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Heading to France with your vehicle? Quelle surprise... Don't fall foul of new emissions regulations...

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Author: Kim Henson

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The RAC is warning motorists driving to France about a new and controversial emissions sticker system...

Drivers of vehicles caught without anti-pollution stickers risk fines of up to £117 Paris, Lyon and Grenoble operating schemes already

The RAC is advising UK motorists driving to France to be aware of a new vehicle emissions sticker system which has been introduced in Paris, Lyon and Grenoble to tackle pollution.



The Crit'Air scheme, which came into force in Paris on Sunday 22 January, requires all vehicles – cars, lorries, motorbikes and buses – to display a windscreen sticker, or vignette, according to how much they pollute. Grenoble and Lyon introduced the scheme on 1 January.

Vehicles registered abroad will be allowed to drive in central Paris without the Crit'Air vignette until 31 March. Stickers cost around £3.20 each (€3.70) – or £3.60 (€4.18) including postage, and come in six categories ranging from the very cleanest (Crit'Air 1) – electric or hydrogen-powered vehicles – to the dirtiest (Crit'Air 6).

The penalty for failure to display a sticker while driving in Paris is an on-the-spot fine of between €68-135 (£58 to £117). The categories correspond to the six European Union emission standards for cars – dating back to 1992 when Euro-1 was introduced.

RAC European breakdown spokesman Simon Williams said: “Anyone caught without a sticker risks a fine of up to £117, although we understand the French police are likely to be lenient in the early days. While the stickers only cost around £3.20 to buy, the website is currently only in French. An English-language site is, however, due to be in operation as of 1 February.”

In order to apply for a sticker online drivers will need to know the European Emissions Standard of their vehicle – this can be quickly checked on the RAC's website at www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/know-how/euro-emissions-standards/. For newer vehicles, covered by Euro 5 and Euro 6 standards, the information you need may be found in section D2 of your DVLA V5C registered keeper form. For older vehicles motorists will need to find out when your vehicle was manufactured and check it with the emissions bands on the above webpage.

Ultimately, those vehicles with the highest emissions face not being allowed to drive in the city on days where pollution is particularly high. In the future vehicles may be banned from driving in Crit'Air areas on certain days based on which sticker have, or which emissions



category they fall into.

Certain vehicles have not been assigned a category and are therefore unable to drive in Paris between 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday. These are typically older models, such as cars registered before 1997, motorbikes and scooters from before June 2000, and trucks and buses from before 2001. Based on the pre-1997 criteria, the RAC understands that one in 10 (9%) French vehicles are too old to get a sticker.

As a result the new system has not gone down well with certain groups – none more so than classic car enthusiasts, around 100 of whom have staged a motorcade of vintage vehicles in protest, under the banner: ‘No to Crit’Air, No to Big-Broth’Air’.

Somewhere in the region of 600,000 vehicles are driven in the French capital every day and pollution has been so severe on occasions that the authorities have banned vehicles from driving in the city based on whether their number plates are odd or even. Paris, along with Madrid, Athens and Mexico City also have wider plans to ban all diesel vehicles from the city by 2025.

A total of 22 other towns may decide to do the same by 2020:

Annemasse

Arras

Avignon

Bonneville

Bordeaux

Cannes



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Saint Maur-des-Fossés

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More information (in French) about the Crit'Air scheme can be found on its website:

www.certificat-air.gouv.fr/.

To see the Crit'Air zones for:

· Paris go to:

<https://www.crit-air.fr/fr/informations-sur-la-vignette-critair/zones-a-circulation-restreinte-en-france-zcr/la-delemitation-de-la-zone-a-paris.html>

· Grenoble go to: <https://www.crit-air.fr/fr/informations-sur-la-vignette-critair/zones-a-circulation-restreinte-en-france-zcr/la-zcr-de-grenoble.html>

· Lyon go to: <https://www.crit-air.fr/fr/informations-sur-la-vignette-critair/zones-a-circulation-restreinte-en-france-zcr/la-zcr-de-lyon.html>