

# China city caps car-buying to curb pollution

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Rush hour traffic in Beijing on December 31, 2010

Another Chinese city has capped the total number of car licence plates it will issue annually, state media said Sunday, following moves by Beijing and other metropolises to curb pollution and congestion.

The world's most populous nation is also the world's largest car-buyer. But it is trying to curb [poor air quality](#) and other environmental damages caused by rapid development.

Tianjin, a coastal city near Beijing with 14 million people and 2.36 million registered motor vehicles last year, will cap new car plates to 100,000 a year, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

The government will award 60,000 plates by lottery, reserving 10,000 of these for fuel-efficient cars, and auction the remaining 40,000.

Of the total plates issued, 88 percent will go to individuals and the rest to companies and other entities, while government bodies will be ineligible, Xinhua said.

Although the details were reported over the weekend, the policy was announced a week earlier and took effect five hours later, sparking "overnight panic buying", it added.

Four other cities -- Beijing, the commercial hub of Shanghai, Guiyang in the southwest and Guangzhou in the south -- have imposed similar restrictions.

Beijing, whose population tops 20 million, launched a lottery system in 2011 for an annual maximum of 240,000 car registrations.



Vehicles move slowly in heavy fog in Hefei, central China's Anhui province on January 14, 2013

The capital has more than 5.3 million cars on the road, Xinhua said. Demand is so high that applicants have just a 1 in 80 chance, the China Daily newspaper said in October.

Guangzhou last year capped registration for small- and medium-sized cars at 120,000. The city of 16 million people had about 2.4 million cars on the road as of May, local media reported at the time.

Starting next March, Tianjin will also restrict a fifth of private vehicles from using the road on workdays depending on their plate number—a practice first introduced in Beijing in 2008.

China's expanding middle class has boosted auto sales to the world's top spot, with 19.86 million vehicles sold in the first 11 months of 2013.

That marked a 13.5 percent rise year-on-year.

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