

# What do I need to know about the central London Congestion harge camera system?



## **What are the cameras for?**

The cameras enable Transport for London to operate the Congestion Charge. This is a £10 daily charge for driving or parking a vehicle on public roads within the Congestion Charging zone, 7.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. Weekends, public holidays, and the period between 25 December and 1 January inclusive, are free.

You will know when you are entering and leaving the Congestion Charging zone because you will see the Congestion Charging signs on or at the side of the road. There are no barriers and tollbooths; instead you are paying to register your Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) on a database.

The cameras read your number plate as you enter, leave, or drive within the charging zone, and check it against the database of those who have paid the charge, those who have registered for Fleet or Congestion Charging Auto Pay or those who do not have to pay the charge because they are either exempt or registered for a 100% discount. Once your VRN has been matched, the photographic images of your vehicle are automatically wiped off the database. For VRNs that have been registered for Fleet or Congestion Charging Auto Pay, the photographic images are retained until the account has been settled.

## **How do the cameras work?**

There is a network of 197 camera sites which monitor every single lane of traffic at both exit and entry points to the charging zone. The images captured by the cameras form the 'Evidential Record' (ER) for any contraventions of the zone. This is a still compilation of images that provides evidence that the vehicle was in the zone during the charging hours. A black and white camera takes a close-up image of the vehicle number plate, with a colour camera taking a wider 'contextual' image of the relevant vehicle.

All our cameras have an integrated Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) computer system. This means that the ER is produced at the roadside. The ER is encrypted and transmitted to the data centre over a dedicated secure broadband link.

You will incur a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) if you drive or park on public roads in the Congestion Charging zone during operating hours, aren't eligible for an exemption, registered for a discount or registered for Fleet or Congestion Charging Auto Pay and don't pay the £10 charge by midnight on the day of travel or the £12 charge by midnight of the next charging day. In order to send you a PCN, the registration details for your vehicle are obtained from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Before any PCN is sent, a visual check is made of the ER to ensure that the number plate has been read correctly.

## **What happens to the images taken by the cameras?**

If the Congestion Charge has been paid, or the vehicle is exempt or subject to a 100% discount, then the image is deleted from the core system by midnight of the following charging day. If the Congestion Charge has not been paid or registered for Fleet or Congestion Charging Auto Pay, the Evidential Record (ER) is retained so that a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) can be issued or until the Fleet or Congestion Charging Auto Pay account is settled. The ER is deleted 13 months after the Penalty Charge has been paid or three months after the Fleet or Congestion Charging Auto Pay account has been settled.

The PCN includes copies of two of the images retained for the ER. These are the black and white images of the number plate and the vehicle, taken at the time of contravention. You may also request from Transport for London a copy of all information held about you, and vehicles for which you are the registered keeper, for Congestion Charging purposes. This is subject to a fee of £10. A 'Subject Access Request' form is available from the Questions and Answers section on the Congestion Charging website - [cclondon.com](http://cclondon.com) - or you can contact the call centre on 0845 900 1234.

If a third party, i.e. the police, requests a copy of an image for a legitimate purpose under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998 (for example, to help solve a specific crime) then Transport for London may disclose a previously recorded image if this is still held. These requests are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Transport for London has a separate agreement to allow the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) routine access to data from the cameras used for Congestion Charging. To allow this to happen, the Home Secretary signed a certificate to evidence that this transfer of data by Transport for London is exempt from certain provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

This access is strictly for the purpose of safeguarding national security – and not for the investigation of general crime. The MPS believes that access is necessary to help maintain the safety of everyone who visits, lives, or works in London.

Transport for London takes the privacy of its customers seriously and robust procedures are in place to control and safeguard access to, and use of, the information.

## The area

The Congestion Charging zone includes the areas of Victoria, St. James's, Waterloo, Borough, City of London, Clerkenwell, Finsbury, Holborn, Bloomsbury, Soho, Mayfair and parts of Marylebone.

There is no charge for driving on the boundary roads around the zone. Please refer to the map below for further details.



For further information on Congestion Charging, please contact us via one of the following:

Congestion Charging

PO Box 4782

Worthing

BN11 9PS

**0845 900 1234**

**cclondon.com**