

Driving Insights

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Get up to speed on the changes to driving rules and regulations

Read about some of the key developments we think you should know about

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London
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News and updates:

Rules and regulations

There have been a quite a few changes to the rules and regulations for driving this year. Here are some of the key developments you need to know about:

01 Number plate rules

Number plate rules have been tightened up with the introduction of the '71' plates and solid black fonts are now required on all new plates, though older plates that met the previous standard may still be used.

02 20mph speed limit

A 20mph speed limit in residential areas is being rolled out in parts of Wales, plus London, Warwickshire and Shropshire.



03 Mobile phone use

Rules around mobile phone use in the car have been tightened up, so it is now illegal to pick up or use a mobile phone while driving, which includes touching your phone while using it as a sat nav.

04 Driving in Europe

The rules and requirements for driving in Europe have changed. We have all the information in our [article here](#).

05 Whiplash claims

The Government introduced changes to the rules around whiplash claims in May. These aim to simplify the compensation process for victims and clarify the ways that claims should be handled by the insurance industry. In particular, there is now a requirement that liability must be decided within 30 working days, with all evidence uploaded to the new Official Injury Claim (OIC) portal if this cannot be achieved because the liability is disputed.

06 Rules for towing

The rules for towing trailers and caravans have changed, so it is no longer necessary to pass a car and trailer driving test to tow heavier trailers.

07 Ultra Low Emission Zone

London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) expansion from 25th October 2021 to cover the area from the North Circular to the South Circular.

08 E10 petrol

E10 petrol, which contains 10% renewable ethanol, has replaced the previous E5 (5% ethanol) petrol across the UK. This will cut CO₂ emissions significantly, but it can be a problem for drivers of older vehicles, as it may not work in their engines. The alternative is to use premium (97+) petrol, which is still based on the E5 standard.



09 Green number plates

Green number plates are now available for zero emission vehicles.



Government incentives: **Electrifying incentives**

The Government has wanted drivers to move to electric cars for some time to help it hit its environmental targets, so it has been offering a range of incentives to encourage people to make the switch.

However, with the financial costs of the pandemic needing to be paid, it's likely that there will be less money for electric cars in the coming years. It has already been announced that the Electric Vehicle Home Charge Scheme (which contributed to the cost of a chargepoint at people's homes) will be ending on 31 March 2022 – and whatever replaces it will likely be targeted at a different audience.

If you're thinking about an electric car, this could be the time to act, while the other benefits are still available. These include:

- 01 The plug-in car grant that contributes a percentage of the purchase price for low-emission vehicles (in the case of cars, it is 35% up to a maximum of £2,500), as long as they are below a certain price.**
- 02 Interest-free loans in Scotland towards the cost of new and used electric vehicles.**
- 03 Far lower benefit in kind tax rates, which can make electric cars much more cost-effective company vehicles for drivers.**
- 04 Zero road tax for zero-emission vehicles (as well as much lower first year tax for low-emission vehicles).**
- 05 100% first year capital allowances for fully electric cars.**

Online car tax guide 2021/22

We understand how important it is to know the latest rules for company cars, so we've partnered with Deloitte to create an online guide that brings them all together in one place. It covers everything from road tax and corporation tax to mileage allowances and fuel benefits – plus all the latest announcements.





Seasonal driving tips:

Driving in autumn and winter

The period of autumn through to winter is a lovely time of year, but it can be difficult for drivers. Here are our tips for coping with the conditions.

This might be the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", but it can also be a difficult time for drivers.

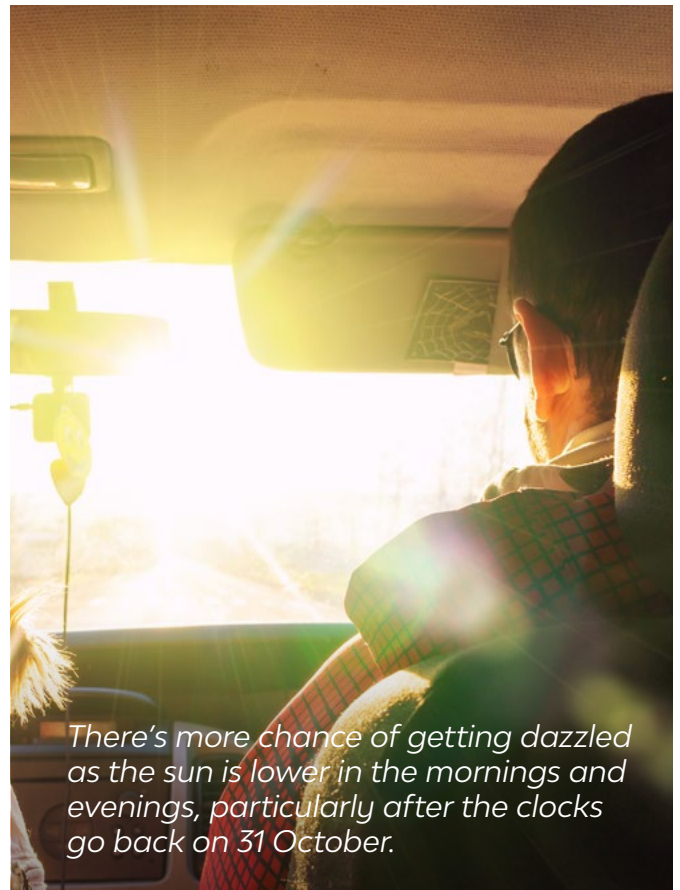
The sun is lower in the mornings and evenings, particularly after the clocks go back on 31 October. This means there's more chance of getting dazzled – and if it's not in your eyes, there's a chance it's affecting the drivers coming towards you.

However, you can take steps to limit the effects:

- 01 **Have sunglasses to hand**
- 02 **Keep both sides of your windscreen clean**
- 03 **Turn on your headlights even when the sun is still out, as it will help other drivers see you**
- 04 **Check your bulbs regularly to make sure they're working**
- 05 **Keep your washer fluid topped up**

Want more top tips for this time of year?

[View infographic](#)



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Maintenance tips:

Keep your car looking nicer, for longer

It takes a lot of work to maintain a car at showroom levels over the years, but keeping it in good condition is a lot easier. It just takes a few simple steps.

01 Plan ahead

Cars are getting bigger, but parking spaces aren't – and this means an increased risk of scratches and dents. However, if you're careful where you park, you can avoid a lot of the risks. Keep clear of spaces where cars might be turning, as they could scrape you without realising, and where possible, pick a space without cars next to you.

02 Get it under cover

It's not an option for everyone, but if you can park underneath a roof, it should keep away bird droppings, sap, pollen and twigs. A garage might even cut your premiums, though it's worth remembering that if you declare it in this way, you will need to park in it.

03 Look after the paintwork

Even if you do your best to avoid them, your car will still pick up the occasional scrape and ding. If this breaks the paintwork, remember to recoat it, as it will help protect against rust.

04 Keep it clean

Similarly, clean the inside regularly – and clean up any spills when they happen. It can be much harder to get things out once they've dried or been ground into the carpet.

05 Don't skip services

You'll know when your regular service is due, so don't let it run late – and if you see a red or yellow warning light, get an expert involved.

06 Be tyre aware

If your tyres are below, or even close to, the limit, your car will take longer to stop in an emergency, which can put you and your family in danger. Checking them regularly can help you make sure you have enough tread.

07 Watch the clock

Finally, if you have a lease car, remember that you signed up for a specific mileage each month. Keep an eye on what you're doing and if you're well over (or under) this level, get in touch with your customer service team.

Does your vehicle have some damage?

Read our Fair Wear and Tear guidelines for advice on preparing your vehicle for return at contact end.

[Advice & guidelines](#)



Efficient driving:

Eight tips to save fuel

The recent 'panic at the pumps' provided drivers with an extra reason to save fuel, but it's never a bad idea to drive efficiently. After all, it should save you money – and it helps the environment as well. Here are eight tips that could mean you get more miles from your fuel.

01 Optimise speed

Cars are generally more fuel efficient in a higher gear, so try to change up as early as you can while still having enough revs for the road situation (and not breaking the speed limit). Then, keep your speed down, as research suggests that fuel efficiency starts to drop once you're going much faster than 50mph.

02 Drive smoothly

Hard acceleration and braking means using more fuel to get up to speed and then wasting more of that speed through the brakes. Driving smoothly at a sensible speed is much more efficient. One way to do this on clear major roads is to use cruise control if you have it.

03 Look ahead

It's easier to drive smoothly if you look ahead on the road so you can plan for anything that could make you need to slow down or stop. For example, if you see traffic lights coming up that are on red, taking your foot off the pedal and letting the car slow down naturally uses less fuel than continuing to accelerate and braking at the last minute.

04 Think temperature

While aircon is great on a blazing hot day, it uses fuel to run. If the inside temperature is only a degree or two over what you usually have, consider turning off the aircon to improve your mileage. When it's a lot hotter, though, it may be better to use the aircon, particularly at higher speeds, as it could be more fuel efficient than opening the windows.

05 Remove weight

If your car boot is full of things that you use occasionally because it's easier than taking them out, think about losing this weight (particularly if they're heavy). Research suggests that every 100 kg of excess load increases the fuel consumption of a vehicle by around 5%.

07 Plan ahead

The most direct route is often the most fuel efficient, so make sure you're going the best way to your destination. That said, also check for accidents or planned roadworks before you leave. A detour or two in this situation might keep you out of a traffic jam where you could be burning fuel while going nowhere.

06 Combine journeys

A warm engine is more efficient than a cold one, so if you know you have several short trips to make, think about combining them into a single journey.

08 Inflate tyres

While it may not sound like much, underinflated and overinflated tyres both reduce fuel economy – and increase your bills as they are likely to wear more quickly. Making sure your car is maintained and serviced on time can also keep it at the best levels of efficiency.

A better alternative?

We hope you find these ideas helpful, but if you'd prefer not to have to queue at the pumps ever again, it might be worth considering an electric car instead. Interest has been rising significantly over the last few days, but we still have a range of vehicles in stock.

A great place to start could be our driver tool that explores how you use your vehicle to see if an electric car could work for you. Why not try it today?



Accident management: The golden hour of accidents

While it may be difficult to remember right after you've been in an accident, getting in touch with your Accident Management provider as quickly as you can (once it's safe to do so), could save you a lot of time and trouble in the weeks ahead. Ideally, you want to do it within the first hour after your accident.

This is now even more important, as the Government introduced new rules around whiplash claims in May this year that mean liability must be decided more quickly. You can read more about this in the 'news and updates' article on [page 2](#).

Supporting LeasePlan customers

If you're a LeasePlan customer, you can call our DriverLine at any time. We're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, so we're always here when you need us.

Doing this means that while you're dealing with any challenges you face from the accident, our team will be working hard to ensure that everything to do with your car or van goes as smoothly as possible - from dealing with your insurer to arranging repairs and sorting out a replacement vehicle. They can also help with any medical issues that you have after the accident.

LeasePlan DriverLine

If you are a LeasePlan driver and you've been involved in an incident, please remember to call the DriverLine **0344 493 7644**

Making sure you have the necessary information

It's also a good idea to bring together as much information as possible right away so you can pass it on to our team. We suggest that you:

- 01 Make a detailed account of events, as it may be required for a witness statement
- 02 Take down details of the other party involved in the accident, including a mobile phone number
- 03 Get details of any witnesses to the accident (name, address, mobile number)
- 04 Look around... are there any CCTV cameras in the area? Could your insurer get hold of CCTV footage?
- 05 Check your dash cam footage is available (if you have one fitted)
- 06 Use your phone to take images or video of the incident and the surroundings as quickly as possible (if it is safe to do so)
- 07 Tell us if you have a tracker/telematics device fitted, as this is useful for geo-positioning
- 08 Make a sketch of incident, including pre-accident positions, if you have some paper to hand. If you have smartphone, use a note-taking or drawing app to sketch the scene and intended route.
- 09 Capture details of any emergency services that attended the scene, including any reference numbers or contact details that they provided.

Essential apps for EV drivers

Your smartphone can be a useful source of information when you're getting used to life with an electric vehicle (EV). Here are some helpful apps to get you moving.

A Better Routepanner (ABRP)

Launched in 2016, ABRP is a sophisticated route-planning tool for electric vehicles. Select your car and preferred networks, and it'll find the fastest way to get from A to B, including charging stops. Adjustable settings mean results can be tailored to reflect your real-world efficiency and the battery state of charge, and the app's algorithm will layer in weather information and live and historic traffic data for more accurate range predictions.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

ChargeFinder

Unlike a petrol or diesel car, you don't have to wait with an electric vehicle while it's charging. ChargeFinder will help locate chargepoints based on the connector, speed, network provider and cost, then suggest local points of interest, including food and shopping facilities. It provides live availability data and route-planning and suggests alternative charging stations nearby if your first choice is busy.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

Co Charger

Co Charger is a platform enabling electric vehicle drivers to share each other's home chargepoints, creating a source of income for hosts and filling gaps in the public networks for users. The entire process is handled by the app, which can list the chargepoint and set a per-hour fee for plugging in, then help others to locate and pay to use it.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

EV Charging by NewMotion

NewMotion's app provides seamless access to 200,000 chargepoints across multiple European networks and 35 countries. It enables drivers to filter chargers by price, speed and availability, control charging sessions remotely and pay for and track usage within a single account. If your usual chargepoint is occupied, the app will also send you a notification as soon as it's available again.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

EVHotels

Destination charging is second only to plugging in at home for convenience. EVHotels enables drivers to find accommodation with chargepoints either on-site or within a set walking distance. Results can be filtered by connector type and hotel chain, and there are 250,000 locations worldwide listed within the app. It'll let you top up while you rest.

Platform: [Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

GECO Air

Small changes to your travel patterns can quickly add up. GECO Air automatically logs all of your journeys – including walking and cycling – then calculates and logs the combined environmental impact in a diary. It will then highlight areas with poor air quality, suggest improvements to driver behaviour and journeys where a different mode might have been more suitable. Results are tailored to your car, including battery-electric models.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

JustPark

Primarily a parking app, JustPark's search results can be filtered to only include spaces with electric vehicle chargepoints. It provides real-time availability with local information and can process pre-booking and payment within a single account. The app can also enable you to make your home chargepoint available to other drivers, and earn an income while you're not using it.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

National Grid ESO – Grid Carbon Intensity

The UK's electrical grid is en route to net zero CO₂ emissions by 2025. In the meantime, the company's app will help you plug in when the energy is greenest. It shows how the electricity is being generated in real time, notifying about new record low carbon intensity and predicting future carbon intensity and sources by region in two-hour timeslots. It's an essential component for making the most of your electric vehicle.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)



PlugSurfing

PlugSurfing is a pan-European roaming service which lets drivers use 150,000 chargepoints across multiple networks from a single membership. There are filters based on price and compatibility, with options for remotely controlling charging sessions and creating a list of favourites within the app. It also offers 24/7 support and will supply a monthly overview of usage and charging costs for drivers.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)

Zap-Map

All the functionality of Zap-Map's live chargepoint map, but in a travel-friendly app. It can locate chargepoints and plan routes including the shortest possible stops, enabling drivers to submit useful information for others and pay for sessions on selected networks. New features include the ability to share your home chargepoint with other drivers and stream the route planner to your car's built-in touchscreen.

Platform: [Android and Apple iOS \(free, some features require a subscription\)](#)
More information: [Click here](#)



Discovering electric:

Introducing Electric Moments

Our Electric Moments campaign celebrates the 'lightbulb' moments when electric vehicle drivers and fleet managers realise just how good these vehicles are – or discover that something they thought was a drawback is actually nothing to worry about.

To encourage more people to find their own Electric Moments we've partnered with YouTube series Fully Charged to create a series of videos exploring EV ownership. These feature Robert Llewellyn (perhaps best known as Kryten in Red Dwarf) and Maddie Moate, who presents Do You Know? for CBeebies. Each video also has contributions from members of the public talking about their electric cars.

Episode 1: What life is like with an electric car and how easy it is to switch

Episode 2: How charging works and where you can do it

Episode 3: Explaining 'range' and what you can do to maximise it

Episode 4: The real costs of owning an electric car – they're more affordable than you might think

Episode 5: How an electric car can be the start of wider green journey

Episode 6: Understanding the 2030 ban on new petrol and diesel vehicles

Episode 7: Exploring electric vans – options and affordability

Episode 8: From tax incentives to grants – the benefits of going electric

Episode 9: The best hints and tips from EV drivers



Understanding the opportunity: Electric vehicles

We've created a set of EV tools designed to make it easier for you to evaluate how well these vehicles might work in your business. The tools can help car and van drivers explore if an EV would be right for them, as well as giving you a way to calculate how much an electric vehicle might cost you to run on a per mile basis.

EV review:

Polestar 2



The Polestar 2 is a high-quality sporting EV, with a dual motor AWD drivetrain with 408bhp and 660Nm of torque – more than a Nissan GT-R. The '2' can take off from rest like a scalded cat (62mph occupies just 4.7s) and you'll be flat out all the way to 140mph.

There's then a hefty 78kWh battery with a 311 WLTP-rated driving range. Charging is about the usual speed for this sort of EV – about ten hours from a garage wallbox or around 40 minutes to get to 80% with a 150kW public charger.

You'd recognise the Polestar 2 as a car from the Volvo family of brands (especially from the rear) but it also has a chunky, purposeful sporty and distinctively Swedish feel of its own. Looks probably aren't going to be the primary reason you choose this contender (and they won't immediately advertise the fact that you've probably spent over £50,000 on it) but if you're OK with something a little more conservatively premium, there's plenty to like here.



Under the skin lies the same modular platform that's used by a Volvo XC40 but it's been updated with a unique front subframe for extra crash protection (electric motors are less absorbent in an impact than an engine), plus there are modifications at the rear to support the heavy lithium-ion battery pack.

There's faultless build quality from an interior carefully fitted out with fabric, wood and vegan leather (proper hide is optional). The blade-shaped dashboard incorporates a predictably huge central freestanding 11.0-inch portrait-format infotainment screen with the latest Google Android system that can automatically activate car stuff (seat positioning, safety system preferences and so on) as you approach it.

The seats are soft and supportive, but the window line is rather high, which contributes to rather poor rearward visibility. Careful battery design means that rear seat legroom is surprisingly good for an EV. And once the powered rear hatch rises, you'll view a 405-litre boot, which expands to 1,095-litres with the seats down, plus there's a further 35-litre space beneath the bonnet up-front.

In summary:

The Polestar 2 has clearly been developed by talented engineers. It'll handle on a different level to most other posh EVs and it develops the electric remit with Volvo-style pragmatism. Buying one would be a step into the unknown. But we can see why you might.

Looking for more EV reviews?

We look at lots of electric cars on the dedicated EV area of our website. You can read all the reviews, including a longer version of our Polestar 2 review here:



DriverLine

For help with your vehicle please call the
LeasePlan DriverLine on **0344 493 7644**

