

Climate change and transport

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Introduction

This section provides information on climate change as well as links to sites with information on how people individually can reduce the environmental impacts of their transport choices.

Background

Scientific evidence shows that the climate is changing.

As we burn fossil fuels we increase the amount of climate change gases in the atmosphere. The most common of these is carbon dioxide (CO₂). Climate change is the world's greatest environmental challenge.

Transport accounts for around a quarter of the man-made greenhouse gas emissions from the UK.

Government targets

DfT shares responsibility with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Trade and Industry for the Government's Climate Change Public Service Agreement (PSA) target.

This PSA target commits DfT to working towards:

- 1) our Kyoto target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent by 2008-12 over 1990 levels; and
- 2) our domestic target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 20 per cent by 2010 over 1990 levels.

These targets do not include emissions from international aviation.

Policies

We are committed to reducing the impact of travel on the environment and we are promoting policies to:

- reduce the fossil carbon content of transport fuel
- increase the fuel efficiency of vehicles
(Further information is available on the DfT website - http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/divisionhomepage/032479.hcsp)
- encourage a move towards more environmentally friendly forms of transport
(Further information is available on the DfT website - <http://www.dft.gov.uk/sustainable>)
- work towards the inclusion of transport in emissions trading schemes.

Reducing the carbon content of fuel

The *Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation* is one part of a set of policies which aim to reduce carbon emissions from transport in ways that are cost-effective and do not restrict people's ability to travel.

Under the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation, 5 per cent of transport fuel sold in the UK will have to come from renewable sources by 2010. We estimate that this will cut carbon emissions by around one million tonnes, equivalent to taking one million cars off the road.

Improving fuel efficiency

New cars sold in the UK are on average some 10% more fuel-efficient than they were a decade or so ago.

The Graduated Vehicle Excise Duty and the Company Car Tax are both linked to vehicles' carbon emissions. Reforms to VED mean that for cars with the very lowest carbon emissions the rate is reduced to zero, and a new top band is being introduced for the most polluting new cars (newly registered from 23 March 2006). Motorists can save thousands of pounds on their company car tax bill if they choose clean, low-carbon vehicles.

For further information see the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) website - <http://www.vca.gov.uk/fcb/index.asp>.

Colour-coded energy efficiency labels for new cars, modelled on those for household white goods, were launched in February 2005 and are now in most UK car showrooms. These enable consumers to make informed and environmentally friendly choices when they buy a new car. Further information is available on the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership website - <http://www.lowcvp.org.uk/>.

Encouraging smarter travel choices

We are putting record amounts of investment into public transport to give people a real choice of ways to travel.

We support a range of measures, called '*smarter choices*', aimed at enabling people to choose sustainable travel options. These include workplace, school and residential travel planning.

With the *Sustainable Travel Towns Initiative* we aim to help turn Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester into showcase travel towns

And we have set up *Cycling England*, an expert advisory body, which coordinates the development of cycling across England. Its budget has recently been doubled - to £10m a year. The Government also provides cycling funding to local authorities outside London - for 2005/06 an estimated £35m is being spent.

The Department provides funding and best practice to help reduce the impact of freight activities on the environment. Further information is available on the Freight Best Practice website - <http://www.freightbestpractice.org.uk> and on the DfT website - <http://www.dft.gov.uk/freight>.

Promoting the inclusion of transport in emissions trading schemes

We believe that a well-designed emissions trading regime is the fairest and most efficient way to ensure that the aviation sector tackles its emissions. We are actively pursuing the inclusion of aviation emissions in the European Union emissions trading scheme.

Additional Links

[DfT climate change impact website](#)

Brings together reports and information concerning the likely impacts of climate change on the transport network

[Tackling transport emissions](#)

Speech by the Transport Secretary, Alistair Darling, to the Environmentally Friendly Vehicles Conference on what is being done to balance transport growth with environmental responsibilities.

[European Union Emissions Trading Scheme](#)

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) is one of the policies being introduced across Europe to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and combat the serious threat of climate change. Phase I of the Scheme began on 1 January 2005 and will run until 31 December 2007. Phase II will run from 2008-2012 to coincide with the first Kyoto Protocol commitment period.

[DEFRA Climate change website: Carbon offsetting](#)

Carbon offsetting is the process by which the emission of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide is offset by investing in projects, which either reduce the emission of, or sequester (remove), an equivalent amount of carbon dioxide.

[Climate change - what you can do to help](#)

Information about how you can help the climate through simple lifestyle changes



[DEFRA Climate Change website](#)

The UK is acting now to adapt to climate change and to reduce the risk by reducing our contribution to the causes. This website explains what climate change means for the UK and what we are doing about it.