

Clean Air Zones: What do I need to know?

1. Clean Air Zones Q&A

Background

Q. What is a Clean Air Zone

A Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is an area where the most polluting vehicles will be charged for driving into, or within, the zone. Those vehicles which do not have clean enough engines will have to pay a daily charge if they travel into, or within, the zone.

Q. Why are local authorities implementing Clean Air Zones?

Tackling high pollution levels is a serious challenge for communities across the UK which is why we are supporting local authorities to take urgent action to clear up our air. Reducing NO₂ levels in the shortest time possible is a legal imperative and will have great health effects on those around us.

We know that air pollution is a major public health risk ranking alongside cancer, heart disease and obesity, and poses the single greatest environmental risk to human health.

Q. What are the types of Clean Air Zone/do all Clean Air Zones charge the same vehicles?

There are four classes of Clean Air Zone. The different classes cover the types of vehicles that are liable to be charged if they do not meet the minimum Euro Standard.

Class A – Buses, coaches, taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs)

Class B – Buses, coaches, taxis, PHVs and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)

Class C – Buses, coaches, taxis, PHVs, HGVs and vans

Class D – Buses, coaches, taxis, PHVs, HGVs, vans and cars

Motorcycles will not be subject to a charge in the Birmingham and Bath Clean Air Zones. Local authorities implementing a Clean Air Zone Class D can choose whether or not to charge motorcycles.

Q Where will there be Clean Air Zones and when?

The first Clean Air Zones will launch in:

- Bath on 15th March 2021 – class C
- Birmingham on 1st June 2021 – class D

There will be further Clean Air Zones introduced at later dates. Information on those will follow as launch dates are confirmed.



Q. How much do I need to pay?

Local authorities set the charges for each class of vehicle so that the CAZ is tailored to each individual area.

Details on the charges in Bath can be found [here](#). Details on the charges in Birmingham can be found [here](#).

Q. How can users find out more about Clean Air Zones?

Users can read our guidance on driving in a Clean Air Zone [here](#). This covers how to check if you'll need to pay a charge, and what support and exemptions are available.

Q. How do I know if my vehicle will be charged?

Our vehicle checker can give you information on whether your vehicle will be charged in Bath or Birmingham using your vehicle registration number. Further Clean Air Zones will be added to the vehicle checker as details are confirmed.

The vehicle checker can be found [here](#).

Q. What exemptions are there?

At a national level, the following vehicles are exempt from CAZ charges.

You're automatically entitled to a national exemption, and do not have to pay a charge, if you have a:

- disabled passenger tax class vehicle (this is different to a blue badge holder)
- military vehicle
- historic vehicle
- vehicle retrofitted with technology accredited by the [Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme](#) (CVRAS)

Local Authorities may consider additional exemptions, this may include certain types of specialist vehicles or discounts based on particular local circumstances.

Q. What is a local exemption?

Local authorities are responsible for managing any exemptions specific to their Clean Air Zone. Local exemptions may apply to specific groups of people, or specific vehicle types, and may be for a limited time period. The vehicle checking service does not take into account whether you may qualify for a local exemption as these are managed at a local level.

Lists of local exemptions can be found here:

For Birmingham follow this [link](#)

For Bath follow this [link](#)



For more information on local exemptions, or to apply for a local exemption, please contact the relevant local authority

Q. Does the vehicle checker service check for national and local exemptions?

When calculating charges, we check for national exemptions. Local exemptions are managed by the individual local authority of the Clean Air Zones you want to drive in, so will need to be checked separately on the local authority website. There is more information on our [guidance page](#).

Q. How do I get support to upgrade my vehicle?

This [link](#) outlines possible support to adapt or replace your vehicle in Bath

This [link](#) outlines possible support to adapt or replace your vehicle in Birmingham

Support packages will be detailed by other councils as they are confirmed.

Support for [upgrading to an electric vehicle](#) and for [installing an electric vehicle charging point](#) can be applied for via the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles.

Q. How do I pay and how often?

If you need to drive a non-compliant vehicle into a Clean Air Zone, you must pay through our payment service. This will be available once the first Clean Air Zone launches in Bath, and will be reached through this [link](#).

From 15th March, the payment service allows you to pay up to 6 days in advance of your day of travel, on the day of travel, or up to 6 days afterwards (13 days in total).

Information on which vehicles have entered a Clean Air Zone must be inputted by the user of the service to calculate the charge payable. Payments can be made by credit or debit card. For those with two vehicles or more, an account can be set up to store number plate information (more details below). Account users can also choose to pay by bank account, as an alternative to paying by card.

Q. What if I go into two Clean Air Zones in a day?

A separate charge is payable for each Clean Air Zone you travel in each day. Our payment service will allow you to complete a transaction for each charge on a given day.



Q. What happens if I get a Penalty Charge Notice?

If you drive a non-compliant vehicle in a Clean Air Zone and do not pay the relevant charge within the specified time, the council will issue a Penalty Charge Notice to the registered keeper of the vehicle.

You must pay the penalty charge within 28 days and the Penalty Charge Notice itself will provide details on where and how to make this payment. The level of the Penalty Charge Notice will be set by the council. If you pay the penalty charge within 14 days, the penalty will be reduced by 50%. This will be set out in the Penalty Charge Notice.

Q. Can I pay my Penalty Charge Notice through the Payment Portal?

No. The Penalty Charge Notice will provide details on where and how to make penalty payments direct to the relevant council.

Q. What if I don't think I should pay a Penalty Charge Notice?

If you don't think you should pay a Penalty Charge Notice, you may make representations to the relevant council. The Penalty Charge Notice itself will set out the grounds on which you can make representations and how to make a representation to the council. If your representations are rejected by the council, you have the right to appeal against that decision to the Independent Adjudicator. The council's letter rejecting your representations will provide details of how and when to appeal to the Adjudicator.

Q. What happens if I don't pay the Penalty Charge Notice?

If you do not pay the Penalty Charge Notice or make a representation within 28 days, the council may serve a Charge Certificate increasing the penalty charge by 50% and take steps to enforce payment of the penalty.

Q. Are non-UK vehicles subject to a charge?

Non-UK vehicles are subject to pay the charge for driving in a CAZ in the same way that UK vehicles are. The CAZ payment service is designed to be able to accept payment for non-UK vehicles. Local authorities are expected to enforce against non-UK vehicles that do not pay a charge in the same way they do against UK vehicles that do not pay a charge



Business Accounts- Check multiple Vehicles

Q. What is a Business Account?

Users can set up an account through the 'Check multiple vehicle' service. Account holders will be able to upload and check compliance of UK registered vehicles. This will support business users in preparing for 15th March 2021 when the first Clean Air Zone, in Bath, starts charging. Once zones are live, business account holders will be able to pay via this service as well.

Q. How can users set up a business account?

Here you can access the '[Check multiple vehicles](#)' service. To create an account, a business will need 2 or more vehicles, a company name and email address.

Q. What does the 'Check multiple vehicles' service for business accounts do?

A primary account holder will need to set up an account for the company. Once a company has set up their account they can:

- **Manage vehicles and view charges:**
Upload vehicle number plates via spreadsheet (CSV) or one-by-one. The number plates determine if the vehicles meet emissions standards in a zone. Only vehicles that do not meet emission standards will have to pay a charge when the zones are live.
- **Add a user:**
Invite up to 10 team members to help manage the account and assign them permissions.
- **Set up an agreement to pay by bank account:**
When charging zones are live, users will be able to pay via credit/debit card or once set up, by bank account each time they enter details of journeys made by any chargeable vehicles.
- **Get Help:**
View maps, see when zones are live and find out about exemptions



Q. When a user uploads the company vehicle list are there any rules? Is there any limit to the number of vehicles on a CSV that can be uploaded at one time?

To add vehicles to the account, a user who has the *manage vehicle* permission, can either use their own spreadsheet or download a template (CSV, 1KB) from the service.

When filling in the number plates follow these rules so the data uploads correctly:

- the number plates can only be between 2 and 7 characters
- only letters and numbers are allowed
- number plates need to be entered in the first column only, leave cell A1 blank
- there should be no empty rows between the number plates
- the maximum number of vehicles you can upload in one go is 200,000

Q. Why do account users need to set up an agreement to pay by bank account?

This is entirely optional and can be done at any time as an alternative to paying by card.

Once set up, users will be able to pay by bank account by selecting the relevant vehicles from their uploaded list and selecting which days they have entered Clean Air Zones. The service will calculate charges payable for each zone, and payments can be made. Users will also be able to pay via a credit or debit card if they prefer.

Q. Does the agreement for paying by bank account cover all Clean Air Zones?

The agreement to pay via a bank account can only be set up for a single Clean Air Zone. If the user requires bank account payments for different zones, they would need to set these up separately. This is because the payment is being made directly to each individual local authority through this payment service.

Currently, users can only set up an agreement to pay by bank account for the Bath Clean Air Zone. They will be able to set them up for subsequent Clean Air Zones in the future – we will confirm when as soon as possible.



Q. When does charging start and how do I pay if I have an account set up?

The first Clean Air Zone will launch in Bath on 15th March 2021. The payment features (*make a payment* and *payment history*) on the service will be enabled and users will be able to pay to drive in the Bath Clean Air Zone.

To make payments, users will be able to select the relevant vehicles from their uploaded list and the zones they have entered. The service will calculate charges payable for each zone, and payment can be made via the user's preferred method (via credit/debit card or by bank account).

Q. Is there autopay?

No. We have had to balance many factors in designing the Clean Air Zone payment service, including the legal imperative to act in the shortest possible time. Autopay would have added to the technical complexity. We have not commissioned an autopay system because the service is proposed to be decommissioned once compliance and a permanent improvement in air quality has been achieved.

Contact Details

Q. I am having trouble with the vehicle checker or accounts service, who do I contact?

Contact Clean Air Zone support if you need help or cannot use the online service.

Online contact form – <https://contact.dvla.gov.uk/caz/>

Telephone: 0300 029 8888

Monday to Friday, 8am to 4.30pm



Q. I need help with local exemptions or policies, who do I contact?

Bath

- CAZ information on their [website](#)
- Email address: enquiries@bathnes.gov.uk
- Phone number 01225 47 70 00

Birmingham

- CAZ information on their [website](#)
- Email address: cleanair@birmingham.gov.uk

Q. How can we provide feedback on the ‘Check multiple vehicles’ service for Business Accounts users and what happens to it?

We are committed to continually improving the service and we value users’ opinions. We encourage users to provide feedback on the experience of using the service when it is launched, using the survey link provided at the top of the Business Account dashboard. Feedback will be reviewed by our service team and feed into our plans for research or continuous service design improvements.



2. Stakeholder & Partner CAZ Communications Toolkit

The purpose of the Stakeholder & Partner CAZ communications toolkit is to provide you with “Cleaner Air Ahead” branded materials to help you build awareness of the forthcoming CAZs amongst your members and/or customers.

The contents of the toolkit can be accessed through a DropBox here:

<https://paper.dropbox.com/doc/Clean-Air-Zones-stakeholder-toolkit--BEVPx17VW1vMj3gpBQGygjOVAQ-r6nqLDuuQk1XpjHesmFv3>

You are able to download the resources and edit them for use in your own communications. If you have any questions or would like further advice, please contact us at:

CAZcommunications@defra.gov.uk

