

SUMMER 2020

LeasePlan

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Driving tips:

Loving summer?

We all know about the risks of driving in the winter. But a hot summer brings hazards as well – and this year could be an even bigger challenge than usual. The good news is that things can be easier to deal with if you plan ahead. Here are our top tips:

1. If your car hasn't been used very much during lockdown, please give it a full check yourself – or get an expert to do it – before you go out on the roads. There are reports that breakdowns have risen significantly in recent weeks and a bit of preparation can help you stay safe.
2. Similarly, if you haven't driven very much for a few months, start slowly when you do get behind the wheel. While you won't have forgotten how to drive, you may have to think more about what you're doing, which could mean you are less aware of hazards and other vehicles.
3. If you're planning a longer journey, remember that there may be fewer public toilets available to use on the way, so it could be a good idea to have your own solution.
4. Check the traffic situation before you travel. With fewer people commuting, there's an expectation that the roads will be clearer – but as the holiday season starts, this could change, as there are likely to be more people staying in the UK this summer.
5. As the day heats up, so does the road and the air in your tyres. Put a reminder on your phone to check them regularly, so you can make sure they aren't over-pressurised.
6. Avoid your car overheating and potentially damaging your engine by checking the fluid level. If it doesn't reach the full line on the coolant reservoir, add a 50/50 mix of water and coolant until it does. It's a good idea to keep an eye on your oil level as well.
7. Whether it's dust or dead insects, your windscreen can get very dirty on a long summer drive. Keeping your screenwash topped up isn't just a legal requirement, it can help keep you safe by ensuring good visibility. Similarly, if you haven't changed your wipers for a while, it can make sense to put new ones on your car.
8. Heat takes a heavy toll on car batteries, so if you haven't changed yours in the last five years, make sure it is replaced or tested.
9. Keep an emergency kit in your car in case you have a breakdown. This should include a water bottle, warning triangle and jump leads, as well as a reflective emergency blanket that can be used for shade.
10. Read your vehicle service schedule and stick to it. In extreme heat, belts and hoses that provide air-conditioning can crack and blister. Also, pay close attention to engine warning lights.
11. Research suggests that dehydration can lead to a 146% increase in driver errors. When you think that the symptoms include slower reaction times, loss of focus and muscle cramps, this is not surprising. If you're heading out on a long journey, or even a shorter one on a particularly hot day, make sure you bring lots of water.
12. Never leave young, elderly or vulnerable people alone in a car. Even with the window left open, the temperature inside the car can end up being double the outside temperature. You shouldn't leave pets locked in a vehicle either.
13. The uncovered buckles on a child's car seat can get hot enough to cause second degree burns to young children. When not in use, cover the seat with a blanket to stop the buckles heating up.





The latest on MOTs

During lockdown, many people had their MOT deadlines extended by six months. This stopped on 30 July and MOTs due from 1 August 2020 will need to be carried out as usual. However, garages are likely to have a significant backlog, so it's a good idea to book your car in with plenty of time – or you could be without a vehicle just when you need it.

Driving tips:

Driving abroad checklist

It has always been important to plan ahead when you're driving on the Continent, but this year it is essential. Here's our checklist to help you get ready:

- While many countries are currently relaxing their restrictions, the possibility of a second wave of coronavirus still exists and there have already been examples of areas returning to lockdown. It's a constantly changing situation, so it pays to stay fully informed. A good place to start could be the European Union's official 'Re-open EU' site (<https://reopen.europa.eu>), which is regularly updated. You could also check the latest travel guidance from the Government at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-advice-novel-coronavirus>
- Depending on the latest pandemic situation, there may be less access to toilets than usual on the journey. You might also be uncomfortable with the idea of using a public toilet. If you have a long trip, it could be a good idea to explore alternatives.
- Check with your travel insurer before you leave so you know what's covered and what isn't – there may be specific requirements or restrictions in relation to the pandemic. Also, make sure you have your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), as these give you access to state-provided healthcare across the EU and they are valid until 31 December 2020.
- You may find the roads clearer than usual, as fewer people are commuting to work. If so, please resist the temptation to put your foot down. You can still get caught by a speed camera and there are likely to be checks on some roads as well. On the other hand, if countries continue to open up, there may be a rush for people to get away after months stuck at home, which could lead to traffic jams and increased accidents. Check the traffic situation and make plans accordingly.



- If you're driving in France, check to see if you'll need a Crit'Air sticker and if you do, order it well in advance of your date of travel.
- Tell your leasing provider that you'll be taking the vehicle abroad well before you travel, so you can get a vehicle-on-hire certificate (VE103). All drivers who own their vehicle must be able to produce a V5 vehicle document (logbook).
- Check you have European Breakdown Cover.
- Consider giving your car a maintenance check before you head off to help improve fuel economy and avoid preventable accidents.
- Whether you are travelling for business or pleasure, fully comprehensive insurance is essential for all drivers.
- Read up on each country's individual driving laws and ensure you comply with them.
- Ensure your driving licence and passport are valid and up to date.
- Travelling with kids? Check the safety and compliance rules on car seats for each country before you set off.

For more information on the things you must, or should, take when driving in Europe, visit the AA's website...

Electric vehicles:

Thinking EV?

If you're thinking about an electric vehicle (EV), you need to know what types are available. Here are the four main options:

1. 'Pure' EVs

This is a vehicle that is only powered by electricity. You might also see it referred to as a 'BEV' or battery electric vehicle – or just called an EV, which can make things a bit confusing at times.

It is charged by an external power source, such as a charge point or a three-pin plug at your home, and this power is then used to drive an electric motor. These vehicles do not produce any tailpipe emissions and some can travel up to 200 miles on a single charge.



'Pure' EV examples:

Nissan Leaf, Tesla Model 3 (above), Renault Zoe & Kia Soul

2. Parallel hybrid

This is the type of EV that most people probably think of when they hear the word 'hybrid'. It has a small electric motor that is mainly charged by the car's wheels when braking. This provides power at low speeds when a traditional engine is least efficient. The petrol or diesel engine then takes over once the car gets above a certain speed, which can be around 15mph – though the electric motor can also be used to boost the car's acceleration after this point in vehicles that have a choice of power modes.



Parallel hybrid example:

Toyota Prius (above)

3. Plug-in hybrid EV (PHEV)

This is a step-on from a standard hybrid, as the battery isn't just charged by braking – you can also plug it in to charge it in the same way as a pure EV.

This means the car has a battery, electric drive motor and an internal combustion engine. It can be driven using the engine, the electric drive motor or both. Typically, these cars have a pure-electric range of up to 30 miles, but once the electric battery is flat, journeys can continue in hybrid mode, so you can keep driving until the tank is empty.

It is worth noting that these vehicles produce emissions whenever they use the engine, so they work best when they do a lot of short journeys and the battery is regularly charged. If this doesn't happen, they can be more expensive to run than a conventional petrol or diesel.



Plug-in hybrid EV (PHEV) examples:

Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV, BMW 530e (above) & VW Golf GTE

4. Extended range EV (E-REV)

Like a plug-in hybrid, these cars have an internal combustion engine and an electric motor, but the key difference is that it's only the electric motor that drives the wheels. The engine is effectively a small generator that burns fuel to charge the battery.

As a result, the electric range can be a lot greater than a PHEV – generally between 150 and 300 miles. This is a bit better than pure EVs (though range is rising quite quickly at the moment), but the key advantage is that you don't have to worry about charging or running out of power.

As long as you can put petrol or diesel in the tank, the car will keep going. However, there will still be tailpipe emissions, which you don't get with a pure EV – and internal combustion engines are significantly less energy efficient than electric motors.



Extended range EV (E-REV) example:

BMW i3 range-extender (above)

If you'd like to find out more, you can explore our *Thinking EV?* Series on [insights.leaseplan.co.uk](https://www.insights.leaseplan.co.uk)

One to watch

Mr. E

In our latest series our electric vehicle expert 'Mr E' explores the benefits of EVs, the costs, charging possibilities, range battery and much more.



Ultra-low emission zones: Clearing the air together

Hailed as the 'world's first 24-hour ultra-low emission zone', it's now over a year since the City of London introduced its ULEZ in central London.

The Zone, which costs £12.50 each day for most vehicle types, and £100 for lorries, coaches and heavier vehicles, has seen a reduction of 13,500 polluting vehicles enter the area every day, and there are now plans to expand it by 2021 to reach the North and South circular roads.

Just 6 months (October 2019) after the ULEZ was introduced into London, the city's Mayor, Sadiq Khan, commissioned a report into the impact it had achieved, and found that:

- There was a significant drop in air pollution across the city, as well as 13,500 fewer polluting cars driven into the zone each day
- 77% of vehicles driving within the zone met the clean emissions standards
- NOx emissions from road transport in the central zone were 31 per cent (200 tonnes) lower than if the scheme was not in place
- None of the air quality monitoring sites located on ULEZ boundary roads have measured an increase in NO₂ pollution levels since the scheme was introduced in April 2019
- After six months, CO₂ emissions from road transport in the central zone were 4% (9,800 tonnes) lower than if there was no scheme

Just before lockdown in February, the hourly average levels of NO₂ at monitoring sites in central London were 35% lower compared with the same period in 2017.

During the initial coronavirus lockdown period, which saw the suspension of not only the ULEZ but London's congestion charge, the level of nitrogen dioxide in the capital reduced by a further 27%. With half of London's pollution coming from road transport and the lockdown period causing a vast reduction in traffic, this reduction of the pollution in the air has shown what can be done if we work as a collective.



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Ultra-low emission zones: **Where next?**

The success of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone is clear. Originally, the government mandated five further Clean Air Zones in Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton. However, before the coronavirus pandemic came into full force, several more towns and cities were looking at adopting some kind of emission restriction in a bid to capture some of the success seen in London.

The city of Bristol, for example, is looking at banning all private diesel vehicles from entering a small area in the city centre. The city's council is also looking to create a larger charging zone for older and less efficient commercial vehicles. Providing it is approved by the local and national authorities, it's likely that their zone will be introduced in 2021.

Oxford's councils are looking to take their clean air zone a step further and are set to become the first city to introduce a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ). This will charge all petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles that enter a small part of the city centre and is set to come into effect by the end of this year. Clean air plans for the rest of the city are likely to come into action in the following years, which could see the ZEZ rolled out across the whole city.

Devising these zones across the country, even in areas that weren't obligated by the government, demonstrates the widespread acknowledgement that something needs to be done to tackle air pollution across the entire country, not just in the capital. However, as we have seen, the low emission zones vary from city to city – so it's essential to keep informed.

You can see all the latest on upcoming zones at insights.leaseplan.co.uk



Online tyre booking

Our online booking service is available for non-urgent repair. For urgent requests please call your DriverLine & select the option for Tyres where one of our team will be able to help.

Company car tax rates

The latest developments:

A lot has changed recently with company car tax rates. Here's what you need to know in five key facts:

01.

The WLTP test is likely to produce higher results for many vehicles, so the Chancellor has cut company car tax rates by two percentage points for 2020-21 and by one percentage point between 2021 and 2023.

02.

The Chancellor also announced that the tax rates for the two years from 2023 to 2025 will be kept at the same level as those for 2022-23.

03.

One consequence of this change is that there is now a 0% rate for electric vehicles registered in this tax year. This also applies to some low emission vehicles. Their rates stay low for the next few years too, at 1% for 2021-22 and then 2% until at least 2024-25.

04.

Higher emission vehicles are still paying more. The charge for the heaviest emitters (those above 170 grams of CO₂ per km) is 37%.

05.

Cars registered in previous years won't see their tax rates reduced this year, but the levels are frozen between 2021 and 2023 – and the more lenient NEDC figures used prior to WLTP will be used for the calculations.

The new 70 number plate

...but do we really care?

Back in the day, the age of a car was revealed by the first letter of its number plate. 'A' meant that the vehicle had been registered between 1st August 1983 and 31st July 1984. 'B' was for between 1st August 1984 and 31st July 1985. And so on, all the way to 'Y' in 2001.

This system was tweaked in 1999, so that the letter changes happened twice a year, in March and September, to avoid a single large spike in car registrations in August. But then, a couple of years later, the letters were done away with completely and the age of a car was revealed by the third and fourth digits on its number plate – both of which are numbers.

These numbers are more intuitive than the old letters. If a car was registered between March 2002 and August 2002, its number matches that year: '02'. If it was registered between September 2002 and the following March, just add fifty: '52'. So, for 2003, it's '03' and '53'. Jump to 2010 and the same principle applies, but you just have to remember the extra '1', so it's '10' and '60'. Easy, right?

The reason we mention all this is that '70' plates will soon be introduced – and they'll be followed by '21' plates in March 2021.

Plate No.	Date Range of Plate
69 Plate	September 2019 to February 2020
20 Plate	March 2020 to August 2020
70 Plate	September 2020 to February 2021
21 Plate	March 2021 to August 2021

In these difficult times, it seems less likely that people will be rushing around to get a car with the latest plates on the day the new number is released – and there will probably be fewer cars available as well, with supply chains still getting up to speed. But for all the talk about 'new number plates' in previous years, was it ever really worth the fuss? After all, the thing that most of us really care about isn't having the absolute latest model. It's about getting a good deal on the car we want.

Want to know more?

Take a look at our online Tax Calculator produced in association with Deloitte.





DriverLine

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

