

Madrid lifts partial car ban as pollution eases

December 29 2016



Vehicles on the M30 motorway in Madrid pass under road signs reading speed limitation due to a pollution spike on November 13, 2015

Madrid on Thursday lifted an unprecedented ban on half of most private cars as pollution in the Spanish capital eased up.

A day earlier and for the first time in Spain, authorities decided to implement a measure already used in other cities abroad by ordering vehicles with even-number registration plates to drive on even-number

days, and cars with odd-number plates on odd-number days.

The measure took effect on Thursday, but it was short-lived.

In a tweet, Madrid city hall said it had lifted the partial ban from Friday "given the improvement in NO₂ (nitrogen dioxide) and (weather) forecasts."

The partial ban on cars is activated when levels of harmful NO₂ in the atmosphere go above 200 microgrammes per cubic metre in at least two measuring stations for a specific period of time, and if the air is unlikely to clear imminently.

There are exceptions to the ban, such as for mopeds, [hybrid cars](#), those carrying three people or more or used by [disabled people](#).

Buses, taxis and emergency vehicles are also exempt.

But city hall said that some restrictions, such as a ban on parking in the [city](#) centre for non-residents, would continue as pollution levels had still not come down to satisfactory levels.



Pollution haze on the skyline of Madrid pictured on December 29, 2016

Still, Madrid stood Thursday at a moderate 70 on the international Air Quality Index that measures and combines five major air pollutants, one of which is [nitrogen dioxide](#).

This compared to 140 in London and more than 300 in Delhi.

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