

SPRING 2020

LeasePlan

# Driving Insights

Car cleaning guidance

Ten tips for drivers

8 tips to keep your car roadworthy if you're a key worker



Coronavirus :

# COVID-19

## What drivers need to know

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The Government has introduced rules restricting movement and encouraging us to stay at home where possible. These measures are effective immediately and must be adhered to by all drivers in the UK.

Here's everything you need to know about driving during the lockdown.

### Non-essential journeys

As of Monday 23rd March, the Government introduced enforceable measures that specified that people should not leave their homes except for very limited purposes:

1. For shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
2. For one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
3. For any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid or escape risk of injury or harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
4. Travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home.

### Fines and penalty charges

Our industry body, the BVRLA, is working with stakeholders to try and alleviate concerns around the administration and payment of penalty charge notices (PCNs) and fines during the lockdown period.

As of Friday 27th March, the below are in practice:

- Dart Charge has confirmed that late representations will be acceptable and are piloting an electronic solution. Further details will be available soon.
- Transport for London (TfL) has confirmed that the Congestion Charge, Low Emission Zone and Ultra Low Emission Zone are suspended.
- London Councils have asked boroughs to take a flexible approach to enforcement.

Private parking - we are working with the British Parking Association (BPA) to encourage its members to accept electronic communication and a more flexible approach to enforcement.



*TfL has suspended all road charging schemes, including the congestion charge, ultra-low emission zone and low emission zone.*

### Travelling in London

With the restrictions placed on public transport, it may be necessary for key workers to drive in London. To help support key workers going about their work, TfL has suspended all road charging schemes, including the congestion charge, ultra-low emission zone and low emission zone.

The usual daily charges are £11.50 for London's Congestion Zone and £12.50 for the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

The suspension has been introduced for lorries and vans as well as cars, and it remains in place "until further notice".



*Those who need to drive should remember that they still need to abide by social distancing guidelines.*

### Special allowances for NHS and social care staff

The Department for Health has said that all NHS and social care staff will be given free car parking on council-owned on-street spaces and car parks.

The government says councils will ensure NHS staff, care workers and volunteers can provide suitable evidence to be displayed in their vehicles in order to avoid charges.

TfL has also given all NHS staff free access to the capital's Santander Cycles.

### Extension to MOT due dates

Even though MOT centers and garages are classified by the Government as 'Essential' and allowed to remain open, many are closing to protect staff and customers.

To restrict the spread of the virus, the Government has introduced a 6-month extension period for car, van and motorcycle MOTs to be carried out if the expiry date was on or after 30th March 2020.

You do not need to do anything to extend your vehicle's MOT expiry date as this will be done automatically. However, vehicles must be kept in a roadworthy condition – with some garages remaining open for essential repairs.

If your first MOT was due before 30 March 2020 and your vehicle did not pass, you will not get an extension and your vehicle will need to pass an MOT before you can drive it again.



*The Government has introduced a 6-month extension period for your car's MOT to be carried out if the expiry date is on or after 30 March 2020.*

### Maintenance and vehicle repair

Garages for essential vehicle maintenance and repair remain open for now – to help keep vehicles, goods and key workers moving and safe.

In light of the exceptional circumstances, we are seeking clarification from manufacturers to establish whether the lack of a service will invalidate vehicle warranties.

### New car orders and deliveries

Due to supply shortages and to help ensure the health and safety of employees, many vehicle manufacturers have temporarily closed their production facilities. This will likely result in a delay in the delivery of new vehicles.

Even manufacturers yet to suspend production could experience delays as a result of supplier factory closures.

### Breakdown

If your vehicle breaks down, you can still call out a recovery provider, who will either be able to repair your vehicle at the roadside or take it to a garage.

Patrols are following Government guidelines: keeping two meters from customers, wearing latex protective gloves and wiping down any surfaces they touch with hand sanitizer or wipes.

The AA is advising that if you've broken down and have symptoms, have been diagnosed or have come in contact with COVID-19, to call and let them know when reporting the breakdown. If you don't have symptoms, haven't come into contact with the virus and aren't self-isolating, you can tell them about the problem online or use their app to report a breakdown.

### Petrol stations

Fuel stations are still open but be aware that it is believed that viruses can survive on surfaces for some time, so wear protective, disposable gloves and keep a hand sanitiser in your vehicle. Many petrol stations already have gloves available for public use at the pumps, however these often run out, so we suggest you bring your own just in case.

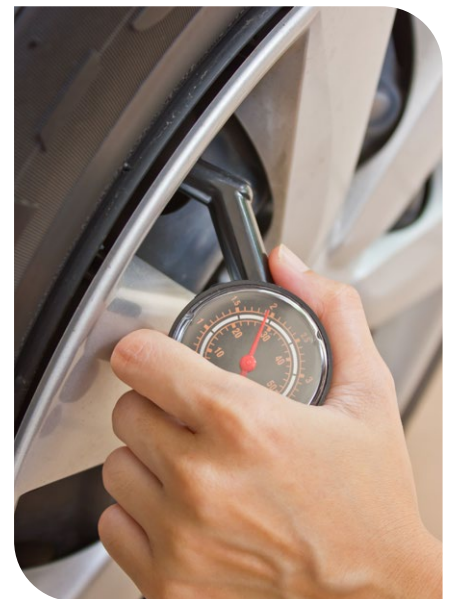
You can also use pay at pump to minimise any contact with others – just be aware of the keypad.

Drivers of electric vehicles using public chargers should also follow the same guidelines.

### Cleaning your car

It's more important than ever to take extra care to keep your vehicles clean and disinfected, as this will reduce the chance of the coronavirus being transmitted through commonly touched surfaces such as the steering wheel, gearstick, radio or door handles.

To ensure your car remains a safe space, here is full guide to sanitising your car from the inside out.



*Make sure you check your tyre pressure before making any essential journeys.*

### Keeping your vehicle ticking over during lockdown

As many of us won't be driving for long periods of time during lockdown, there are a few things you can do to protect your vehicle and keep it in roadworthy condition.

Take a look at our guide to keeping your vehicle ticking over here.



# Coronavirus : Car cleaning guidance

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We understand that this is a difficult time for key workers who still need to be at the wheel on a regular basis. If you're in this position, we have ten tips to help sanitise your car.



*Apply a generous amount of alcohol-based sanitiser to your hands before putting on gloves.*

## Step 1: Protect yourself first

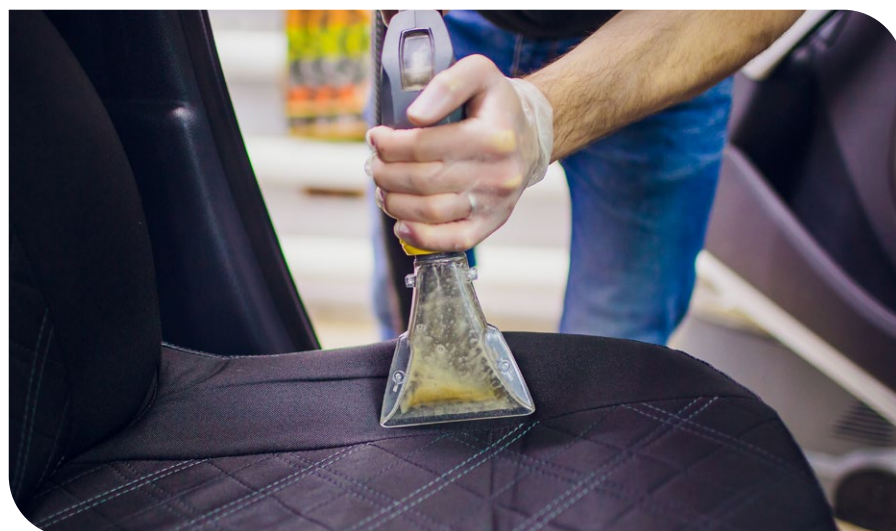
Before stepping out to clean your car, it is important that you wear the right protective gear. Put on a pair of high-quality rubber gloves and a face mask if you can, as there will be a lot of dirt particles in the air as you dust surfaces. Apply a generous amount of alcohol-based sanitiser to your hands before putting on the gloves so that you have an extra layer of protection. Though you may usually wear a pair of shorts and a t-shirt when cleaning your car, at this time, we recommend you wear jeans and a full-sleeve top to limit the amount of direct contact to your skin.

## Step 2: A regular clean

Start your car clean in the same manner that you would normally. Pull out the floor mats and dust them, use a vacuum cleaner and work on getting all the dirt and grime out from the corners. While you're at it, you can vacuum the seats as well. Remember to dispose of the vacuumed dirt effectively, preferably in a bin bag you can throw into your main bin immediately. Do not leave it lying around where someone might inadvertently come into contact with it.

## Step 3: The soak

Take a large tub of water and add regular detergent or a liquid soap and mix well. Take all the carpets/floor mats and soak them in this tub. If you have any other fabric that is removable in your car, put them in to soak as well. Leave them in the tub for a minimum of 30 minutes before getting them out and leaving them in the sun to dry.



*Use a vacuum cleaner and work on getting all the dirt and grime out from the corners. While you're at it, you can vacuum the seats as well.*



*Take an alcohol-based disinfectant and put some on a sponge. Use this to rub down all plastic parts.*

## Step 4:

### Scrub well

Prepare a separate soap-based mix to be used as a scrub for fabrics that can't be removed from your car. Dip a sponge in the mix, give it a squeeze so that it isn't going to soak your car and use it to scrub away at your seats, door panels and armrests. Make sure you reach into all the corners. We recommend that you also give the roof lining a good rub down with the same solution.

## Step 5:

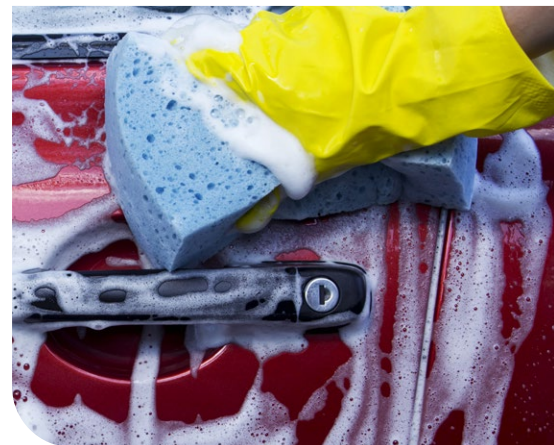
### Down to the detail

Now that your car has been vacuumed and scrubbed, it's time to get down to the details. Take an alcohol-based disinfectant and put some on a sponge. Use this to rub down all plastic parts including the door panels, centre console, dashboard, the pillar covers between doors and around your windscreen. Don't forget to clean up the boot of your car as well, as this is one place that sees the most foreign items in the form of shopping and shopping bags. Remember to apply the disinfectant/sanitiser to all the most commonly touched parts of the vehicle including the steering wheel, gear stick, power window buttons, rear view mirror, fuel lid opener and bonnet opener.

## Step 6:

### The exterior

Now that you are done with the interior detailing, it's time to address the exterior. A soap wash will make sure that all the exterior surfaces are clean, but make sure you are generous with the soap mix and go over commonly touched parts like door handles, mirrors, and the boot. Letting the soap sit there for about 5 minutes, then wash the car down, using a dry cloth to get rid of the excess water.



*Focus on commonly touched parts like door handles, mirrors, and the boot.*

## Step 7:

### Clean up

Now that your car is done, it's very important that you dispose of the gloves, waste cloths and other disposable material effectively. All your clothes and car wash cloths and sponges should go straight into the wash and you should take a long shower. After all that effort, you don't want to leave your clothes lying around as these could potentially contaminate other surfaces, so play safe and proactively get everything cleaned.

## Final step:

### Stay protected

The best defence against COVID-19 is to restrict your movements. A lot of people are already working from home and though there is a lockdown, people are still able to go to the shops and work where necessary.

Avoid driving somewhere unless it's absolutely essential and remember to always carry an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with you. We recommend using this to periodically rub down the door handles and steering wheel, particularly after you've been shopping as you may have touched a contaminated surface. These precautions can also help to ensure the safety of other people who might come into contact with your car, such as engineers and mechanics, particularly if your vehicle requires an urgent repair.

If you need to fill up your car at a petrol station or charge your electric vehicle make sure you wear gloves when handling equipment as these too might be contaminated.



## COVID-19 – our response

Please take a look *Keeping people safe, and your organisation mobile* article on our [leaseplan.com](https://www.leaseplan.com) website.



Coronavirus :

# Ten tips for drivers

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The UK government's rules around travel are tightening. The official guidance is to stay home - but some essential journeys in the car may be unavoidable.

Here are tips to keep you and your vehicle safe.

01

**Make sure you follow the Government's social distancing** guidelines when are out and about. You shouldn't be driving to a location away from home to walk the dog or exercise.

02

**New Police Powers:** If you are a key worker ensure you are carrying a letter from your employer explaining your reason for travel.

03

**Shopping for essentials:** Think about everything you put into and take out of your vehicle. It could potentially bring the virus into your vehicle - or pass it on if you aren't cleaning the surfaces regularly.

04

**Keep your car clean, inside and out.** We have some guidance to help you do this.

05

**Make sure you have a way to clean your hands,** as there will likely be times where you have to touch something outside the vehicle and it's best to be safe.

06

**Filling up:** If you have access to disposal gloves, keep some in your car. You can use them when you refuel at the pump if the garage doesn't have any available.

07

**Keep oil, water and fluids topped up:** Do everything you can to maintain your vehicle, as it may take longer to get a response for breakdowns or book in a garage repair.

08

**Diesel Drivers:** Be mindful of your diesel particulate filter (DPF) you can read more on this here.

09

**Don't drive unwell:** Make certain you know what to do if you start showing symptoms. You can find the Government's guidance below.

10

**Please drive safely.** The emergency services have enough to do already.

## Make sure you know the symptoms

You can find the Government's guidance here.



Coronavirus :

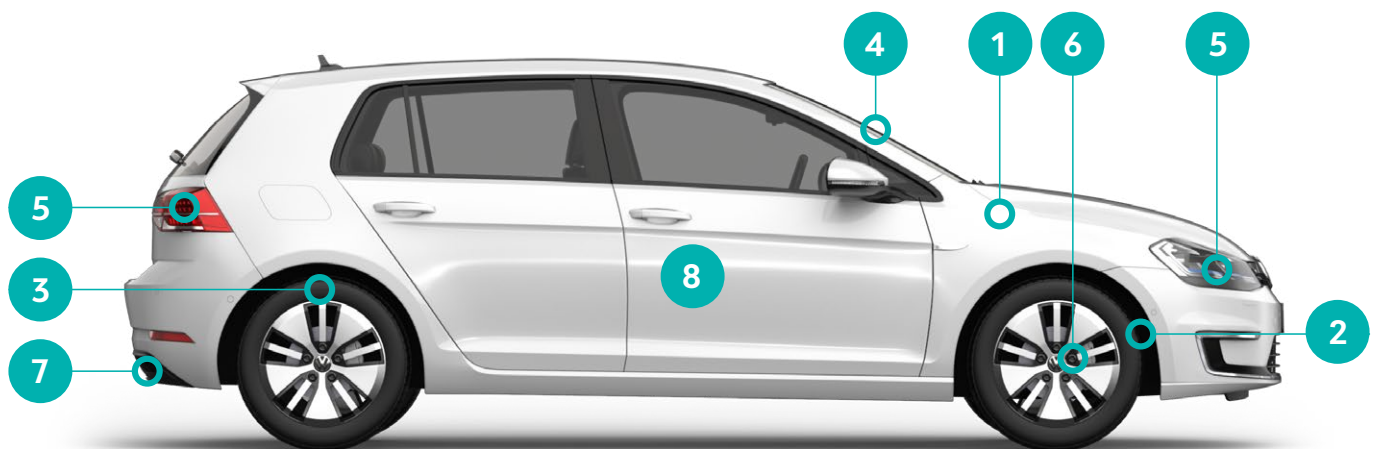
# 8 tips to keep your car roadworthy if you're a key worker

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The announcement that MOTs will be extended for six months is good news for key workers and drivers who need to use their vehicles for essential travel during the lockdown, especially with people being encouraged to drive rather than use public transport. At the same time, it will help to take a lot of pressure off garages and breakdown recovery services.

However, it's important to remember that even with the MOT extension, you still have a legal responsibility to keep your vehicle roadworthy. Failing to do so could land you a fine of £2,500, 3 points on your licence or even a driving ban.

So, if you need to use your car for essential purposes or you're a key worker, vehicle leasing company LeasePlan UK has shared 8 tips designed to ensure vehicles are in the best condition possible throughout this period, and to keep drivers safe on the road.



## 1 Oil

Oil keeps your engine working smoothly, so it's important to make sure your vehicle has enough. For most cars, all you have to do is lift the bonnet and check the dipstick (just remember to wipe it clean first). If the level is low, top it up using the type of oil specified in your owner's manual.

## 2 Tyre tread depth

Your tyres quite literally help to keep you on the road, as the treads provide traction when you're driving. If they're getting low, braking distances will increase and you'll have less grip when cornering. The tread also helps funnel water away from the tyres, so when it's low, there's more chance of aquaplaning in the wet.

Checking your tyres is as easy as using a tread depth tool that you can pick up in petrol stations or buy online. A quick alternative is to use the 20p test to get a rough idea of tread depth. Just put a 20p in the treads and if you can't see the outer band at all, your tyres are definitely above the legal limit. There are also tread wear indicators built into the grooves on tyres that can give you a quick guide to their status.

If your tyres are below the limit, or very close, please remember that garages are still open at the moment and you'll need to get your tyres changed. It's worth phoning ahead to check opening hours and whether the tyres you need are in stock, as this will prevent any unnecessary journeys.



The law says that your tyre treads must be at least 1.6mm deep, but many safety experts suggest 2mm, as braking distances rapidly increase when you drop below this point.



*Driving with a chipped or cracked windscreen can be considered a motoring offence.*

### 3 Tyre inflation

Tyre pressure is important too. Under-inflated tyres can limit handling, affect braking distance and make punctures more likely, while over-inflated tyres can increase the risk of blow-outs. In addition, tyres that are not inflated correctly will not wear correctly, so they may need replacing sooner – and they make your car less fuel efficient. All in all, it makes good sense to check the air in your tyres the next time you refuel, which you can do using a pressure gauge. And remember to check your spare tyre too, if you have one.

### 4 Windscreen

Driving with a chipped or cracked windscreen can be considered a motoring offence, as it can seriously impede a driver's vision. It could also be enough for your vehicle to fail its MOT. Therefore, it's vital you arrange for repairs as soon as possible otherwise your vehicle will be deemed as unroadworthy. And don't be tempted to put it off for the time being – a crack left unattended can quickly spread across the windscreen, which will result in a much more complex – and expensive – repair job.

It's also a legal requirement to have fluid in your car's screen wash bottle, as you have to be able to clear your windscreen while driving. Topping it up is easy; simply lift your bonnet, find the filler cap and pour in washer fluid (or water, if you don't have anything else available). It's also a good idea to give your windscreen a clean at the same time, as a blurry windscreen can be dangerous when the sun is low. Once you've done all this, give the windscreen a spray and see how the wipers work. If they rub or leave streaks, it could be time to change them. This is easy to do yourself and is a simple but effective way to keep safe.

### 5 Lights

It's crucial that your lights work, as other drivers must be able to see your vehicle, and this can be done if you're on your own. Most lights can be tested by turning them on and getting out of the vehicle. For brake lights, park your vehicle near something with a reflective surface, for example another vehicle, a window or a painted garage door during the day and check your lights through your mirror when you push the pedal.



*It's crucial that your lights work, as other drivers must be able to see your vehicle.*

### 6 Brakes

Given how important your brakes are, it makes sense to test them before every journey. Just start the car moving slowly and then use the brake pedal. If it doesn't feel right, you can contact a garage – they're still open for essential maintenance.

### 7 A special note to diesel drivers

If you drive a diesel car, please be aware that you need to take care of your Diesel Particulate Filters (DPFs). This means burning off the diesel particles and clean the filter. Not doing this can result in the vehicle completely shutting down and cause major engine damage.

All you need to do is get your car on an A road or motorway on a regular basis, such as every 300 miles. You then need to run it for 10-20 minutes at speeds in excess of 40mph. This will heat up your exhaust and burn off any soot in the filter.

### 8 Static vehicles

While many key workers are still using their cars on a daily basis during the lockdown, people who are staying at home may only need their vehicle once a week – or even less. If you're in this position, it's worth starting the engine occasionally and letting it run for a bit to keep the battery topped up and cycle the fuel.

It's also worth keeping in mind that leaving your car parked for long periods of time can lead to flat spots on the tyres, so it's essential you check your tyres before using it.

And, while it's not a safety issue, if your car is parked under a tree, consider putting a cover on it to protect against sap and bird droppings. Bird droppings on modern water-based paint will start to impact the lacquer within 90 minutes, or even less if the car hasn't been polished for a few years. If it's dried on, use some warm water to soak it first as this will make it a lot easier to remove. Scrubbing at it without soaking first will do even more harm as it can create scratches.

We need to ensure everyone's safety as much as we can, so these tips will hopefully help to keep our drivers and their vehicles safe when travelling during the coronavirus pandemic. After all, it's still important to maintain our vehicles, and ensure they are meeting legal requirements. If in doubt, consult your vehicle handbook or contact the AA.



Coronavirus :

# Further reading

Browse our frequently asked questions to get the answers you need, fast.

# DriverLine

For help with your vehicle please call the LeasePlan DriverLine on **0344 493 7644**