




Polluting cars to be phased out

By Xie Yu (China Daily)

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A slew of subsidies have been introduced to promote the use of low-emission vehicles in Beijing and phase out heavy polluting ones, a senior municipal official said Tuesday.

Speaking at a press conference, Du Shaozhong, deputy director of the environmental protection bureau, said that from tomorrow, all yellow-label cars will be prohibited from driving within the 5th Ring Road, and from Oct 1, they will be banned within the 6th Ring Road.

Thanks to the measures introduced during the Olympics, Beijing's blue sky rate rose by 7 percent this year, he said.

Beijing has 353,800 yellow-label vehicles, which account for just 10 percent of the total number of motor vehicles but 50 percent of emissions, he said.

Yellow-label vehicles are those that do not meet the Euro I emission standard, which was adopted in China in 1992.

"The new subsidies are designed to encourage people to stop using heavy polluting vehicles," Du said.

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From tomorrow until the end of next year, owners of yellow-label vehicles will be given up to 25,000 yuan (\$3,700) as a reward if they stop using their vehicles.

And drivers will be subsidized if they purchase environmentally friendly ones, he said.

Violators will not be fined during a three-month reprieve period, he added.

"Generally speaking, the earlier people switch their vehicles the more money they will get," Du said.

"The elimination of yellow-label cars is key to improving the air quality in Beijing."

An anonymous worker at the Beijing Chaoyang District Construction Group said the firm has several yellow-label cars, but they have not been used since September.

"It is good news that we will get the subsidy. I guarantee we will buy eco-friendly cars in the future," she said.

"Also, high-emission cars cost a lot in fuel, so it will be cheaper to run energy-saving ones."

Ren Lihong from the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Science said eliminating high-emission vehicles will help improve air quality in Beijing.

"Such cars are a major producer of particulate matter, so the air will be better if they are eliminated, obviously" she said.