

1. Introduction

The London Low Emission Zone commenced on the 4th of February 2008. The aim of the LEZ is to improve air quality in London by deterring the most polluting vehicles from being driven in the area.

The LEZ will apply:

- From 4 February 2008 to all diesel engined lorries over 12 tonnes;
- From 7 July 2008 to all diesel engined lorries over 3.5 tonnes and buses and coaches over 5 tonnes with more than 9 seats
- From 4 October 2010 to all diesel engined vans over 1.205 tonnes and minibuses under 5 tonnes with more than 9 seats.

All of these vehicles, including goods vehicles, motorcaravans, motorised horseboxes, and other specialist vehicles, will have to comply with an emission standard of Euro III for Particulate Matter (PM) in order to operate within the LEZ without charge.

From January 2012 the emissions standards will be tightened to Euro IV for PM for lorries, buses and coaches only. Cars, motorcycles and small vans are not included in the low emission Zone (LEZ).

For further information, visit [TfL's London low emission zone website](#).

2 VOSA Certification

2a. Installed certified abatement device

For operators that purchase certified abatement devices referenced on the TfL approved devices list (<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/lez/comply/5074.aspx>) there are 2 routes to certify that your vehicle meets the required LEZ emissions standards after the device has been fitted onto the vehicle:

1. If the fitter installing the approved abatement device is an Approved Examiner authorised by VOSA, they can conduct a free acceleration smoke test after the fitment of the abatement device. The authorised examiner will complete a Declaration of Conformity and Declaration application form which will be sent to VOSA and if the test is successful, VOSA will issue a Low Emissions Certificate (LEC) or Reduced Pollution Certificate (RPC) and send this directly to the applicant within 10 days of the test.

A summary of the Abatement Device Fitment Declaration Route described above can be found in the following document.

Should you wish to take advantage of this route, it is recommended that you contact the manufacturer who can advise the nearest location of an Authorised Examiner. A list of the certified abatement device manufacturers

can be found on the TfL website:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/lez/comply/5074.aspx>

2. After the abatement device is fitted the operator can book a LEC or RPC test with VOSA. If the vehicle passes the physical inspection and the free acceleration smoke test, then VOSA will immediately issue a LEC or RPC.

2b. Eligible Engine

Operators that have vehicles which have Euro 1 or 2 engines and that may meet the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) emissions standards and is referenced on the TfL eligible engines list

(<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/lez/comply/5374.aspx>) will need to get either a LEC or RPC test at VOSA.

Note: Reduced Pollution and Low Emissions Test will consist of a physical inspection and a smoke opacity test. Vehicles must pass both of these inspections in order for a LEC or RPC to be issued

RPC: Reduced Pollution Certificate

Some of the Euro I and II vehicles will already have a RPC certificate. If they have had an RPC issued before 1st January 2001 and it has lapsed, they can be eligible for a RPC test. However, vehicles which have not previously had an RPC cannot be issued with an RPC even if they have an eligible engine, since the Department for Transport's Reduced Pollution Certificate (RPC) regulations changed in January 2001.

LEC: Low Emissions Certificate

This is a certificate offered by Transport for London to allow vehicles to provide proof they comply with the emissions requirements of the scheme. It is issued to vehicles or engines which are not eligible for the RPC, but which comply with the LEZ emissions standards.

After a LEC or RPC test has been conducted, the test results will be transferred from VOSA to TfL automatically and the data will be updated on TfL's database within 10 days.

Options available to achieve LEZ compliance

The [TfL website](#) outlines the options available for your vehicle to achieve compliance to drive within the LEZ without being subject to a daily charge. The [Energy Saving Trust](#) also provide additional advice in relation to the types of abatement devices that can be fitted to your vehicle.

3. Booking either a RPC or LEC test with VOSA

For pre-funded accounts or payment by credit/debit cards, the Operator should book a LEC or RPC test by calling VOSA on 0870 60 60 440 or contact their local [Test Station](#):

The details that VOSA will ask for at the time of booking are:

- Registration mark of the vehicle if vehicle is registered and number of axles
- The type of test that the operator wishes VOSA to undertake (LEC or RPC)
- Where the operator would like the inspection carried out

- When the operator would like the test to be undertaken
- What is the eligible engine type, or what necessary modifications have been undertaken

Provided the above information is supplied, an appointment will then be agreed for the operator to present their vehicle to a test station where a physical inspection and smoke opacity test will take place to determine that the vehicle satisfies the Low Emission Zone emissions standard and has the necessary certified abatement device installed.

Important points to note:

- 1. When presenting a vehicle for inspection it is important that it is accompanied by a person who is competent and equipped to tilt the cab or remove engine access panels safely and is able to re-instate according to manufacturers instructions.**
- 2. Bookings will only be taken for vehicles that either have an engine on the eligible engines list, or have had a certified abatement device fitted onto the vehicle**

Customers that wish to pay cash will need to visit a [Test Station](#) to book their tests.

Customers that wish to pay by cheque must forward the required fee and request to book a LEC or RPC test directly to the Test Station where they wish to have the inspection carried out.

4. What are the costs for an LEC and RPC?

If the appointment is made for a time during core opening hours, the charge will be £28.

If the check is carried out at the same time as the annual inspection or certificate of Initial Fitness (COIF) examination, the charge will be £17.

If a request is made for an inspection outside the core opening hours, a supplement of £11.00 is charged

If a request is made to inspect a vehicle on a site other than a Goods Vehicle Testing Station, there is an additional charge of £6.00 per vehicle. **Please note that testing away from HGV testing stations can only be carried out if there is a reasonable number of vehicles to be tested at the same time and provided that the local Testing Station Manager agrees to the arrangement.** If you wish to take advantage of this facility please contact the relevant [Test Station](#) prior to making the booking.

Inspections involving a combination of charges can be undertaken.

5. Which vehicles are eligible to receive Reduced Pollution Certificates?

Specific types of vehicles registered in the UK prior to October 2006 are able to obtain a Reduced Pollution Certificate (RPC). Vehicles with a valid RPC can be registered for a [reduced level of vehicle excise duty \(VED\)](#). Vehicles that are eligible to obtain a RPC are:

goods vehicles over 3500kg revenue weight in tax class HGV, used in connection with a trade or business, including vehicles used for exceptional loads and haulage vehicles (not showman's); and,

buses and coaches i.e. Public Service Vehicles in tax class Bus

Which have been:

known to comply to an enhanced environmental standard as approved by VCA, or

re-engined to a higher environmental standard, or

fitted/converted to run on petrol or gas.

Additionally vehicles in the tax classes above fitted with Euro 5 or EEV engines and NOx control can now be accepted for RPC provided they are registered in the UK prior to 1 October 2009. See [RPCs for early compliant Euro 5 and EEV vehicles with NOx control](#) for special procedures for issuing first RPCs for vehicles manufactured to comply with this standard.

6. How does my vehicle qualify for the Reduced Pollution Certificate test?

The vehicle must be constructed or adapted to achieve a considerably higher standard of Particulate Emission than that required by the EU emissions directive in force at the time of manufacture. The higher standards required are set out in Schedule 2 to the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002 no 2742) as amended. (All of this legislation can be found on the [Office of Public Sector Information](#) website.)

Equipment fitted or modifications made to reduce diesel engine exhaust emission must have a type approval from the Vehicle Certification Agency complying with the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval of Reduced Pollution Adaptations) Regulations, 1998 (SI 1998 no 3093) or the Motor Vehicle (Type Approval of Reduced Pollution Adaptations) (Amendment) Regulations, 2000 (SI 2000 no 3275).

Standard diesel-powered vehicles first presented for Reduced Pollution compliance tested on or after 5 January 2001 will in all cases require a modification, such as an exhaust particulate trap, regardless of their age. Consult your vehicle manufacturer or dealer for information on approved modifications. Use of low-sulphur diesel or biodiesel and/or Euro 2 or Euro 3 or 4 engines without other modifications is not sufficient.

Pure gas, gas/petrol or petrol engined vehicles, because they do not normally give Particulate Emissions, will comply with the requirements without further modification or type approval, provided that they are operating correctly. Gas-diesel dual-fuel vehicles are treated as diesel vehicles.

Diesel vehicles which were first presented for Reduced Pollution compliance testing prior to 5 January 2001 can continue to be re-tested even if they did not have any special modification, provided they still comply with a Reduced Pollution Equipment type approval issued by Vehicle Certification Agency.

7. Which vehicles are eligible to obtain Low Emissions Certificates?

Vehicles that are eligible to obtain a LEC are:

Goods vehicles and passenger vehicles over 8 seats plus driver used in connection with a trade or business, including vehicles used for exceptional loads and haulage vehicles;

Vehicles where no RPC compliant solutions are available – e.g some vehicles between 3500kg and 5000kg revenue weight;

Vehicles in tax classes not eligible for RPC (e.g. private HGVs, PLG including private minibuses and motorhomes);

Vehicles which were not UK registered prior to 1 October, 2006 or first RPC tested prior to 5 January, 2001.

Which are:

- identified on the [TfL Eligible Engines List](#);
- known to comply with an enhanced environmental standard as approved by VCA that would have (except for date of test or registration) been eligible for an RPC and will meet the London Low Emission Zone emissions standards. The [RPC Approved device list](#) can be found on the TfL website;
- modified to an enhanced Particulate Matter (PM) standard as approved by VCA or EST, including partial filter or other abatement technology that doesn't meet the RPC eligibility criteria. The [LEC approved device list](#) can also be found on the TfL website;
- re-engined to a higher environmental standard, or
- fitted/converted to run solely on petrol or gas.

8. What does the LEC/RPC test at VOSA involve?

When a vehicle is presented for inspection it must be accompanied by a person who is competent to tilt the cab safely and is able to re-instate according to manufacturers instructions, otherwise, the examiner will refuse to conduct the check.

The vehicle examiner will want to see:

- engine
- fuel system
- exhaust system
- chassis number
- engine number
- type number on the control device
- pollution control device.

The LEC/RPC test consists of a physical inspection and smoke opacity test. It is in the operator's best interests to ensure that the vehicle is fully prepared. At time of inspection the engine type designation must be visible, the fuel pump number clean if relevant to the LEC or RPC approval and a competent person must be present to tilt the cab. Failure to adhere to any of these instructions will result in a refusal to carry out the test.

Reduced Pollution Certificates

Different levels are currently applied for a metered smoke opacity test for RPCs:

- Diesel engines with particulate traps $0.2m^{-1}$
- Euro 1 diesel engines without particulate traps $0.8m^{-1}$
- Euro 2 diesel engines without particulate traps $0.4m^{-1}$
- Euro 4 or 5 diesel engines with/without particulate traps $0.4m^{-1}$
- Euro 0 diesel engines replaced with an Euro 2 diesel engine $1.0m^{-1}$

Low Emissions Certificates

For vehicles fitted with devices on TfL's [LEC Approved Device List](#), the in-service exhaust gas opacity limit is determined by the abatement device type.

The limit value is also recorded on TfL's LEC Approved Device list which is subsequently issued to VOSA

For vehicles with engines on TfL's [Eligible Engines list](#) (where the smoke Limit K has been agreed with manufacturers) and which are not eligible for an RPC, the smoke test limit will vary from engine to engine.

The purpose of the certificate inspection is to ensure the engine is on the eligible list, whilst the smoke test confirms the vehicle is operating within expected emissions limits. Whilst this smoke test level is stricter than the MOT limit for the vehicle, the use of the smoke mark ensures it is within the certified in-service limits for the vehicle.

9. How long are RPCs/LECs valid for?

Certificates will be valid for at least a year. To allow the annual test and LEC/RPC check to take place at the same time, an extension of up to 11 months will be available for the first certificate. Thereafter, the certificate will be valid for up to 14 months for a PSV and 13 months for HGV, depending on the date of the next annual test.

10. Do I need to let TfL know that I have obtained a RPC or LEC to drive within the LEZ?

No. Once the vehicle has completed their Low Emissions or Reduced Pollution test, the data will be automatically transferred to TfL - it can take up to 10 days before TfL's database is updated to show that the vehicle has passed the test and therefore meets the required LEZ emissions standards. There is no need for the operator to register directly with TfL.

There is no need for the operator to let TfL know of the vehicle's change in status as this will be done automatically for them.

11. Can I obtain a replacement LEC or RPC?

Duplicates will not be issued for LECs or RPCs. If a certificate is lost or defaced then arrangements must be made for a new RPC or LEC test to be carried out and the appropriate fee paid so that a new certificate can be issued.

If however a certificate has been damaged and you have its identifiable remains, or if any of the particulars on the certificate are or have become incorrect, e.g. because of a Registration Mark change, the original certificate may be surrendered and replaced by an amended copy at the issuing Goods Vehicle Testing Station. There is no fee for a replacement certificate.

12. The Vehicle has passed the roadworthiness smoke test but wasn't issued with an LEC or RPC. Why is this the case?

The smoke test conducted as part of the LEC or RPC test is a separate test and has a standard more stringent than a roadworthiness smoke test. In order for a vehicle to be successfully issued with either the LEC or RPC test, they must:

- Pass the physical inspection (i.e the vehicle must either have an engine on the [TfL Eligible engines list](#), or a certified abatement device from the [TfL Approved Device list](#) is fitted onto the vehicle).

- Pass the smoke test. For vehicles eligible to receive an RPC and where an abatement device has been fitted, the smoke opacity limits have been defined in Point 7, under the heading, Reduced Pollution Certificates. For vehicles eligible to receive a LEC, the smoke Limit K has been agreed with the manufacturers

Passing a roadworthiness smoke test does not automatically mean that your vehicle is eligible for a LEC or RPC. More information can be obtained under points 4-7.

13.VOSA contact details

You can book either a LEC or RPC test by calling VOSA on 0870 60 60 440. For more details regarding the RPC or LEC technical testing process, please contact the following number and mention that your enquiry concerns Reduced Pollution Certificates or Low Emissions Certificates: Tel: 01792 458888

[Reduced Pollution Certificates and Low Emissions Certificates \(Printable Version\)](#)