

Paris

Paris vehicle pollution sticker scheme comes into force

Police checks last week found only one in 50 vehicles stopped had sticker despite them being available since July



French police in Crit'Air sticker control operation in the Place de la Concorde in Paris. Photograph: Jacques Demarthon/AFP/Getty Images

Drivers in Paris must display an anti-pollution sticker in their vehicles or face fines in the latest attempt by the French authorities to improve air quality.

The sticker scheme, which became mandatory on Monday, includes cars, lorries, motorcycles and scooters, and bans some vehicles from the city during weekdays.

It follows numerous spikes in pollution in which smog has descended over the French capital, forcing traffic reduction measures and the introduction of free public transport on the worst days.

The six different coloured Crit'Air (air criteria) stickers indicate the age and cleanliness of a vehicle. Certain vehicles - including petrol and diesel cars registered before 1996; vans registered before 1997; pre-2000 scooters and motorbikes; and lorries, trucks and buses from before 2001 - are banned from the city between 8am and 8pm.



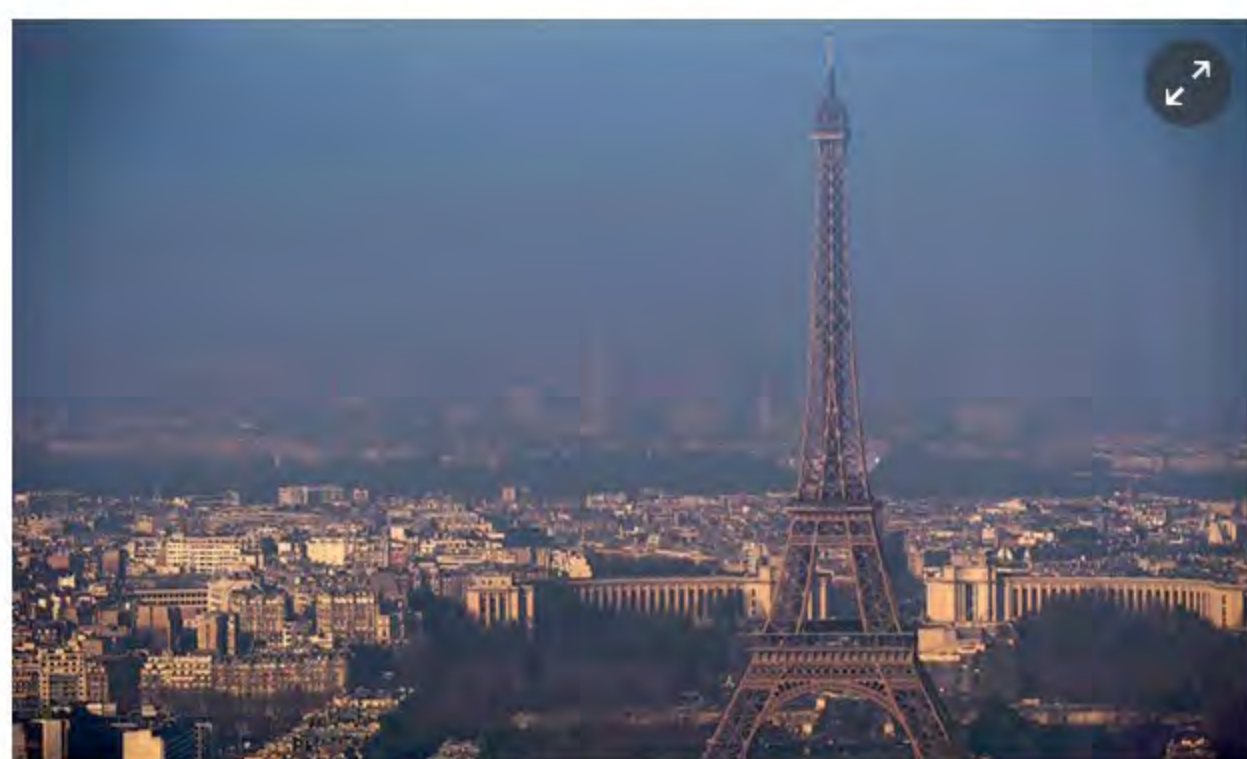
There are six types of Crit'Air sticker, indicating the age and cleanliness of a vehicle. Photograph: Lionel Bonaventure/AFP/Getty Images

Foreign-registered vehicles have been given until March to obtain their stickers, which cost €4.18 each, payable online.

The scheme was unveiled last year and stickers have been available since July.

The French government announced 1.4m Crit'Air stickers had been ordered through the official website, but a police check carried out across Paris last week found only one in 50 vehicles stopped had the sticker.

About 600,000 vehicles are estimated to drive in and around the city every day. Those found without stickers can be fined €68 for cars and €138 for lorries.



There have been numerous spikes in pollution in which smog has enveloped Paris. Photograph: Lionel Bonaventure/AFP/Getty Images

Other cities in France have anti-pollution sticker schemes, but Paris has chosen to make it permanent. The authorities say that in the event of high pollution it will make it easier to ban less clean vehicles from the city, instead of banning half of all cars depending on the registration plate, as has been done up until now.

The mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, has made it clear she will continue her campaign to reduce by half the number of cars in the city by making life increasingly difficult for motorists.

City hall plans include closing roads to traffic and pedestrianising areas of the capital as well as an eventual ban on all diesel vehicles.

"More cars means more pollution, fewer cars means less pollution. It seems obvious but in this post-truth age there are those who would argue that fewer cars means more pollution. We prefer to stick to the truth," Hidalgo told journalists last week.

Experts dispute the estimated number of premature deaths caused by air pollution in France, but Hidalgo said there were about 40,000 a year.

"The lead particles are found not just in the lungs, but the heart and brain, especially those of children. So we will continue to try to make Paris a city where people can breathe."

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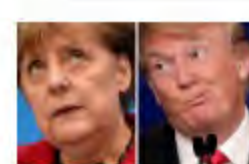
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