

The London T-Charge (2017) and Ultra-Low Emission Zone (2019).

From 23 October 2017, nearly all vehicles registered before January 2005 will incur a £10 ‘toxicity charge’ or T-Charge every time they enter the London Congestion Charge Zone. The new charge will be levied in addition to the existing congestion charge.

In April 2019¹, the congestion zone area will be designated an Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) and the toxicity charge will be extended to diesel vehicles registered before January 2015.

T-Charge at A Glance

What? A £10 daily charge for driving in central London in a vehicle that doesn’t meet the Euro 4 (or higher) emissions standard

When? Starts on 23 October 2017. Will be superseded by a stricter Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) charge in 2019

Where? Within the existing Congestion Charge zone, using the same number plate recognition cameras and payment system

Why? To tackle excessive air pollution from traffic by discouraging the use of older vehicles that don’t meet post-2005 emissions standards

1. The T-Charge from October 2017

Who will be affected?

Vehicles with a 54 or older number plate (i.e. more than 12 years old in October 2017), are likely to be liable. The new charge applies to vehicles that don’t meet the Euro 4 exhaust emissions standard, which became mandatory for new vehicles registered from January 2005.

Very few fleet vehicles will be affected as the majority meet the later Euro 5 or 6 emissions standards. A handful of classic cars and vans run as company vehicles will be affected, as will fleets that do not restrict the age of privately-owned cars in their ‘grey fleet’, which would allow employees to drive pre-Euro 4 vehicles.

What types of vehicle does it cover?

Cars, vans, minibuses, buses, coaches, HGVs, motorised caravans and horseboxes, breakdown and recovery vehicles, private ambulances, motor hearses and dual-purpose vehicles. Essentially any vehicle that doesn’t meet the Euro 4, 5 or 6 emissions standards.

What is exempt?

Electric vehicles and combustion vehicles that emit less than 75g/km of CO₂ receive a 100% discount on the T-charge and the congestion charge. Motorcycles are completely exempt from the charges, as are most motorised tricycles and quadricycles, which only incur the charge if they were registered before 2000-2001.

Residents in the zone qualify for a 90% discount on both the T-charge and congestion charge. Transport for London, which runs the charging schemes, lists a limited number of other exemptions and 100% discounts at www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/emissions-surcharge.

How does it work?

- The T-Charge uses the same automatic number plate recognition cameras as the congestion charge. Every vehicle entering the zone is recorded and the number plate checked against registration records. Pre-Euro 4 vehicles incur the £10 T-Charge, which is added to the £11.50 congestion charge. Both charges are payable as a single transaction through the existing congestion charge payment process. Whereas the congestion charge varies according to whether drivers use the Autopay scheme, pay on the day or pay the following day, the T-Charge is always £10: The operating hours of both the Congestion Zone and T Charge are Monday to Friday 07:00 to 18:00. Excludes Bank Holidays and the period between Christmas Day and New Year’s Day inclusive.

Daily cost of C-Charge and T-Charge by payment method

	Auto-pay	Pay on day	Pay by midnight following day
T-Charge	£10	£10	£10
C-Charge	£10.50	£11.50	£14
Total	£20.50	£21.50	£24

¹Subject to TfL consultation. If not April 2019, the ULEZ will be implemented in September 2020.

Where can drivers check whether their vehicle is liable?

TfL has 'T-Charge Checker' on its website at www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/emissions-surcharge/emissions-surcharge-checker. Drivers can check by registration number or vehicle type and get immediate confirmation whether the vehicle is liable.

Non-payment penalty

Drivers have until midnight on the day after entering the zone to pay the T-Charge. If they don't, TfL will issue a penalty notice for £130 to the vehicle's registered owner or keeper. This will be reduced to £65 if paid within 14 days.

2. The Ultra-Low Emission Zone from 2019/20

Currently scheduled to come into effect in either April 2019 or September 2020, the ultra-low emission zone will impose tighter rules on diesel vehicles. Diesels will incur the T-Charge unless they comply with the Euro 6 emissions standard, which became mandatory for new cars in the EU in January 2015.

Therefore, most diesels over five years old in 2019 (pre-64 plate) will have to pay the T-Charge in central London. The ULEZ will have more impact on fleets than the 2017 T-Charge as Euro 5 diesels on five-year replacement cycles will still be in service in 2019.

The ULEZ will cover the same area as the congestion charge zone. The criteria for petrol vehicles will remain Euro 4 because their NO_x emissions are lower than diesels. TfL will enforce the ULEZ via the existing system of cameras, payment methods and penalties. Exemptions and discounts for low-emission vehicles, residents and others will continue to apply.

3. Plans to extend the zone in 2021

Transport for London has set out a plan to extend the Ultra-Low Emission Zone to cover the whole area inside the North and South Circular roads. The proposed scheme will affect heavy goods vehicles and buses from 2020. Cars and light goods vehicles will be affected from 2021. The proposals are under consideration (October 2017) and further details, including charges, are expected to be announced well in advance.

Cars and light goods vehicles will be affected from 2021. The proposals are under consideration (October 2017) and further details, including charges, are expected to be announced well in advance.

What you can do about the charge

To avoid the T-Charge London from October 2017: Only drive in the congestion charge zone in a vehicle that meets or exceeds Euro 4 (or Euro IV for large goods and passenger vehicles), or is exempt, e.g. an EV, hybrid or motorcycle. You may need to upgrade your current vehicle to a newer one. You will still have to pay the congestion charge.

To avoid the ULEZ charge after April 2019: Only drive in the zone in a vehicle that complies with Euro 6 (diesel) or Euro 4 (petrol) or is exempt. If you drive a diesel, you may need to change to a newer model or a petrol or ULEV vehicle. You will still have to pay the congestion charge.

To avoid both the congestion charge and the T-Charge (and save up to £24 per day per vehicle):

- Drive an ultra-low emission vehicle that meets the criteria on TfL's website for a 100% discount. TfL may alter their criteria for the ULEV discount in future so do check www.tfl.gov.uk before deciding on a vehicle.
- Use public transport in the zone – or walk or cycle if possible.

Summary

The good news. Very few vehicles registered in the past 12 years will incur the new T-Charge in London. Almost no company cars and only a small proportion of private cars used on business (whose average age is estimated to be seven years) will have to pay it.

The bad news. If you drive a vehicle that is liable for the new charge, you'll pay twice to drive in central London – both the congestion charge and the T-Charge. And from 2019 onwards, many diesel cars on the road today that were registered between 2005 and 2015 will incur the T-Charge too.

- Drive an ultra-low emission vehicle that meets the criteria on TfL's website for a 100% discount. TfL may alter their criteria for the ULEV discount in future so do check www.tfl.gov.uk before deciding on a vehicle.
- Use public transport in the zone or walk or cycle if possible.

More information

T-Charge information

Transport for London: www.tfl.gov.uk

ULEV information

Fleets: www.alphabet.com/en-gb/alphaelectric

Drivers: www.goultralow.com

Alphabet (GB) Limited, Alphabet House, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 0FB. Tel: 0370 50 50 100.

Registered office address: Alphabet House, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 0FB. Registered in England and Wales 03282075. Alphabet (GB) Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this guide is for general information purposes only and is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication (October 2017). Neither Alphabet nor the author can be held responsible for any actions or consequences arising from acting on, or refraining from taking any action, as a result of reading this.