

Driving Defensively

When I arrange to meet customers, so that they know what I look like, I describe myself as a short guy with grey hair. Other descriptions have been applied in the past but as this is a family newspaper, I can't repeat them here.

The customers often reply that they fit the same description, so I guess we must be stereotypical ex-pats. Another stereotype that I share with most males is that I think I'm a good driver; not a perfect one, just good. For sure I'm going to have to be a little better now as the Spanish media is full of a clampdown on "distraction driving" caused by twiddling with the radio, adjusting sat- navs, smoking etc all of which I am guilty of. I use a totally hands free kit as using a mic' and speaker is the only form of phone use officially allowed. Kids and dogs are probably the worst distractions and should be ejected at the first opportunity. The long awaited ban on back seat drivers is still pending!

Men, the best drivers?

Telling a bloke that he is a bad driver is not the done thing; it's like telling him that he is puny or has a small weaner; guaranteed to cause offence as it strikes at the core of his masculinity. Every man knows that we are instinctively better drivers than women, funny then that insurance companies often demand lower premiums from lady drivers as they have less accidents; must have their sums wrong.

So now that we men know that we are perfect drivers, what about the idiots on the roads? I expect that they think that they are perfect as well, but we still share the tarmac with them so can expect to meet up with them daily and need to try and maintain our perfect record, so how can we do this? A few years ago I was a manager within a massive multinational distribution company which taught defensive driving so I will pass on a few tips learned

Space front and rear

Give yourself plenty of space. If you are driving too close to the vehicle in front, it is difficult to see the road ahead and dangerous if he suddenly brakes. Try this; when the leading car passes a fixed object count to two slowly; if you have passed the same fixed object before the two is up, you are too close; this works at all speeds.

Being tailgated? This is very unpleasant for most of us and is guaranteed to set the testosterone flowing. The temptation to slam the brakes on can be overwhelming and speeding up will only make him keep up with you, so the best advice is not to let him wind you up but gently decelerate giving him more opportunity to pass and annoy someone else

Do you have an escape route? If there is an accident ahead can you see where you will head for if you cannot avoid the carnage? Ever been boxed in whilst waiting at traffic lights and the vehicle in front stalls? If you stop with sufficient space in front of you

that you can see the rear wheels of the car in front touching the road you will have enough room to get out

Reversing

Have you noticed the amount of rear-end damage to cars over here? Much of this is caused by reversing, when visibility from the driver's seat is at its worst. The way to minimise this is firstly to avoid reversing at all by parking where possible in a space that you can just drive off from. If not possible, always reverse park, this way you can see everything around you as you approach the parking slot and make your manoeuvre. Driving off afterwards is so much simpler

Safe driving!

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