



## **IMPORTING A CAR FROM THE EU INTO PORTUGAL**

Those moving to Portugal are often interested in bringing their car with them. While road taxes may be modest, import duty to bring a car into Portugal can be very high. When taking up residency in Portugal, you are permitted to import your car tax-free as part of your “personal belongings” when you move, provided you abide by certain rules and deadlines.

### **Non-Residents and Motor Vehicles**

Any European registered motor vehicle may be kept in Portugal without importing it, for anything less than 180 days per annum, under certain conditions:

- The owner must be a non-resident;
- The Owner must have the registration documents at hand to be viewed upon demand by the authorities,
- Only the registered owner of the car may drive the vehicle whilst in Portugal,
- The vehicle is for private use only and is driven into Portugal by its registered owner.

### **Importation of Vehicles**

Importation of one’s vehicle into Portugal is tax-free upon taking up permanent residence, only if:

- One has owned the vehicle in one’s home country for 12 months prior to residency in Portugal;
- The vehicle is for private use only;
- The registered owner of the vehicle is transferring his residence from another EU member state where he has been resident for at least 365 days (Proof of this is required by way of old utility bills, etc.)
- The vehicle was purchased fully tax-paid in its registered owner's former country of residence;
- The vehicle has been used by its registered owner in his former country of residence for at least 12 months prior to residency in Portugal.



## Required Documents

- Copy of *Residência*;
- Copy of Passport;
- Copy of Fiscal Number;
- Copy of Driving Licence;
- 2 authenticated copies of the log book (at Post offices or *Junta*, as well as a Notary);
- Colour photos of car taken at 45° back and front, i.e. number plate at an angle (corners);
- European Certificate of Conformity;
- “*Atestado de Residência*” from your *Junta de Freguesia* stating that you reside in their parish as of the date of issue of your Residency Certificate;
- Certificate from Consulate;
- Certificates from *Finanças* (client) & *Segurança Social* (*Despachante*);
- Cheque made payable to *Despachante* (normally €200-€300) to initiate process. The final cost will vary.
- Owner to know where chassis and engine number are stamped on the car (if can't find go to car dealer);
- Original handbook of car;
- Km's
- Tyre size

## Things to be aware of...

- One car per person, which must have been owned for a minimum of 12 months prior to the date of issue of your Residency Certificate.
- Process to be submitted within 6 months of issue of Residency Permit.



- You will be asked for proof of residence at the address where the vehicle is registered in the year prior to issuing of your Residency Permit. Only utility bills are accepted as proof of residence.
- You are asked to obtain proof from the *Finanças* and *Segurança Social* that you have never received benefit, income, etc. in Portugal (if entered into the Portuguese system - *IRS*, Social Security - you can not bring car in free of duty)
- A inspection of the vehicle by a Portuguese MOT will be required at some point, regardless of whether you have a current MOT, or the age of the car. (*Despachante* to arrange)
- Can the headlights be adjusted if it is a right hand drive, if not, new lights need to be fitted which can be very expensive.
- Once the car has been matriculated, it cannot be sold for 1 year.

As you can see, this process is not necessarily for the weak hearted. In fact, it is wise to expect some bureaucratic resistance along the way. An easier - and less frustrating - alternative would simply be to sell your old car and buy a new one here in Portugal. The choice is yours.

### **Motor Vehicle Documentation**

All vehicles in Portugal are required to have:

- *Certificado de Matrícula\** (Registration Certificate), issued by the *Instituto de Mobilidade e dos Transportes Terrestres* or (for vehicles registered before 31 October 2005)
- *Titulo de Registo de Propriedade* (Ownership Registration Document, issued by the *Conservatória do Registo Automóvel* (Vehicle Registration Office), AND
- *Livrete* (Registration Document), issued by *IMTT*.
- Road Tax (Imposto Único de Circulação): Paid annually, during the month in which the vehicle was registered, on-line at your local tax



office or *Loja do Cidadão*. This tax is payable in respect of all vehicles, regardless of whether or not they are in use. Proof of payment is made by showing the receipt issued by the relevant authority;

- Insurance: All vehicles must have at least third party insurance cover. The insurance company will provide an insurance stamp for display in the lower right-hand corner of the vehicle's windscreen, at the time the policy is issued.

These documents, as well as the driver's ID and licence, should be carried at all times for production to the authorities on request.

### **MOT Testing and Certificates**

MOT testing is compulsory in Portugal for all vehicles over four years old. Cars aged between 4-7 years must be tested every two years and thereafter every year. The test (*Inspecção Periódica Obrigatória – IPO*) must be carried out at an approved garage. The garage is required to request the vehicle's ownership documents (*Título de Registo de Propriedade and Livrete* or the more recent *Certificado de Matrícula*) and the owner's taxpayer's identification card (*cartão de contribuinte*) before carrying out the test.

A stamp confirming that the vehicle has undergone (and passed) the test is subsequently issued. This should be displayed below the insurance stamp, in the lower right-hand corner of the vehicle's windscreen.