

Paris ends smog-fighting traffic restrictions after one day

March 23 2015



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French authorities announced Monday that emergency traffic-limitation measures to combat high pollution levels in Paris would not be extended as forecasts showed the air was clearing.

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vehicles with licence plates ending in odd numbers after a prolonged spike in pollution last week.

They were planning to ban cars with even numbers on Tuesday, but the scheme was halted following improving forecasts.

"Due to the improving situation today and tomorrow, the alternative traffic (plan) will not be renewed Tuesday," announced Ecology Minister Segolene Royal, who took time to salute "the good citizenship of motorists who understood the necessity of this measure."

The Airparif monitoring agency said smog density was still near alert levels Monday, but rain forecast for Tuesday was expected to clear the air.

Though public transport is free of charge to take the sting out of the restrictions, ferociously independent drivers in the capital rail against the measure, despite it having been used only twice since 1997.

Similar emergency restrictions were last implemented almost exactly a year ago—on March 17—during a particularly bad spike in the [pollution](#) levels.

The Paris area is confronting an increasingly troubling [air pollution](#) problem, caused by vehicles, heating and heavy industry, which generate tiny floating particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and the blood system and can cause cancer.



A technician sets up apparatus on a mobile pollution level-checking station on the Avenue des Champs Elysees in Paris on March 23, 2015, as pollution control enforcement measures were implemented in the city

In Paris, authorities measure the concentration of particulates with a diameter of less than 10 microns—so-called PM10—in the air to determine [pollution levels](#).

The safe limit for PM10 is set at 80 microgrammes per cubic metre (mcg/m³), with levels in Paris Monday expected to be somewhere between 40 and 55 mcg/m³. The city's alert level is fixed at 50 mcg/m³.

According to a 2011 World Health Organisation report, the planet's most polluted city was Ahvaz in Iran with an average of 372 mcg/m³.

Beijing had an average of 121 mcg/m³, while Paris was measured at 38 mcg/m³.

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