

With Euro 6 touching larger panel vans at the end of this year and LCVs from September 2015, van users need to get used to AdBlue, says Steve Banner, reporting from his Mercedes Sprinter test drive in Dusseldorf

# First Euro 6 van



Anybody who wants to buy a new diesel Mercedes-Benz Sprinter built to the soon-to-be-mandatory Euro 6 emissions rules will have to get used to pouring in AdBlue every so often. That will be a novelty for any van operator not used to running heavy trucks, but Mercedes contends that employing SCR (selective catalytic reduction) is the only cost-effective way for light commercials to comply. Rival manufacturers will have no choice but to follow suit, it believes.

The first van to meet Euro 6, Sprinter carries its AdBlue in an 18-litre tank in the engine compartment. When full, it weighs 30kg and the contents will last 3,750 miles. The driver gets a warning on the dashboard 625 miles before the receptacle is completely empty. If no action is taken, then engine speed will be reduced to 75% of normal around 200 miles later. If these alerts continue to be ignored, the van's speed will be cut to just 12.5mph after a further 300 miles have elapsed.

While Euro 6 should not result in a fuel penalty, vans fitted with the technology look set to cost more. "Typically, we're looking at a list price increase of up to around 1,200 euros," states Mercedes-Benz's head of product management and marketing for large and medium vans, Norbert Kuntz.

## Euro 5 or Euro 6?

Sprinters that comply with the current Euro 5 emission rules are still being made, although Euro 5 will become stricter for some new light commercials from next September. Particulate emissions, for example, will be cut by 10%, but, of course, AdBlue will not be necessary. Meanwhile, Euro 6 applies to all new heavy commercials registered from January 2014 and some of the larger Sprinter models will therefore be affected. So Sprinters with a reference mass in excess of 2,840kg are already being produced solely in Euro 6 guise. Euro 6 will start to affect light commercials from September 2015 onwards, so far as registrations are concerned.

Grossing at up to 5.0 tonnes, Sprinter is marketed as a van with a load cube of up to 17.0m<sup>3</sup>, a chassis cab, a chassis double cab, a crew bus, a minibus with up to 17 seats and as a 4x4. Available for order in June and likely to start arriving in dealerships in September, the latest Sprinter features a re-styled front and some modest changes to the cab interior.

Apart from the modifications required to meet Euro 6, the engine line-up remains the same, as do power outputs. Customers have the choice of a four-cylinder 2.1-litre diesel at 95bhp, 129bhp or 163bhp, or a V6 3.0-litre diesel at 190bhp, all of which are equipped with particulate filters. A 156bhp supercharged petrol 1.8-litre that can run on CNG (compressed natural gas) is available, too. A six-speed manual gearbox is standard. A seven-speed 7G-Tronic Plus automatic is offered as an option and is now available with ECO start/stop, which cuts the engine, if it is allowed to idle in congestion or at traffic lights.

As well as lowering Sprinter by some 30mm in an attempt to improve its aerodynamics and make it easier to load and unload, Mercedes has engineered detailed modifications into the drivetrain, with the aim of further reducing fuel consumption. As a result, an official fuel economy figure of up to 40mpg on the combined cycle is said to be achievable, if you specify one of the optional low-CO<sub>2</sub> BlueEfficiency plus Euro 6 models. Meanwhile, service intervals have also been extended up to 37,500 miles, as determined by the Assyst onboard maintenance computer.

Considerable emphasis is being placed on enhanced safety. Sprinter is getting Crosswind Assist as standard, as part of its ESP (electronic stability programme) system. Other optional safety devices include Blind Spot Assist, Collision Prevention Assist, Highbeam Assist (prevents other drivers being dazzled at night) and Lane Keeping Assist (TE, April 2013, page 49). "It's the safest van that's ever existed," claims Kuntz. **TE**

