnie, I just heard on the news that there's a car going the wrong way on the AP7, you must be careful." "You are right" said Jonnie, "But it's not just the one car, it's all of them!"

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