

## Green number plates

Many of you may have noticed a sudden proliferation of green Spanish number plates, by which I mean white letters and numbers on a green background. These are not displayed by members of the political party of the same name, energy efficient cars or even greengrocers, but are plates provided in only two sets of circumstances

On occasion they are provided to vehicles that do not have EU type approval and the paperwork is being regularised to allow time for the vehicle to conform to the demanding strictures of the Trafico system, but by far the most common use of them is where a vehicle has been impounded by the police

This subject was covered only 6 months ago when a police purge started but I make no apologies for covering it again as many people are still falling foul of a clampdown facilitated by the police forces being shown how to simply find out if a foreign vehicle is legally on the road

### Don't bother mate

Many expats have tried to avoid re-registering their vehicles in Spain because they do not think that their vehicle is worth it or one day they will get around to buying a Spanish one. They are seduced by their neighbours who also haven't got around to it and the fact that on their urb' there are loads of non-Spanish registered cars so find comfort in numbers. The police have had clampdowns in the past, but these have been fairly random whereby a car has been in an accident, stopped at a roadside check or they are fed up with seeing it around and clearly flouting the law, but this latest purge is more systematic

### So what is illegal?

For a car to be in use on the roads in Spain it must be legal in the country in which it is presently registered, this means that it must be taxed, insured, have an in date roadworthiness certificate (MOT in the UK) and not have been declared off the road (SORN in the UK). It may be a coincidence but the removal of the requirement to display UK road tax discs may have made the police wonder how they could check if the car was legal, so now they open up their smart phones, go onto the DVLA website, tap in the registration number and make of a vehicle and bingo, it tells them what they need to know

Try it yourself by following this link: [www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/](http://www.vehicleenquiry.service.gov.uk/)

Simple eh? No language barriers, just ticks and crosses

### Recovering your vehicle from the police

If your vehicle has been impounded this is what you need to do to recover it. Firstly, pay the fines, typically €700, reduced to €350 if paid promptly. Pay the road Spanish tax, pay the registration/import tax and apply to Trafico for provisional registration. After this, get the green plates from an official supplier. You now need to insure the car against the provisional number, go to the police compound, pay the daily storage charge of between €5 and €15 per

day, pay the cost of the grua (breakdown truck) which took your car to the compound of around €80 to €150 and you can drive your car off, but only within Spain

The green plates have a validity of two months which allows enough time for the car to be re-registered normally, so it will need to be inspected by an engineer who will produce a report (ficha reducida) confirming that your vehicle is essentially as built, after which it can be presented for an ITV inspection by which time your UK or Irish lights will probably have been exchanged. Back to Trafico again for the definitive registration, get some black on white number plates, change your insurance documents and crack on

Much of this is similar to standard registration, but the costs are much higher, meanwhile you are without a vehicle and facing a good deal of stress. Still think that it is worth not bothering?

### Spanish Number Plates

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