

‘Getting in the zone’ has become a popular phrase in recent years, but, come 3 January 2012, some transport operators may be wishing they had stayed well out of it.

On that day, new emissions standards come into force in Greater London’s LEZ (low emission zone). From then, commercial vehicles that are already affected by the LEZ – HGVs, buses and coaches – will have to meet Euro 4 standards for particulate matter (PM), if they want to drive within the zone, without paying a £200 daily charge or a £1,000 fine.

In addition, larger vans, minibuses and certain specialist vehicles, which have, so far, not come under any scrutiny, will henceforth be required to meet the emissions standards set by Euro 3 – or face a charge of £100 a day or a £500 fine, if they fail to pay.

TfL (Transport for London) is urging owners and operators of the estimated 150,000 commercial vehicles affected by the new change in legislation to take action now, to avoid costly fines.

Are they taking notice? Retrofit emissions technology manufacturer EminoX has been warning operators for months that time is running out. Yet it estimates that half of the affected vehicles are still non-compliant. Furthermore, EminoX says that orders placed as at 5 October for fuel-borne catalysts and emissions traps represent less than a third of the total number forecast as requiring retrofit.

EminoX has invested in a service centre just outside the LEZ and also increased its manufacturing capacity. But the company is advising that, like other similar operations, its resources are limited, so those that have not already acted may find themselves out of pocket.

Leniency isn’t a word being bandied about in TfL HQ. It is less a case of act today; more act yesterday.”



Transport Engineer’s regular ‘IRTE to IRTE’ members’ column: focusing on the issues, challenges and concerns that matter to transport engineers and fleet managers