



European
Joint
Support Unit

Driving in France





DRIVING IN FRANCE

NOTE THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF PRIORITY MARKINGS ON THE ROAD (STOP, GIVE WAY) THE PRIORITY IS ALWAYS FOR THE VEHICLE COMING FROM YOUR RIGHT. This is the case all over France – Cities (including Paris), towns, and the countryside. Always be careful of this and when in doubt – give way.

The same rule is also valid if traffic lights are out – you always give way to the right.

The subject of Duty-free cars needs to be approached with care. A bilateral Technical Agreement between Ministries of Defence covering the status of Exchange Officers (EOs) was indeed signed in Nov 15. Immediately following signature, the FMOD confirmed to us that the NATO SOFA applied to British EOs and LOs. However, it transpired that the FMOD had not consulted (and has still not done so) the major French governmental departments involved in matters of privilege and tax, notably the Finance and Interior Ministries and Customs. There is therefore no formal French pan-government agreement on the status of ELOs, and as a result some members of our community have not been permitted to register tax-free cars. However, the further away from the centre of government one is the better these things work, and most of the members of the ELO fraternity who wish to do so have managed to register tax-free vehicles without difficulty by going through their regional Sous-Préfectures (note: not the Mairie). The level of uncertainty is such that we here in BDS do not give positive advice as it could result in an officer ending up deeply out of pocket. We will, however, let you have a letter stating that the NATO SOFA applies to you; we do not guarantee that it will work, and we recommend extreme caution if you decide to go ahead.

Another option is to take out a long-term lease on a car in France. Some of our Officers have done this and the benefit is you can hand it back at the end without any worries. It is not too expensive, and you circumvent all the registration etc.

PERSONAL VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Please note that a new ECO tax has been introduced in France and can potentially cost several thousand euros when registering your UK car in France. You can calculate the cost of your car on the website below.

[http://carlabelling.ademe.fr/recherche/index?category=berline&RechercherL=Rechercher&orderby\[\]=co2%20asc](http://carlabelling.ademe.fr/recherche/index?category=berline&RechercherL=Rechercher&orderby[]=co2%20asc)

The *immatriculation* is a vehicle's registration. The details of a vehicle are in the *Carte Grise*. The process is now done online, and you upload the documents as necessary.

<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N367>

Please note that if you want to circulate during pollution peaks you have to have a sticker on your windscreen with an A-D category. Only A and B cars can circulate on these days. It only costs 3.62 euros and you should have one.

<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F33371>



To register a car in France you now have to use the New ANTS website (www.ants.gouv.fr)
Préfectures no longer have a carte grise section.

To log in you need an account and then are required to sign in again using France Connect (Ameli, Impots or La Poste Account). I created a La Poste account and had my Passport verified; however, this account did not let me use the ANTS website in order to start a request.

The easiest way to start the process is to get someone to start the process for you (who has an 'impots' account) and in effect sponsors your application. My French Boss helped me through the process after logging on using his 'Impots' account details. When making an application there is a selection at the bottom to choose if the request is for someone else. The following documents were required to be uploaded:

Previous registration certificate, 2. Certificate of Conformity, 3. Quitus Fiscal or Customs Certificate, 4. Passport (Proof of Identity), 5. EDF Bill (Proof of address), 6. CERFA 13757 (signed application for carte grise), 7. Invoice (Proof of ownership)

The process was very easy to complete

It then took 1 mth to get a response and when I paid the registration fee and I received an electronic Carte Grise Provisoire, and the real Carte Grise within another week.

good to check with your insurer to confirm cover whilst waiting for the carte grise process.

VEHICLE INSURANCE

In France, vehicle insurance is compulsory and must cover the cost of the damage you might cause. Once you have found suitable insurance, the company will send you the policy, a cover note, a green card (*attestation d'assurance*) and the insurance certificate (*vignette d'assurance*) which must be stuck to the inside of your windshield at the bottom right hand side. Payment is usually made monthly and runs on a 12-month contract. Refunds can be obtained for unused portions of the year but check with the insurer before. Motorcycle insurance can be surprisingly expensive compared to in the UK, and the process for registering and insuring motorcycles imported from the UK is tortuous and can be painful.

Here are some of the companies that Embassy UK based members of staff use, prices can vary so it's worth shopping around:

Philippe Consoli – consoli@groupe-satec.com
tel. 01 42 85 67 19 / 01 42 80 15 03

Astral Insurance Brokers
Tel: 00 33 (4) 68 32 41 20
Fax: 00 33 (4) 68 32 58 80
www.astral.com

Generali "Very easy to deal with and English spoken". One tip that new arrivals might find useful is that insurance can come with a breakdown package included. And, unlike in the UK, both the insurance and breakdown package are valid throughout Europe (including the UK), something which is not the case with UK insurance and breakdown cover"



Direct Assurance - <http://www.direct-assurance.fr/>

Tip: "If you've brought your UK car with you, remember to check up front whether the company you're thinking of doing business with will insure a RHD car. I got as far as paying the deposit before they informed me, they didn't (despite my having explained it was a UK car...)." One of our Officers has recommended the company below which insures UK plated cars abroad.

Stuart Collins & Co, 114 Walter Road, Swansea, SA1 5QQ

Tel : +44 (0)1792 655562

Fax : +44(0)1792 651126

mail@stuartcollins.com

VEHCILE MOT

Contrôle technique – All cars registered in France must have a MOT before the 4th anniversary of the date they were first put on the road and subsequent visits every 2 years. You won't be reminded about this – it is your responsibility to make sure it is done and avoid fines.

<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2878>

VEHICLE DOCUMENTS

Car drivers: motorcycle riders are obliged to carry their vehicle documents and driving licence when driving and are liable to fines if they are unable to present their papers on request. Failure to produce them within five days will result in a further fine. Drivers without proper insurance cover will be liable to a fine and/or a prison sentence.

WARNING TRIANGLE AND SAFETY JACKET

By law, one red warning triangle and one high-visibility waistcoat/vest must be carried in all vehicles. In the event of breakdown, the driver must put on the safety jacket before leaving the vehicle, and then place the warning triangle 30 metres from the breakdown to warn approaching traffic. Failure to carry these items in the vehicle is punishable by a fine incurred per item not carried.

SEAT BELTS AND MOBILE PHONES

It is a legal requirement in France for front and rear seat passengers as well as drivers to wear seat belts. Failure by a driver to 'belt-up' can result in a fine. Moreover, responsibility rests with the driver for ensuring that his front seat passenger is wearing a seat belt. Failure to do this will result in the fine being doubled and a further amount payable if the fine is not paid within one month. It is illegal for children under ten years of age to ride in the front seat of a car. It is also illegal to talk on a mobile phone whilst driving.

BUS LANES

Bus lanes in Paris are reserved for the sole use of public transport, taxis and bicycles.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURE

Should you be unfortunate enough to have an accident it is compulsory to complete an accident report form (*Constat Amiable d'Accident automobile*). This does not constitute recognition of responsibility but serves to list the persons involved and the events and helps accelerate the reimbursement procedure from your insurance company. The accident report form is provided by your Insurance Company and should be kept in your car along with your other documents.

In case of serious damage to your car or to people, do not hesitate to call the Police. The Police must come when requested and the report they will make (called *procès verbal*) is a legal document (you will be provided with a copy).