

Dash-lights

Flashier sports cars do not have a driving position, they have cockpits! Perhaps the owners see themselves as fast jet pilots. A bewildering display of lights to indicate smooth running or problems are in their face, left, right and overhead. Some even have a Head Up Display (HUD) which projects information onto the windscreen so the pilot or driver does not have to look down to get a reading

Over-familiarity with our vehicle, means that we tend only to notice these when there is a problem and they are often ignored until it is time for the ITV (MOT) inspection.

Common warning lights

The most common warning lights show bulbs not working on the exterior lights, engine management system fault, ABS (anti-lock braking system) and airbag warning.

As far as the ITV is concerned, the engine management and ABS warnings can be ignored. All exterior lights should work, though I am perpetually surprised that in such cases the inspector will often point out the such and such a light is not functioning and give you a pass, hence the reason why there are so many cars in Spain with only one brake light, if any

The air bag warning light is supposed to come on when you turn on the ignition, and then go off a few seconds later. More often than not the main culprits are bad connections with the plug and socket under the seats, or the seat belt socket. These are simple to fix with the system being re-set afterwards by use of a diagnostics computer that all modern mechanics need to have to hand.

Checked yours lately? If you're like me no, but now you know what to look out for, but don't wait for the ITV as I'm sure that this clever device has saved hundreds of lives when it explodes for a nano second before collapsing again, saving us from biting the steering wheel or head butting the windshield

Biased headlights

Many previous customers have told me that the headlights on their cars have been altered to perform to continental standards which means pointing to the right kerb instead of the left. Experience has taught me that few lights have this ability.

Some can be adjusted to take out the right hand bias making the beam pattern "flat" or symmetric. Some ITV stations will accept flat-lined lights, others will not

Not sure which yours are? The best way to find out is to take your car to a garage and ask them to check and if possible adjust them against a beam setter, the same type that is used at the ITV station. Alternatively, a simple check that you can carry out yourself, preferably but not necessarily at night is to put your headlights on dipped beam and hold a piece of white A4 paper in close to the light. You should see a line of

light parallel to the road surface and a secondary beam of light pointing right or left. The left or right bias can be seen either as a sharp line or sometimes as a blob of light

Thumb wheel adjuster

Ever seen that little thumb wheel on the dash with a picture of a headlight next to it? Some people think that this is an adjuster for changing the bias of the lights from UK to continental standard; if only it was, but no. This moves the headlight beams up and down and is very rarely used unless you are in the habit of towing a trailer or caravan or loading the boot with breeze blocks, all of which bring the front of the car up and make the lights look like they are searching for Messerschmitts. The thumb wheel is designed to adjust the lights down during the period of carrying loads or towing.

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