

Vehicles and Residency

Odd that buses come along in threes and in my line of work, queries seem to follow the same pattern. Not sure why this is unless some joker has started a rumour and folks want the facts, so it is time for me to don my anorak again!

Residency is a tricky question as many people are not sure what this means. No surprise due the plethora of documents available over here and the conflicting advice given by the bar room lawyers. Full residency is having a Residencia certificate/card, Padron, paying taxes if liable, and for many of us having a SIP (health) card. I qualify for all of the above, but the mere thought of this makes many people quiver with doubt and fear. Of course they may also be on the run from the old bill or an ex-wife/husband or have just disappeared to spend the kids' inheritance in which case a low profile is understandable

I guess that a lot of genuine fears arise over paying taxes and losing the benefits that you may have back home. Whilst I am no tax expert and urge you to find one if in any doubt, the documents required to register a vehicle in Spain do not make you a resident, so what do you need?

Proof of address

Four documents are normally all it takes. The first three are perhaps obvious as they are the vehicle registration document (preferably in your name; you would be surprised how many aren't), a copy of your passport, an NIE certificate which identifies you in the system and proof of address

Proof of address can be demonstrated via a number of documents. The most common are a utility bill, from those friendly people at Iberdrola for example, the escritura (deeds) to your property, rental agreement, campsite letter or the Padron. Whilst the Padron is the most acceptable document it is not mandatory in the vast majority of cases. For those unsure what the Padron is, it is a document provided by each Town Hall (ayuntamiento) showing that you are registered as having a home in that town whether that home is owned, mortgaged, rented or is a caravan

So in principle you could live most of your life in your home country whilst maintaining a mobile home on the Costa del Britanicos and still have enough paperwork to register a vehicle

Naturally exceptions apply and a Padron may become vital. This would normally be because your vehicle falls outside of European Type approval

The Residencia is never mandatory unless you are seeking to avoid the registration (a.k.a. import) tax on your vehicle and you are a British citizen. The Irish are lucky in that they can avoid the tax without obtaining residency, though there is a limited timescale for all nationalities who wish to gain tax exemption

Residencia and NIE

The residency document which was initially produced as an ID card, later as a green sheet of paper and latterly as a green card supersedes the NIE certificate, so those who have residency do not need to have an NIE certificate which for some people is a blessing in disguise. Older NIE certificates were hand written, often on yellow paper and perfectly acceptable throughout Spain except by Trafico who refuse it because this style of document is merely a request form.

The white A4 NIE certificates all nicely typed up are OK. But, oh yes there's a big but because those certificates issued in the last year or so expire after 3 months and may need renewing if required by the jobsworths. The latest NIE's do not show your address either. I wonder if this is progress or messing with the system because the civil servants have nothing better to do?

Seem daunting? Not to an anorak like me, so if in doubt get in touch

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