

## Renewing your driving licence

Several people have recently asked how and when they need to renew their Spanish driving licence. I have had mine since about 2008, but in 2012 took a close look at it whilst preparing to write an article and realised that it had expired! Oops, well not all of it, just the entitlement to drive 7.5 tonne vehicles and others requiring a vocational licence. Like many older geezers this entitlement was granted under “grandfather rights” many years ago, and has come in handy ever since.

The renewal was straightforward enough. I went to a specialist medical centre (Centros de Reconocimiento de Conductores) and undertook the “medical” which is a series of simple tests of your coordination ability, eyesight, hearing etc. They also renewed my licence via Trafico and this arrived in the post a week or so later. I just wish that they had taken a better photo as I look like a member of the Addams family from the spooky TV series!

Apart from the photo, the front of your license will show the date of issue and expiry. The reverse side shows your entitlements and the specific expiry date for each one which, as in my case, was earlier for the vocational elements than the date on the front and was how I came to miss it

Once you receive your replacement licence, check that the entitlements are the same as before, it is not uncommon for them to be missed off; if this is the case, go back to the medical centre and point it out to them

A Spanish licence will cover you for driving anywhere in Europe as would your UK one and you can hire a car in the UK or elsewhere just as you do now.

## Exchanging your UK licence

This process is like renewing a Spanish one in that a medical is required. Some centres, but not many, will also undertake to exchange it for you, otherwise Trafico in your Provincial capital (such as Alicante City or Murcia City) is the place to go or engage a Gestoria or another specialist

Contrary to popular belief, if you already have a licence issued in any EU country, there is no need to take a driving test when obtaining a Spanish one. Some folks are reluctant to give up their UK licence, but personally I find it very useful as identification as it shows my name, photograph and NIE number

Brexit is never far from our minds so it is reasonable to question what happens after this event. Presently EU licences are valid throughout the Union so your Spanish licence for sure will be valid in the remaining 27 countries, but to me it is inconceivable that a Spanish licence will not be valid in the UK or vice versa in the future. The rules are governed by reciprocal agreements, not political union, and both Spain and the UK have such agreements with many countries outside of the EU, mostly, but not exclusively, former colonies, so this is not a major worry for me

## Why change your licence?

If you live in Spain habitually, you are required to exchange your UK licence for a Spanish one within two years of gaining Residency or when it would have been due for renewal “back home”. The rules are open to ambiguity and I am aware of at least one person has been fined for having a UK licence when the police officer wrongly thought that he should have a Spanish one. Bear in mind that a Guardia officer who can read your licence through the obligatory sunglasses may not be aware of all the nuances, but best not to argue, after all he has a gun and plenty of mates. If you live here, play safe and get Spanish

Spanish Number Plates  
Graham Shelton  
Orihuela, Alicante  
[www.spanish-number-plates.com](http://www.spanish-number-plates.com)  
[info@spanish-number-plates.com](mailto:info@spanish-number-plates.com)  
966 753 375  
605 319 889