

## **Spain Understanding the speed limits, road signs and traffic conditions on the roads in Spain.**

The general rules and regulations for driving on Spanish roads are similar to those in other European countries. Drivers are expected to understand and follow the Spanish Highway Code.

### **General Rules**

- Drive on the right
- The minimum age for driving a car in Spain is 18 years
- Seatbelts must be worn by the driver and all passengers
- The use of mobile phones and similar devices while driving is prohibited.

An exception to this is when used with a hands-free device that does not have headphones or earphones

- The use of headphones and earphones is prohibited.
- The driver must ensure that the vehicle's number plates (placas de matricula) are visible.
- Vehicle-owners are responsible for ensuring that non-licence-holders do not drive.
- The use of equipment which aids or encourages the evasion of police traffic officials is illegal. It is prohibited to signal to other road users to warn them of a police control point or similar.
- Car horns should not be used to signal in built-up areas, except to prevent accidents.
- It is obligatory for all vehicles to be insured.

## Driving with Children

The driver is responsible for ensuring that all minors travelling in their vehicle are seated according to the law.

- Children under 12 years of age (or less than 135 cm in height) must sit in the back seats of a vehicle, unless an approved seat/restraint is used
- Children under three years of age (or weighing less than 18 kg) must be seated in an approved seat suitable for their height and weight

Children of fewer than 12 years of age are forbidden to ride on motorbikes or mopeds. However, from the age of seven, a child may ride as a passenger provided that a helmet is worn and the driver is an adult who holds the correct licence.

- Further information on suitable seats is provided by the Traffic Department (Dirección General de Tráfico, DGT)

## Documents and Items to Carry in the Car

Drivers are expected to carry the following items in their vehicle at all times and can be fined for not doing so:

- Inflated replacement tire and the tools to fit it
- Reflective vests for driver and passengers
- Two warning triangles

Drivers are expected to carry the following documentation in their vehicle at all times:

- Current driving licence (Permiso de Conducir)
- Vehicle logbook (Permiso de Circulación)
- ITV (Vehicle Inspection) paperwork. The roadworthiness sticker should be placed in a visible position on the windscreen.

Although it is recommended that drivers carry original documents, certified photocopies are acceptable. Certification is considered legal if provided by an authorised notary, and some town halls and local traffic departments may also provide certified photocopies. Lamination of documentation is acceptable.

The following items and documents are not obligatory, but are recommended by the DGT:

- A spare set of bulbs, and tools to change them
- A receipt proving up-to-date payment of road tax
- The car insurance policy and receipt of payment

### **Accidents and Breakdowns.**

In case of an accident or breakdown, the procedure that the driver must follow is:

- Switch on warning lights
- Put on reflective vest and ensure that any passengers do the same
- Exit vehicle and place warning triangles at a distance of 50 metres from the front and rear of the vehicle. On one-way roads, or roads with three lanes, placing one triangle at a distance of 50 metres from the rear of the vehicle is sufficient
- Ensure that passengers who exit the vehicle wear a reflective vest and stand behind safety barriers or on the pavement
- Call for assistance using an emergency call box, or dial 112 to call emergency services from a mobile phone or landline.

## **Recovery Companies**

Many Spanish insurance providers include vehicle recovery as part of their insurance service. It is advisable to read the small print when agreeing to any insurance policy to confirm what the policy does and does not include.

Other organisations in Spain also offer annual recovery assistance policies:

- The Royal Automobile Club of Spain (Real Automóvil Club de España), RACE:

Note that only registered recovery companies can tow vehicles.