

Pre-Euro horsebox

Transport for London

Low Emission Zone



A private riding stable uses a Bedford TK chassis with specialist horsebox coachwork, plated at 7,500 kg GVW to transport horses to equestrian events throughout the country. Occasionally, these events take place within the boundaries of the London Low Emission Zone (LEZ). This type of usage results in relatively low annual mileages which, coupled with the substantial replacement cost, mean that vehicles like this have a long useful life. This vehicle was first registered in 1975 and has an engine which pre-dates the emissions standards for recent vehicles. It is particularly useful to the owners as no HGV licence is needed for drivers who passed their driving test prior to 31 December 1996.

This horsebox will be affected by the London LEZ from 7 July 2008. From that date it will be required to meet the Euro III emissions standard for particulate matter (PM). This standard rises to Euro IV for particulate matter in January 2012

The London LEZ comes into effect on 4 February 2008. However, some types of vehicle do not fall within scope until later in the year. For heavy

diesel engined vehicles between 3.5 and 12 tonnes GVW (including goods vehicles, motor caravans, motorised horseboxes and other specialist vehicles), that date is July 2008.

This horsebox is powered by a Bedford 330 diesel engine with a manual transmission. As the vehicle is so old, it will appear as non-compliant if checked against Transport for London's (TfL's) LEZ Compliance Checker (tfl.gov.uk/lezlondon). The owner will therefore need to take some action to avoid paying the £200 daily charge for travel within Greater London from 7 July 2008.

The owner of a horsebox as old as this is faced with three options if they wish to drive the vehicle within the London LEZ:

Paying the daily charge

The first option is to continue to drive within the London LEZ after 7 July 2008 and pay a daily charge of £200 for vehicles which do not meet the specified emissions standards (further details are available on TfL's website). If the vehicle is only to be used within the London LEZ on one or two occasions each year, owners may find this the most economical option. Note that failure to pay the charge would attract a penalty charge notice of £1000 for this vehicle type.

Replace the vehicle

The second option is to replace the vehicle with one which is compliant with the requirements of the London LEZ. A compliant vehicle may be one that was constructed to the Euro III standard from new (Euro III became mandatory on 1

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October 2001), or it may have been modified (retrofitted) with an approved PM abatement system which allows it to meet the Euro III standard for particulate matter. If the vehicle is retrofitted with an abatement device, it will need to be certified and tested annually by VOSA (further details on TfL's website).

Fit a particulate filter

The third option is to retrofit the vehicle with a particulate matter (PM) abatement system which will ensure it meets the required standards. It is important to discuss the vehicle operating cycle with the chosen supplier to ensure that the correct specification is fitted. On a vehicle of this age, the technical options may be limited because some PM abatement systems do not work well with the high oil content of the exhaust fumes from older engines. In addition, the relatively cool exhaust temperatures of these older engines pose an additional challenge.

A PM abatement system, using a full-flow diesel particulate filter (DPF) and fuel-borne catalyst (FBC) system could be fitted. This type of filter uses a liquid catalyst added to the fuel by an automatic dosing system. This so-called FBC enables the filter to regenerate ("burn off") the trapped particulates at lower temperatures than for a conventional catalytic DPF. This is important on a vehicle of this size which does low mileage at relatively low speeds.

All full-flow DPF systems require the periodic removal of ash residue, which would necessitate the fitting of a service exchange filter element

approximately twice per year depending on duty cycle. A service indicator, installed as part of the system, alerts the driver when servicing is required. Such a system is likely to cost around £4,000 for a vehicle like this. A DPF system of this type fitted to this age of vehicle would be able to take the particulate matter emission standard to the Euro III level. This means that the vehicle would meet the London Low Emission Zone standard of Euro III for PM until 2012 when the required standard will change to Euro IV for PM. At this time it would be necessary to replace the vehicle to avoid paying the daily charge when driving in the zone.

Only approved devices can be used to meet the requirements of the London LEZ. It is important that any retrofit device is selected from the list published on the TfL website. Approved suppliers should be able to advise on the most appropriate equipment to suit any vehicle. It is important to note that vehicles fitted with non-approved devices are not deemed to have met the required emissions standard and their registered keeper will thus be liable to pay the daily charge.

Once a filter has been fitted the owner must take the vehicle to a VOSA test station to be inspected and to undergo a smoke test. If it passes the test, a Low Emissions Certificate or a Reduced Pollution Certificate will be issued. When VOSA issue the certificate they will inform TfL, and the vehicle details will be updated on TfL's database within 10 days. Please allow enough time for this before travelling in the zone.

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The LEZ compliance status of the vehicle can be checked on the TfL website.

For further information visit tfl.gov.uk/lezlondon or call 0845 607 0009.

Details correct at time of publication.
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