

Deadlines

Whilst cleaning the inside of my car this afternoon (incidentally, did you know that you cannot wash your car in Spain due to the scarcity of water? You have to use a car wash where the water is recycled). I noticed that my car is due for its ITV inspection in March, so those pretty little ITV stickers in the windscreen have their uses

My deadline for submitting this article is tomorrow and whilst I always meet it, sometimes it's a struggle with everything else going on, but meeting this deadline is important to me and hopefully to my readers but especially to the staff at CBN. Normally I always have a few ideas as to what to cover, always prompted by customer queries or incidences that have happened recently. So if this deadline is important what others are?

ITV inspection and road tax

Well as mentioned above, my ITV inspection is due and if I miss the date, my insurance may become invalid and eventually I would get a letter from the nice people at Trafico advising me to get my act together. Were I to be stopped by the friendly "boys in green" no doubt a fine would follow and even stronger words provided, so it very important to meet this particular deadline. Whilst the ITV sticker shows the month as well as year of the inspection, it does not show the exact date; this is shown inside the ITV card, so contrary to popular belief you do not have until the end of the month in question to have the test. Incidentally, a vehicle can be re-tested at any time before the present ITV has expired

If the vehicle fails the examination, then the period to put right any deficiencies is two months, failing which you will hear from Trafico; however it is never a good idea to let this deadline run its course, especially if the problem affects the safety of people or your car. Although the ITV system is recorded via a central computer, do not rely on reminders from the authorities.

The deadline for road tax can cause confusion, normally because it is widely understood that the tax is for January to December, though it typically has to be paid by the first week of May; however you can bet your last glass of vino that local differences apply!

Non-Spanish vehicles

The above assumes that your vehicle is Spanish; what if it isn't? Well if your car is British, you must have a current MOT, road tax and insurance. If you SORN your vehicle it should not be used anywhere as the SORN does not apply to the UK only. There is a clue in the wording of Statutory Off Road Notice. Taking the car back to the UK to tax and MOT it annually does not make the car legal in Spain if it is here for more than 6 months in any 12-month period

So what deadlines do we have here? Firstly, a non-Spanish car can remain legally in Spain for up to 6 months before it has to be taken out of the country for 6 months. If

you have passed this deadline as many people have, you are leaving yourself open to sanctions. If your MOT is about to run out, your deadline is to take the vehicle back to the UK for 6 months and get it MOT'd at the same time or re-register it. An ITV inspection is not a substitute for the MOT on a British or other foreign plated car

Want to re-register your vehicle but are wary of import tax? There is an important deadline here in that to gain an exemption from the tax, you can do so if you re-register within two months of obtaining your first Padron or obtaining Residencia, whichever came first. Another proviso here is that you must firstly have owned the vehicle for at least 6 months, so to save the tax, meet this deadline first

If you owned your vehicle before coming to Spain, very few other deadlines are important, but if you are registered here, then there are other deadlines that apply mostly concerning the age of the vehicle because more and more regulations have been introduced. Bargains are to be had by purchasing outside of Spain, but before doing so, seek specialist advice to ensure that the vehicle that you have in mind can be accepted here

Customer Care

On a completely different note, I was recently flattered to be invited to be a judge for an organisation named "Company Women". Maybe as the father of four daughters, they assumed that I knew something of the fairer sex; yeah right! This organisation which as the name describes is for ladies who either run businesses or who can make an active difference in their organisations.

The role that I was given was to interview ladies that had been nominated for the prestigious annual award for Customer Care. When so many businesses are closing down and people returning to the UK, it is easy to get caught up in the doom and gloom. The ladies that I interviewed showed that there are those who are passionate about their customers and this shows in everything that they do. Is it any surprise that they are successful when unlike some fellow expats; they do not provide a shoddy service with the hope of making a fast buck before the truth catches up on them

Providing that little extra goes a long way in terms of customer satisfaction and the feeling of having done a job well and helps businesses survive. Well done ladies, it was a pleasure meeting you

Phew deadline met; no not this one, the other half says that dinner is ready!

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