

Compound Crisis

The article that appeared in the Costa News issue 2207 in regard to the owner of a UK car that had been impounded raised a number of questions.

For those of you who did not read the item, it was in relation to a pensioner whose MOT had expired so he had SORN'd the car at DVLA. Subsequently the car was used for a trip to Alicante-Elche airport where the car was seized by the police and subsequently taken to the municipal compound in Elche. The pensioner's circumstances deserve sympathy and he appears not to be a serial offender; unfortunately the police see their role as enforcing the law irrespective of the motives of the perpetrator, so let's take a look at why this happened

For a vehicle to be legal in Spain it has to be road-legal in the country in which it is presently registered. In the case of UK cars this means having an in-date MOT, road tax and insurance. Similarly, it cannot be SORN which is Statutory Off Road Notice. The clue is in the title and off road means off road throughout the EU, not just the UK.

Smart Cops

As part of a clampdown on illegal cars in Spain, all police forces have been shown how to determine the legality of UK vehicles via their smart phones which everyone seems to have these days. To see how simple it is, on your smart phone go into Google and enter www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk. This will ask for the registration number and make of the vehicle. Straightaway you can see if the vehicle is road legal. There is no need to understand English as red flags tell the police if it is not

The cynical may say that this is a way of gaining extra income as the fines are substantial, normally €700, halved for prompt payment, plus the cost of the grua (breakdown truck) that took your car to the compound of say €100, plus a daily charge averaging €10 per day and they may well be right. The compound in Elche is full of foreign cars as well as Spanish ones

So how do you get your car out of the compound?

Firstly, ensure that the fines are paid, then apply to Trafico for provisional plates which are black on green, insure the car using the provisional number, go to the compound to pay any outstanding charges and drive away. **YOU DO NOT NEED AN ITV TO OBTAIN GREEN PLATES.** There is a catch though. In addition to the above costs you will also be required to pay road tax and registration tax, a.k.a. import tax, which you would have paid anyway if the car had been re-registered in the normal way.

Once you have the green plates, the car can be re-registered formally. The car will need an ITV prior to which you will need a Certificate of Conformity from the manufacturer or an engineer's report which some, though few, ITV stations can provide. If your headlights and

rear lights are of the UK type, these will need changing before the inspection. After the ITV, the papers can be presented to Trafico and a definitive registration number will be provided. The green plates last for 2 months only and cannot be used outside of Spain

Alternatives?

Let the compound keep the car; it will subsequently be scrapped but you will receive nothing in return. Or arrange for a scrapyard to collect the car for scrapping and they will reward you with about €150. The pensioner in our story wants the car collected from the compound by a grua and taken to the UK. Whilst I have never dealt with this exact requirement I'm sure that I could if asked

It goes without saying that to prevent yourself from going through this grief, keep your car legal and don't be tempted to use it even for short journeys if it is not road-legal

Spanish Number Plates
Graham Shelton
Orihuela, Alicante
www.spanish-number-plates.com
info@spanish-number-plates.com
966 753 375
605 319 889