

Information for international visitors to North Rhine-Westphalia

Motorists travelling in North Rhine-Westphalia will have to get used to urban Low Emission Zones which certain categories of vehicles are banned from entering. Since 1 January, 2008, a number of cities in Germany - North Rhine-Westphalia included - have been imposing such zones in their areas, aiming to improve air quality. Once an LEZ is declared, it may only be entered by vehicles marked with the appropriate coloured sticker. This applies also to passenger cars and commercial vehicles registered abroad.

On German motorways, you do not need a low-emission stickers. Motorcycles are exempt as well.

Where will Low Emission Zones be imposed during 2008?

Cologne was the first city in North Rhine-Westphalia to declare a Low Emission Zone - on 1 January, 2008.

During 2008, most likely in the autumn, Low Emission Zones will be established in the Ruhr cities of Duisburg, Oberhausen, Bottrop, Gelsenkirchen, Recklinghausen, Essen, Mülheim, Bochum and Dortmund.

How do I recognise an LEZ?

Low Emission Zones are identified by traffic signs ('Umwelt ZONE'). An additional sign below the traffic sign shows the coloured low-emission stickers needed for entering.



Are the stickers valid in North Rhine-Westphalia only?



No. The low-emission stickers are valid throughout the country.

Can I find out, before setting out, whether or not I am entitled to a sticker for my car, and what colour I will receive?

Privately owned passenger cars and commercial vehicles are divided into four categories, according to the amount of pollutants they emit. These categories are based on European emission standards defined in a series of EU directives. The colour of the sticker denotes the category the vehicle is grouped under.

Whether you are entitled to a sticker for your car - and the colour, green, red or yellow - depends on the amount of particulates emitted by the vehicle.

Here is an overview of emission categories and the corresponding vehicle types. If your car is not included, any agency issuing low-emission stickers will be happy to supply further information.

European emission standard	Emission category	Date of first registration Passenger car	Date of first registration HGV	Sticker
		Diesel	Diesel	
Euro 1 or less	1	Before 1 January, 1997	Before 1 January, 1996	none
Euro 2 or Euro 1 with DPF	2	From 1 January, 1997 to 31 December, 2000	From 1 October, 1996 to 30 September, 2001	red
Euro 3 or Euro 2 with DPF	3	from 1 January, 2001 to 31 December, 2005	ab 01.10.2001 bis 30.09.2006	yellow
Euro 4 or Euro 3 with DPF and higher	4	from 1 January, 2006	ab 01.10.2006	green

		Petrol/Gas (LPG, CNG)	Petrol/Gas (LPG, CNG)	
less than Euro 1 (vehicles not in category 4)	1	before 1 January, 1993	before 1 January, 1993	none
Euro 1 and higher	4	from 1 January, 1993	from 1 January, 1993	green

DPF = Diesel particulate filter

Where can I obtain a low emission sticker?

In the Netherlands, stickers are issued by TÜV Nord branches.

Visit www.tuev-nord.nl/keuringen/umweltplaketten for detailed information in Dutch and a Dutch-language order form.

There is also the option of ordering your sticker from Germany before setting out. They can be obtained from *Kreis* or *Stadt* motor vehicle registers as well as TÜV or DEKRA test centres.

Issuing agencies will require a copy (uncertified) of the registration documents, which can be mailed, faxed or scanned and e-mailed. You will receive your sticker by post. The fee is between 5 and 10 euros if picked up at an issuing office. Costs may be higher, including postage, if the sticker is sent to you by mail.

You can also order your sticker on-line at

www.tuev-nord.de

www.tuev-sued.de/auto_fahrzeuge/feinstaub-plakette

www.umwelt-plakette.de

What are the penalties?

There is a € 40 fine for failing to display the appropriate sticker whilst travelling through an LEZ.

Where can I get more on low-emission zones in North Rhine-Westphalia?

Go to www.umweltzonen.nrw.de