

New year motoring reminders

About this time of the year, those of us who write about motoring matters are prone to offering what we hope is sensible advice about...well motoring.

This often runs along the lines of check your oil and water, keep your tyres inflated correctly, ensure that the car is serviced regularly etc. etc. Even in Spain it makes sense to carry spare water for the car and for drinking, blankets, wellies, Kendal mint cake, a rope, snow chains and after the recent gota fria, a lifejacket

All good stuff that you can read about elsewhere. As I deal mainly with the laws of motoring, here a few more things to add to the list

Road Tax

Although the tax period is from January to December, the bills are sent out over the Spring. The tax is set by your Ayuntamiento (Town Hall) though in much of Alicante Province it is collected by SUMA

Each bill will show the due amount, plus when and where it is to be paid. If you haven't received a bill by say March, this either means that you have moved and not told anyone. (I can hear the groans of anguish now!!) or the bill has been lost, so you may want to chase it up

ITV inspection

ITV inspections are due every 6 months, annually or two years depending upon the age and type of your vehicle. Both the ITV card and the coloured sticker in the windscreen will tell you when the next inspection is due.

Those of you who are not full-time residents may not be in Spain when the car becomes due for inspection, but vehicles can be inspected well before the expiry date so you can choose a month when you are normally over. Remember if you allow your ITV to run out, then you are not only committing an offence, but your insurance may become invalid

Insurance

By now you will hopefully have another year's worth of "no-claims" bonus so may wish to consider fishing around for a better quote, though make sure that you compare like-with-like not forgetting that all important breakdown cover (no-not all policies provide it automatically). If you loan your car to visiting relatives, ensure that they are covered, especially if they are less than 30 years of age.

Driving Licence

How about a new driving licence; still using your UK one? If you have the green Residencia certificate or card, you should exchange your licence for a Spanish one within two years of obtaining it. Although you can wait until the UK one is due for

renewal, my advice would be to do it sooner rather than later. It is a good form of ID in lieu of your passport

Re-registration

Your car still on UK plates? Ah well. In 2016 I dealt with drivers who were heavily fined, had their cars impounded, or gave them up, as the cost of getting them out of the compound was more than the car was worth. Your neighbours or the bar-room lawyers may say don't bother, so hopefully they will pay the costs if your car is impounded

Buying a new car?

Before buying locally, consider having the car's history checked as many people end up with unexpected inherited costs. If buying a car from the UK or another country, or thinking of buying a brand-new car then give me a call before you do, as I may be able to save you money in taxes or suggest where to buy

The Police

Our dear friends in the nice green uniform as well as the Bobbies of the Policia Local are rallying around to help fill the government's coffers by fining motorists for all sorts of reasons. Those of you from the UK will find this frighteningly familiar, as motorists are an easy target, so drive legally and don't give them the chance to hassle you.

Happy new year and safe motoring

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