What Car? reveals the biggest car tax risers ahead of new VED rules due on 1 April

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Imminent changes to Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) mean consumers have just over a week to secure a deal on a new car before tax rates soar by up to 2475%.

Analysis by What Car? has shown that the cost of taxing a car purchased after 1 April 2017 could be up to 25 times more, with even some of the most environmentally friendly plug-in hybrids commanding sharp tax increases.

It's conventional hybrids such as the Lexus GS300h and RX450h that will be hit hardest, however. These have traditionally been an attractive option for those seeking a luxury car with small-car emissions, because under the outgoing legislation, the GS300h and RX450h cost owners as little as £40 to tax over three years. But under the new rules, that increases to £1,030.

Under the new legislation, only zero-emissions cars costing less than £40,000 will be free to tax, but buyers still have a few days to make significant savings by purchasing before the 1 April deadline, using the new What Car? New Car Buyer Marketplace, which lets people compare discounts from dealers in their area.

In the case of the GS300h hybrid, the near-£1000 hike in the three-year tax bill is made up of a £150 first-year rate based on its CO2 emissions, followed by two subsequent payments of the new hybrid flat rate of £130 per year, which applies to all vehicles with emissions above 0g/km CO2.

In addition, all vehicles that cost more than £40,000 are subject to a further £310 a year charge between years two and six. As a result, three-year tax bills on the Porsche Cayenne E-Hybrid, Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV and Volvo XC90 T8 and Audi Q7 E-tron will also jump from zero to as much as £1,000.

On the up side, the Audi, Mitsubishi and Volvo remain eligible for a government grant of £2,500 thanks to their low CO2 emissions of less than 75g/km, and if buyers order before the tax hike they could save almost half as much again.

Motorists who flocked to buy one of Britain's top sellers in the first months of 2017 are also likely to have avoided a hefty tax premium and could still do so if they move quickly. Six of 2017's top 10 sellers are among the highest risers. Certain derivatives of the Vauxhall Astra, Ford Focus, Nissan Qashqai, Mercedes C-Class, Audi A3 and BMW 3-Series will command an extra tax bill of between £400 and £1,000 over three years.

What Car? editor Steve Huntingford said: "The new tax laws are designed to increase the advantage of running a zero emissions car, but they make things much more complicated and push up the price of many 'bread and butter' models. Fortunately, there are still opportunities to get a great deal.

"Buyers still have a small window to snap up a bargain before 1 April, and there are a number of grants for plug-in hybrids at their disposal. Tax aside, valuable savings can be made by using the What Car? New Car Marketplace to get the best possible price."

The latest deals can be found at www.whatcar.com/new-car-deals.

Top 10 tax increases

Make/Model	Segment	Fuel type	Cost of tax for three years – 2016/17	Cost of tax for three years – 2017/18	Cost increase over three years	Percentage Change over three years
Lexus RC 300h 2.5 F-Sport 2dr CVT Auto	Coupe	Petrol Hybrid	£40	£1,030	£990	2475%
Mercedes-Benz C250d AMG Line Premium 2dr Auto	Coupe	Diesel	£60	£1,060	£1,000	1667%

Mercedes-Benz S300h L AMG Line 4dr Auto	Luxury	Petrol Hybrid	£40	£1,030	£1,000	2475%
Lexus RX 450h 3.5 SE 5dr CVT Auto	Large SUV	Petrol Hybrid	£40	£1,030	£990	2475%
Audi A6 3.0 TDI S Line 4dr S Tronic	Executive	Diesel	£60	£1,060	£1,000	1667%
Mercedes-Benz C250d AMG Line Premium Plus 4dr 9G-Tronic	Executive	Diesel	£60	£1,060	£1,000	1667%
Mercedes-Benz E200d AMG Line Premium 4dr 9G-Tronic	Executive	Diesel	£60	£1,060	£1,000	1667%
Lexus GS300h 2.5 F-Sport 4dr CVT	Executive	Petrol Hybrid	£40	£1,030	£990	2475%
Audi A5 2.0 TDI Sport 2dr S Tronic	Convertible	Diesel	£60	£1,060	£1,000	1667%
Mercedes-Benz C220d AMG Line 2dr	Convertible	Diesel	£60	£1,060	£1,000	1667%

Hybrid tax increases

Make/Model	Segment	Fuel type	Cost of tax for three years – 2016/17	Cost of tax for three years – 2017/18	Cost increase over three years	Percentage Change over three years**
Lexus RX 450h 3.5 SE 5dr CVT Auto	Large SUV	Petrol Hybrid	£40	£1,030	£990	2475%
BMW X5 xDrive40e SE 5dr Auto	Large SUV	Petrol Hybrid	£0	£970	£970	N/A
Porsche Cayenne S E-Hybrid 5dr Tiptronic S	Large SUV	Petrol Hybrid	£0	£895	£895	N/A
Audi Q7 3.0 TDI Quattro e-tron 5dr Tip Auto	Large SUV	Diesel Hybrid	£0	£880	£880	N/A
Mitsubishi Outlander 2.0 PHEV 4hs 5dr Auto	Large SUV	Petrol Hybrid	£0	£880	£880	N/A
Volvo XC90 2.0 T8 Hybrid Inscription 5dr Geartronic	Large SUV	Petrol Hybrid	£0	£880	£880	N/A

UK top sellers

Make/Model	Type	Model's overall UK sales chart position*	Fuel	Cost of tax for three years – 2016/17	Cost of tax for three years – 2017/18	Cost increase over three years	% Change over three years**
Vauxhall Astra Astra 1.0T 12V ecoFLEX Design 5dr	Hatchback	3	Petrol	£0	£400	£400	N/A

Easytronic							
Ford Focus FOCUS 1.5 TDCi 120 ST-Line Navigation 5dr Powershift	Hatchback	4	Diesel	£0	£400	£400	N/A
Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta [Comfort Pack/Tech Pack] 5dr	Small SUV	5	Diesel	£0	£400	£400	N/A
Mercedes-Benz C350e Sport Premium 4dr Auto	Executive	6	Petrol Hybrid	£0	£895	£895	N/A
Audi A3 1.6 TDI SE 5dr S Tronic	Hatchback	8	Diesel	£0	£400	£400	N/A
BMW 340i M Sport 5dr Step Auto [Business Media]	Executive	10	Petrol	£555	£1,400	£845	152%

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