



HELP IN FRANCE

Assistance for British people moving to or living in France

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Things to know when buying or selling a car.



We have had a few cases of problems when buying and selling cars recently, so we thought you should know some of the 'do's and don'ts' involved with the paperwork in France for the much loved and much hated car.

Selling your car in France.

You will have to fill in a 'Certificat de Cession', a duplicated form in three parts. One copy for you, one for the buyer and another which has to be sent **by you** to the Prefecture. If you fail to send it to the Prefecture, your old car will still be considered as yours and you will be responsible for any speeding tickets, points on your licence or accidents caused by the new owner ! We British have enough problems to deal with in France without the extra burden of sorting out this kind of mess, so please pay attention to the paperwork and don't trust the buyer to send the form to the Prefecture for you. It's always better to be safe than sorry as one of our clients knows only too well.

You will also need to 'cross out' the Carte Gris and write "sold on + (the day's date)" and sign it.

Buying a car in France.

When buying a car, you need to be provided with the following documents:

- La Carte Grise (Registration document of the car) which the seller will have crossed, as above.
- A copy of the Certificat de Cession (Transfer of ownership)
- A Certificat de Situation Administrative (Also called Certificat de non gage) which proves that the car is fully owned by the person selling the car and not fully or partially in the control of a third party, (a previous seller or a credit company.)
- A Certificat de controle technique (MOT)

Without these documents, you will not be able to apply for a new Carte Grise from the Préfecture and therefore cannot be the legal owner of the car.

You are given one month to go to the Prefecture and have the Carte Grise under your name. If the car is bought in a different French department, your car will be given a new number and you will have to change your licence plates.

A tax is payable at the Prefecture for the Carte Grise. It is calculated according to the engine power of the vehicle and can vary according to the department in which you live.

Parlez-vous franglais?

by Joanna W Simm

I knew that learning French wasn't going to be as easy as I had anticipated when I found that I had requested that a hairdresser should; 'Please dye my bottom dark because I have too many grey horses.'

Send in the clowns, here come the Brits. There's a joke that my kids are fond of telling at the moment, and it runs something like this.

'What do you call a man who speaks two languages?'

'Bi lingual.'

'What do you call a man who speaks many languages?'

'Multi lingual.'

'What do you call man who speaks one language?'

'English'.

Oh so sad but true. Why, oh why is it that we find it so difficult to learn to speak another language?

Children, of course, seem to pick it up quickly, (although mine would point out that perhaps even we adults would learn faster if we were shut into a classroom from eight in the morning until five every evening, hearing nothing but French) yet for many of us it is a continuing struggle just to be understood and to understand in the simplest of situations. After three years of full time residency, I can still be completely flummoxed at the supermarket when the check out girl says something I am not expecting. Cue blank looks and assume the mantle of the fool.

We try, God knows we try. My poor husband, whose metal work business necessitates dealing with tradesman, suppliers and government authorities as well as clients, has assembled a communication system composed of gestures, animal grunts, machine noises and other sound effects and dance moves mixed with his very limited French vocabulary and a few words of English. Mostly this is surprisingly effective and the French, bless their kind hearts, even seem to find it marginally endearing. Elegant, however, it is not. His most noteworthy mistakes include introducing himself as an Englishwoman (Je suis anglaise) and, even more impressively, as the country of our fathers itself, with a majestic, 'Je suis Angleterre!'

Contrary to popular opinion, French is not actually English spoken with a funny accent! The French language is a potential minefield for we linguistically challenged Brits, but it is a minefield that we will painfully and painstakingly negotiate every day.

J'habite en France, donc je dois apprendre parler francais!

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