

Welcome to Alphabet

Your guide on driving fines and charges, and how to avoid them



You drive your business forward

We'll take care of your vehicles and your drivers

This short guide will explain everything you need to know about the various driving fines and charges it's possible to incur when driving in the UK – as well as information on how to avoid them, and contest them. So, take a careful look through before keeping this guide somewhere safe for reference. If you have any further questions, you can find our contact details in the Contact us section.

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Advance Fines Notification

What is Advanced Fine Notification?

Advanced Fine Notification (AFN) is a free, opt-in Alphabet service whereby we send an automated email to notify you and your driver that a vehicle-related fine has been received and processed by us.

The email is sent within 24 working hours of the fine being paid or its liability transferred. This provides advanced warning of any recharge invoice, which can take between four and six weeks to be processed.

The AFN email includes a copy of the fine notification, and this will inform you of our actions, and any steps you need to take. It will also include a third-party authorisation letter, which will allow you or your driver to appeal directly to the Issuing Authority.

If we receive a Notice of Intended Prosecution regarding a particular fine, the AFN email will not contain a copy of this Notice, in line with Police guidance.

How do I arrange for this service to be activated?

Activation is easy.

Simply email our Vehicle Administration Team at vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk and send the following information:

- Your company name
- Your email address, and up to 2 CC addresses, where we can send the AFN emails
- The date on which you'd like this service to begin

How long does it take to activate?

Once set-up has been requested, allow up to 10 working days for full activation.

Is there an administration fee?

No, this service is free for Alphabet Customers.

How does the recipient know if Alphabet has paid the fine notice?

The email will always outline any action Alphabet has taken. If you have any further queries, you can contact our Vehicle Administration Team, whose details will also be provided within the email.

How do I challenge a penalty?

The third-party authorisation letter, attached to every AFN email, will allow you to appeal directly to the Issuing Authority. Ensure you include the third-party authorisation letter with your appeal.





Penalty Charge Notices

What is a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)?

Penalty Charge Notices are issued when people breach certain regulations, such as parking where restrictions apply, entering and stopping in a box junction, driving in a bus lane etc. Some PCNs are issued directly and are often placed onto a vehicle's windscreen, however, most are captured and enforced using CCTV footage. Sometimes, bus lane contraventions can be issued as an enforcement notice rather than a PCN.

What should you do if you receive a PCN?

If you find a PCN on your windscreen, you should either make the payment or submit an appeal immediately to avoid any escalations. Because we're the registered keeper of the vehicle, if you don't do either of these things straight away, we'll receive a PCN that can be for a higher amount than the original fine.

For any PCNs captured by CCTV, we'll be sent those directly in the post.

What will we do with any PCNs we receive?

We'll pay them as soon as we receive them to take advantage of the reduced rate that's usually offered, and also to prevent any further escalation (i.e. having to appear in court). If you prefer, you can choose to have all PCN notices transferred to you instead. Simply speak to our Vehicle Administration Team to do this. For any PCNs relating to the use of London bus lanes, it's not possible for us to transfer these across, so we will pay these and pass the costs onto you.



We make managing fines simple

To make things easier, we have an Advanced Fine Notification service which can inform you of any fines which we have paid or transferred – so you can take action earlier if you want to appeal the claim. You and your driver will receive an email which lets you know what action we've taken and also provides a copy of the fine ahead of your monthly invoice. To opt-in to this service, simply email vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk.

How to appeal any fines

If we've paid a PCN for you and you feel there are grounds to dispute it, please contact our Vehicle Administration Team. They'll be able to help you with this and send you a letter to appeal the fine directly with the issuing authority. We'll also share any instructions shown on the fine.

If you're sending an appeal by post, we recommend using registered or tracked delivery, especially if you're including any supporting evidence.

If your appeal is successful, the issuing authority will issue a refund to Alphabet which we will then pass on to you. Please be aware that refunds can take up to 28 days to reach us, but once we have them we'll credit them to you within 30 days of receipt.

Ways to avoid receiving a fine

- Make sure any parking permits, payment tickets or Blue Badges are clearly displayed.
- Keep your registration number and payment details up-to-date and double check that they're correct on any Auto Pay apps or accounts, e.g. make sure you're using '0' instead of 'O'.
- Check you've paid for the correct date.
- Be vigilant and check for any signage about parking restrictions and make sure you pay the appropriate fee.
- If you breakdown, keep all your paperwork safe just in case you need it for a future appeal.

More information

www.gov.uk/parking-tickets/playing-a-ticket

www.gov.uk/parking-tickets/challenging-a-ticket

www.londontribunals.gov.uk



Private parking fines

A guide to laws, fines and processes surrounding private parking

Protection of Freedoms Act

The 2012 Protection of Freedoms Act (POFA) made it illegal to immobilise vehicles, using clamps or other techniques, on private land in England and Wales. However, it gave private parking operators a legal right to the payment of parking charges from the registered keeper of a vehicle whenever a driver parks on private land without paying the relevant charges.

British Parking Association Code of Practice

In 2007, the British Parking Association (BPA) set up their Approved Operator Scheme (AOS) for members who work in parking enforcement services on private land or in unregulated public car parks.

In October 2012, they introduced a Code of Practice by which their members must operate. Copies of this code can be accessed from the [BPA website](#).

Parking enforcement notices

Parking enforcement on private land is often outsourced to third parties by the owners of the land, such as supermarkets and large shopping centres. The type of enforcement notice given generally takes one of two forms:

- 1 A breach of contract between the driver and the landowner or their nominated agent.

The terms and conditions for parking are generally displayed to users of the car park on signage in the area. By parking in the facilities, the driver accepts the displayed terms and conditions and so forms a contract with the landowner/private parking operator.

If this contract is broken, for example by a driver overstaying a time limit or occupying a space reserved for specific users; the landowner or nominated parking enforcement agent can legally obtain the registered keeper's details from the DVLA and issue a parking charge notice.

- 2 A trespassing matter between the landowner and alleged offender

If you park on private land without permission from the landowner, under the law of torts, they can seek to receive compensation or damages.

What action will Alphabet take upon receiving a parking enforcement notice?

As the registered keeper of the vehicle, any charge notices are sent from the enforcement agent directly to us.

On receipt of a private parking charge (also known as a 'notice to keeper', 'parking charge notice' or 'enforcement notice'), we have the following options:

- Transfer liability to the customer who was leasing or renting the vehicle at the time (if the parking authority allows).
- Pay the charge in full
- Report the vehicle as sold or stolen (if applicable)

Unless you have instructed us otherwise, when we receive a parking enforcement notice we'll transfer the liability for the charge to you. The parking enforcement agent will then contact you directly so you can choose to settle the fine or appeal it.

If the parking authority doesn't allow us to transfer liability, we'll forward you the first notification we receive. However, if we're sent a second notification (often for an increased amount), then we'll pay the charge in full to prevent further escalation and pass that charge on to you. We may charge an administration fee for doing this. Therefore, please ensure you keep us informed of any changes to your email or postal address.

How to appeal a Parking Charge Notice

Instructions for how to appeal any charges can be found within the notification. We recommend sending your appeal in writing, via registered or tracked delivery, including any supporting evidence where applicable. If the enforcement agent has a website, you can find out more information on their appeals process there.

Unhappy with the result?

Should you be dissatisfied with the result of your appeal, you can sometimes appeal it further via Parking on Private Land Appeals (POPLA). For more information on POPLA, visit www.popla.org.uk.

More information

The following websites provide useful information on Private Parking in the UK:

British Parking Association
www.britishparking.co.uk

British Parking Association Approved Operator Scheme
www.britishparking.co.uk/Initiatives/AOS

Parking on Private Land Appeals (POPLA)
www.popla.org.uk

British Vehicle Renting and Leasing Association
www.bvrla.co.uk





Railway Byelaws

How do Railway Byelaws affect parking?

Britain's Railway Byelaws govern railway stations, trains, and tracks across the country, covering passengers, staff, property and equipment, and must be observed by everyone.

Section 14 of the byelaws refer to traffic signs, causing obstructions and parking and if a motorist breaches any of these, it is deemed a criminal offence and can incur penalties. This section states that no person in charge of a motor vehicle "shall park it on any part of the railway where charges are made for parking by an operator or an authorised person without paying the appropriate charge at the appropriate time in accordance with instructions given by an operator or an authorised person at that place".

To put it simply, this means if there are parking charges to be paid at a station, you need to pay it or face the fine displayed in that area.

There could be further costs to pay due to clamping, storage, or removal of your vehicle. However, this requires that there's a sign in that area advising such action will be taken if any vehicle has parked contrary to the byelaw. In Scotland, any motor vehicle left in breach of Section 14 may be removed by the police.

Failure to make any of the required payments can result in you having to appear in court.

Where do these byelaws apply?

At all rail stations in the UK where there are signs up stating that the byelaw is in force and parking restrictions apply.

Who will pay the fine?

As the registered keeper of the vehicle, we are liable for this byelaw's penalty charge and cannot transfer liability to you or your company. Therefore, we'll pay the fine when we receive it and then charge this back to you.

How do I avoid receiving a parking fine at railway stations?

Always take notice of the signage you see, including any restrictions shown. Also, make sure you pay enough to cover the full time that you'll be parked and that you park within the designated bays.

What should I do if I receive a fine?

If there's a penalty notice displayed on your vehicle when you return to it, we suggest making the payment immediately to ensure you pay the lower fee or, if you feel you can appeal it, following the instructions given on the notice.

Failure to do either of these will result in a penalty notice being sent to us, which we'll then notify you of. If at this stage, you feel you have grounds to dispute the charge, contact our Vehicle Administration Team who'll be able to help you and send you an authorisation letter to appeal it.

More information

www.gov.uk/government/publications/railway-byelaws





Congestion Charge

The Congestion Charge is a £15 daily charge imposed by Transport for London (TfL) for driving a vehicle within the charging zone. It applies between 07:00-22:00 every day, except Christmas Day (25th December).

Am I entitled to discount or exemption from the Congestion Charge?

If you think you might be exempt or entitled to a discount, please visit the [Discounts and Exemptions section](#) on TfL's website where you'll find the most up-to-date information.

You can apply for a discount online, however you'll need to supply certain documents to prove you're entitled to it. These are all clearly shown on the Congestion Charge website under each category which include:

- Blue Badge Holder
- Ultra-low emission discount
- Roadside recovery vehicle

If you need any supporting documentation from us, we can provide that, but we're not responsible for registering you for any discounts or exemptions.

You'll need to continue to pay the daily Congestion Charge in full when travelling within the Congestion Charge zone, until TfL provide you with written confirmation that your application was successful. Applications will apply for 12 months and then need to be renewed – if you're renewing, then make sure the documents show your up-to-date vehicle registration details.

When do I need to pay it?

The daily charge is £15 if you pay in advance or on the same day. This rises to £17.50 if you pay by midnight of the third charging day after travel. If you haven't paid by that point, you will receive a Penalty Charge Notice.

How do I pay for the Congestion Charge?



Auto Pay

The easiest way is to set up an Auto Pay account. This system stores your contact, vehicle, and payment details, and then automatically charges you for the number of days your vehicle travels within the Congestion Charge area. It also protects you from receiving any PCNs. An annual £10 registration charge will apply to each vehicle you add to Auto Pay.

Auto Pay can cover up to five vehicles but if you regularly have more than five vehicles travelling in and out of London, you can set up Fleet Auto Pay which also has a few more benefits.

Details of how to set up an account are available on the [Congestion Charge website](#).



Online

Visit TFL's [Pay to Drive in London](#) page.



Using the TFL Pay to Drive in London app

You use the app to:

- Pay a penalty
- Set up Auto Pay
- Check if a postcode is in a charging zone
- Manage your account
- Save your vehicle details for future use
- See your payment history

It's available to download for free at both the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.



By phone

UK: 0343 222 2222

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 08:00-20:00 Closed on weekends and Bank Holidays

International: +44 20 7649 9122

Textphone (for those with impaired hearing): 020 7649 9123

How do I avoid receiving a Penalty Charge Notice?

If you have a Congestion Charge account with TFL you should:

- Keep your registration number and payment details up-to-date
- Check your account regularly
- Check the Auto Pay function is activated (if you've requested it)

For one-off payments make sure you:

- Check the registration provided is correct e.g. '0' instead of 'O'
- Check you've paid for the correct date – payment outside of the date parameters will still result in a Penalty Charge being issued to the registered keeper of the vehicle (us).

What should I do if I receive a Penalty Charge Notice?

As the registered keeper of the vehicle, if a PCN is issued for the Congestion Charge, it will be sent to us. We cannot transfer liability for TFL's Congestion Charge, so we'll pay it on your behalf and recharge the PCN onto you.

If you feel there are grounds to dispute it, take a look at the Congestion Charge website for details on [how to challenge a Penalty Charge Notice](#).

Please also notify our Vehicle Administration Team who may be able to help and provide you with an authorisation letter if you need it.

More information

www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge





Vehicle administration FAQs

How do I get the documentation I need to take my vehicle abroad?

Simply call the driver helpline (the number can be found on the credit card-sized card within your vehicle) and they'll be able to send you everything you need. Please note, this will incur an upfront fee of £14.40.

Will Alphabet register my vehicle as exempt from any congestion charges or toll crossings, such as the Dart Charge?

No, this is the responsibility of the fleet manager or driver of the vehicle.

I've received a fine for my vehicle, what should I do?

If you have any queries or need some help with your fine, please contact the Alphabet Vehicle Administration Team at vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk or call them on **0370 0120 334**.



We make managing fines simple

To make things easier, we have an Advanced Fine Notification service which can inform you of any fines which we have paid or transferred. You and your driver will receive an email which lets you know what action we've taken and also provides a copy of the fine ahead of your monthly invoice. To opt-in to this service, simply email [**vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk**](mailto:vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk).

Can I add a personalised or cherished number plate to my vehicle?

As long as your company allow it, we can do this for you. To get this added to your vehicle, contact our Vehicle Administration Team who'll be able to help with this, ensuring there are no tax complications or issues with vehicle maintenance. There's a cost of £14.40 per vehicle which will be added to your monthly payment.

If you're ordering a new vehicle through us and would like it registered with a specific number plate, please provide your V778 retention certificate or V750 certificate of entitlement to your Alphabet Retailer.

Why can't I just use the online .gov.uk service to add my own number plate?

This online service is only for vehicles registered to a private individuals or companies, as opposed to a Leasing Company.

It's time to return my vehicle but I'd like to keep my number plate – what do I need to do?

Based on the DVLA's guidelines, making a change to a vehicle's registration document can take 4-6 weeks. So, to ensure you have enough time to transfer your plate, you must start this process no later than 8 weeks before the agreed collection date of your vehicle – otherwise, this may result in late hire charges as we'll be unable to take collection of the vehicle.

I'm due to return my vehicle soon but have just received an MOT reminder, do I need to have this completed?

Yes – your vehicle must have a valid MOT on the date of collection in order to avoid any additional charges and late hire fees.





Vehicle administration FAQs

Glossary

Appeal

When a driver or company challenges a penalty with the issuing authority

BPA

British Parking Association

Dart Charge

Dartford Crossing toll charge

IAS

Independent Appeals Service (for private parking)

Issuer/Issuing Authority

This is the authority or private company that has issued the fine or penalty notice

NIP

Notice of Intended Prosecution

NTO

Notice to Owner

Traffic Penalty Tribunal

Parking and Traffic Appeals Service

PCN

Penalty Charge Notice

POFA

Protection of Freedoms Act

POPLA

Parking on Private Land Appeals (Independent Appeal Assessors)

Registered Keeper

This is the person/company named on the V5 vehicle registration document, for our commercial vehicles, this will be 'Alphabet (GB) Ltd'

Representation/Transfer of liability

Where the registered keeper informs the issuing authority of the hirer (or drivers) details so that the fine can be redirected to them

Pay and Recharge

If we pay a fine on your behalf (to ensure the notice doesn't escalate, e.g. to court), we'll then pass this charge on to you

Railway Byelaw

Britain's railway byelaws are a set of laws that cover trains, tracks and stations across the country

TFL

Transport for London

Vehicle administration FAQs

Fine notifications, including Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and Private Parking

There are several offences that could lead to a fine being given, such as:

- Parking where prohibited
- Overstaying a free parking period
- Stopping in a box junction
- Driving in a bus lane

Failure to pay congestion charges and/or toll payments

If we receive and pay a fine on your behalf in order to prevent escalation of costs, this will be recharged to you (you can still appeal these with the issuer).

Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIP)

NIPs are mainly issued in relation to speeding offences and must be issued within 14 days. For these, the police authority will write to the registered keeper (us), to find out who the driver was at the time of the offence.

We are legally obliged to inform the police of the hirer or driver details (if known), within 28 days of the NIP being served. The police will then reissue it to the hirer/driver, who'll have a further 28 days to complete and return the NIP.

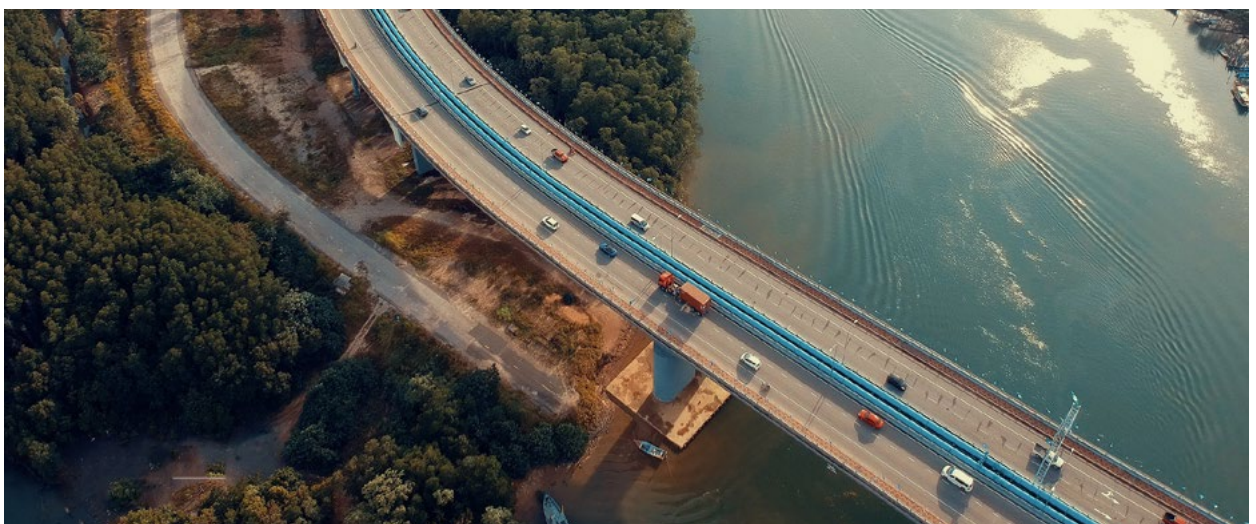
These notices usually require legal representation and can have an impact on your driving licence.

Appeals

Appeals must be lodged directly with the issuing authority as soon as possible and within their timescales (which vary between issuers). You'll need to appeal either in writing or via their website.

The BPA's Code of Practice states that the issuer should acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 14 days of receiving it. A decision should be provided in writing, between 35-56 days of receipt, dependant on the issuing authority and fine type.

If an appeal is rejected, the issuer should allow at least 14 days from rejection for any payment to be made before any enforcement action is taken. Where an appeal is successful and payment has already been made by Alphabet (through pay and recharge), the issuer will refund the payment to us which we'll pass on to you. Refunds can take up to 28 days to come through, but once we receive them, the credit will be processed and applied to your account within 30 days. Any administration that we charged in relation to processing the penalty may also be credited at our discretion.



Fine guidance FAQs

Can I be notified of any fines before Alphabet pay them?

Where a payment is required, we'll pay it within 5 working days of receiving it to take advantage of any discounted rates and prevent the fine escalating. We do have an Advanced Fine Notification service which can inform you of any fines which we have paid or transferred which can allow you to take action earlier if you want to appeal the claim. To opt-in, simply email vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk

Does Alphabet charge an administration fee for processing fines and penalties?

Yes, there is an administration fee for each one we receive.

Does Alphabet register my vehicle for exemptions e.g. low CO2 and Blue Badges?

No, the responsibility to register, manage, and keep any exemptions up-to-date address, including your email address, as well as your telephone number.

Do I send an appeal to Alphabet?

No, appeals should be lodged directly with the issuer but let us know if you're appealing at vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk as we can provide you with an authorisation letter.

How long does the appeal process take?

They can vary between issuers and sometimes take months – see 'Appeals' section on page 2.

How do I or my company get my refund if my appeal is successful?

If your appeal is successful, please forward any confirmation from the issuer to vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk so we can identify any refunds and get these credited back to you.

How long will it take to get a refund?

Once we've received payment from your issuer (which can take up to 28 days), we'll process the amount and credit your account within 30 days. See 'Appeals' section on page 2 for more information. All information in this guide is subject to change in line with policy and external legislative changes. The information is to be used only as a guide and further reference to official websites is advised.

More information

Guidance regarding grounds for appeal

www.trafficpenaltytribunal.gov.uk/

www.londontribunals.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dartford-crossing-fees-exemptions-penalties

www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/congestion-charge



Have any other questions?

Don't hesitate to Contact our Alphabet Vehicle Administration Team today

Email: vehicleadmin@alphabet.co.uk

Tel: **0370 0120 334**

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Disclaimer: The information provided in this guide is for general information purposes only and is correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication (November 2021). Neither Alphabet nor the author can be held responsible for any actions or consequences arising from acting or refraining from taking any action, as a result of reading this.

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www.alphabet.co.uk