



> What is the Congestion Charge?

The Congestion Charge aims to reduce congestion within a specified area of central London. The charge is in operation Monday to Friday 07:00-18:00 and does not apply at weekends, Bank Holidays, or the days between Christmas Day and New Year's Day, when traffic levels are lighter.

It was introduced by Transport for London (TfL) in February 2003, following extensive public and stakeholder consultation and was extended westward in February 2007. In early 2009, The Mayor started the legal process to remove the western extension following an informal public consultation, and this will be followed by a further series of statutory consultations. The earliest the extension could be removed is spring 2010.

> Why is the Congestion Charge necessary?

London suffers from the worst traffic congestion in the UK, and among the worst in Europe. The charge is designed to encourage motorists to use other modes of transport, thereby cutting congestion, traffic levels and helping to reduce emissions.

> How does it work?

The Congestion Charge is an £8 daily tariff and payment enables motorists to drive around, leave and re-enter the charging zone as many times as required in one day.

There are no barriers or tollbooths; instead drivers are paying to register their Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) on a database. Cameras read a vehicle's number plate as it enters, leaves or drives within the charging zone and checks it against the database of those who have paid the charge or those who do not have to pay (because they are exempt or registered for a 100 per cent discount). Once a VRN has been matched, the photographic images of the vehicle are automatically deleted from the database.

The daily charge can be paid before or on the day of travel, by telephone, text message, online, at selected shops, petrol stations and by post.

Drivers have up to midnight on the day of travel to pay the £8 charge or £10 if they pay the next charging day after travelling in the zone. Drivers who have not paid the charge by midnight on the next charging day after they travel in the zone, will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 14 days.



> Exemptions and discounts

Exemptions and discounts are available to certain categories of vehicles and individuals. The following are automatically exempt:

- > London licensed taxis and private hire vehicles
- > Motorcycles
- > Bicycles
- > Vehicles with nine or more seats that are licensed with the DVLA as a bus

Residents of the Congestion Charging zone are eligible to register for a 90 per cent discount, which means they would pay a minimum of £4 for five consecutive charging days.

Blue Badge holders are eligible to register for a 100 per cent discount and so pay no daily charge.

Businesses and other organisations operating a fleet of at least 10 vehicles, including cars, can register for the Congestion Charging Fleet Scheme and pay £7 per day per vehicle.

> Where does the money go?

By law, all money raised by the Congestion Charging scheme must be spent on improving

transport in London, from which all Londoners can benefit. The net revenues from the charge are spent on measures to further the aims of the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

In the financial year 2007/08, £137m was raised to invest back into London's transport system.

> What are the benefits?

Congestion Charging continues to make a valuable contribution to London's transport network. It has reduced congestion and provided better transport services, cleaner air and safer roads.

The Sixth Annual Impacts Monitoring Report revealed:

- > A 21 per cent reduction in traffic entering the original charging zone has been maintained (70,000 fewer cars a day)
- > A six per cent increase in bus passengers during charging hours and a 12 per cent increase in cycle journeys into the western extension
- > Cycling levels within the zone are up 66 per cent since the introduction of the Congestion Charge

**Congestion Charging
Customer Service
PO Box 2985
Coventry CV7 8ZR**

**0845 9001234
tfl.gov.uk/congestioncharge**