

## Paperwork, paperwork and paperwork

Quesada is a very large urbanisation straddling the hills just North of Torrevieja; a pleasant area and for those who like Spain this way, a real home-from home for UK ex-pats due to the large number of Brits living there amongst their own shops and bars and a far cry from the Spanish village which I call home

Because of the amount of foreign vehicles in Quesada, I draw a lot of customers from the area and my business is increasing there. Perhaps the following incident may explain one reason why

### The angry policeman

The phone rings; on the other end is a customer whose car is in the process of being re-registered. He is a little flustered, as the Policia Local in Quesada had pulled him in and the family members with him are very anxious. The officer concerned is being unpleasant refusing to let him continue to drive. As with many ex-pats living on urbanisations with their fellow countrymen, his command of Spanish is limited, so I ask to speak the policeman and although my Spanish is far from perfect, it's adequate for most occasions

The officer says that a document being produced is no good and unless more documents can be found the car is being towed away. Fortunately, I'm not that far away, so ask the officer if he can wait for me to get there. Upon arrival, a grua (tow truck) in attendance, but no, it's not for us, but for the driver of a German registered car whose paperwork is not in order. I ask the officer what is the problem?

Perhaps I should explain that when I re-register vehicles, I give to the owner a document from the ITV station that explains that the vehicle has been inspected for importation. This document shows the owner's and vehicle's particulars and that original documents, have been handed in for processing. The registration number of the vehicle isn't shown, though the chassis number is very prominent. The policeman says that as the registration number isn't shown nor do we have a "Justificante Profesional" from a gestor, the car is being impounded. Now this officer is particularly aggressive, so I have to try and explain to him without making matters worse that the Justificante is not issued in these circumstances and that the registration number of foreign vehicles is not shown on the ITV document. He then went on to say that the owner had no form of identification on him and couldn't prove that the vehicle was his.

I asked if I could take the owner home in my car (his car was going nowhere except maybe the pound) for such documents. We do this and return a short while later with passport, driving licence, insurance papers etc. The officer has now got the bee out of his bonnet and we are all free to go about our business

### The moral of this story?

Always carry the required personal documents with you and the documents for your car, which are logbook, ITV card, insurance, and receipt for road tax. Perhaps of

equal importance, do not expect the police to know all of the niceties of paperwork. The bureaucracy in Spain is mind boggling and ever changing. By the time a change has been passed down the chain of command, it could be months before the officers on the front line get to hear about it. I once had a cigarette with an on-duty Guardia Civil who proceeded to complain long and hard about the constant changes and how difficult it was for him to keep abreast. Of course he had my undying sympathy

Motorists are an easy target for cash-strapped councils and the amount of spot checks has increased lately, so before you take your car out, make sure that you have everything with you

### More paperwork

There are a number of documents necessary when living in Spain. Many people ask me about these, especially people who are still living in the UK and are moving over to Spain; yes people are still coming here and I agree, the grass is greener. So here is a summary of these documents and my understanding of their purpose

**NIE** Numero de Identificacion Etranjeros (Registration number for foreigners). This is a bit like your social security number from the UK. Without this, you can get very little done in Spain.

**Padron** (“Empadronamiento”). This document is provided when you register at your local Town Hall (Ayuntamiento). It is normally free

All people who live in Spain whether natives or not are required to register. This proves where you live, but more importantly is needed to gain access to the health and education systems. It is also needed for larger capital purchases, such as a car and when re-registering your vehicle

In a wider context, your town is provided with funds from upper levels of government based upon the amount of people registered.

*The above do not confer residency*

**Certificado De Registro de Ciudadano de La Union.** (Certificate of Registration). This document replaced the previous ID card called a Residencia. Basically, it is a national register of foreigners in Spain. You should obtain one within 3 months of arriving in Spain if you are permanent here. Costs 10 euros. This does confer residency

The **Baja Consular** is a document from the Consulate. The Consulates of all countries issue it as an aid to bringing your personal possessions to Spain, including your car, without the need to pay import tax

As far as the British are concerned, this document is not issued by the UK government *per se* and therefore the information asked for is not passed to the UK authorities. This document is shown to the Hacienda (Spanish tax office) to demonstrate when you came to Spain and is then returned to you

Neither of the above mean that you will start paying additional taxes in Spain and if you continue to live and work in the UK or receive UK state benefits, these will not be affected either, though if in doubt consult a properly qualified gestor or assessor who specialises in these matters

Phew, mind-boggling eh? So please get in touch for further information