

C-charge tax won't reduce CO2 emissions

Factsheet

The Mayor Ken Livingstone's new £25 charge on larger cars will have practically no effect on the environment and looks more like an attempt to get additional revenue out of Londoners. The CO2 saved in the first year of this scheme could be as little as 4 minutes of emissions from Heathrow Airport.

About the Mayor's proposals

- Mayor Ken Livingstone is planning to increase the congestion charge for larger "Band G" cars – cars that emit more than 225 grams of CO2 per kilometre.
- The cost of driving a Band G car into the congestion zone will increase from £8 to £25, a 213 per cent increase.
- Congestion zone residents who drive Band G cars will lose their exemption. Their charge will now rise from just 80p to £25, a 3025 per cent increase.
- Cars in the lowest A/B bands will be exempt from all charges.

What this means for the environment

- Speaking at the press conference announcing the new charge, the Mayor admitted that his new charge would have a "small" impact on emissions.
- According to TFL's report on the proposed emissions related congestion charging, the savings expected in 2009 in CO2 emissions is expected to be anywhere from 100 to 5,000 tonnes per year. [Transport for London, Report to the Mayor Following Consultation with Stakeholders, Businesses, other Organisations and the Public, [January 2008](#), p 50]
- Even Friends of the Earth stated "that CO2 emissions could increase as a result of the proposals." [Transport for London, Report to the Mayor Following Consultation with Stakeholders, Businesses, other Organisations and the Public, [January 2008](#), p.145]
- According to the Aviation Environment Federation, Heathrow emits 13.9 million tonnes of CO2 a year. [[Aviation Environment Federation](#)]
- The savings expected from the emissions related congestion charge will be equal to anywhere from 4 minutes to 4 hours.

CO2 Emissions at Heathrow (Tonnes)		CO2 Savings from the Low Estimate for the C-charge (Tonnes)		CO2 Savings from the High Estimate for the C-Charge (Tonnes)	
Year at Heathrow	13,900,000	C-charge savings per annum	100	C-charge savings per annum	5000
Day at Heathrow	38082.19	How this compares:			
Hour at Heathrow	1586.76	For the low band: (C-charge savings per annum/CO2 per min at Heathrow) = 3.78 minutes			
Minute at Heathrow	26.45	For the high band: (C-charge savings per annum/CO2 per hour at Heathrow) = 3hrs 15 mins			

How this compares

- For the low band: (C-Charge savings per annum ÷ CO2 per minute at Heathrow) = **3.78 minutes**
 - For the high band: (C-Charge savings per annum ÷ CO2 per hour at Heathrow) = **3.15 hours**
- According to the AEA Energy and Environment report, the new charge will not affect general air quality through reducing either NOx or PM10. “Emissions related congestion charging would have a negligible impact on pollutant emissions in 2009. Given that this is the case, it is anticipated that there would similarly be a negligible impact on air quality, and hence the pollutant concentrations would remain the same as for the baseline scenario.” [AEA Energy and Environment, “Combined Impact Assessment of Proposed Emissions Related Congestion Charging,” [17 August 2007](#)]

What this means for congestion

- As a number of observers have pointed out, exempting A and B band cars from the charge could actually *increase* congestion as people trade their larger cars for more than one smaller car or who now decide it was now cost effective to drive into central London.
- According to the AEA Energy and Environment report to Transport for London on the proposed emissions-based congestion charge, “In the longer term, it is possible that the emissions related congestion charging proposals could lead to increases in overall traffic levels within the Congestion Charging zone, with consequential small negative impacts on air pollution.” [AEA Energy and Environment, “Combined Impact Assessment of Proposed Emissions Related Congestion Charging,” [17 August 2007](#)]
- London First, the business organisation that seeks to attract inward investment into London, has called the Mayor’s new plan “daft”.