



Image: Getty

Jan 07, 2021 00:00 GMT

Two-hundred thousand new battery electric vehicles sold since 2010

Despite the wider car industry suffering badly from the effects of the pandemic, 2020 was a landmark year when it came to sales of battery electric vehicles with twice as many sold last year compared to the year before, and a total of more than 200,000 registered since 2010, analysis of SMMT figures by the RAC shows.*

December alone saw more zero-emissions vehicles registered than ever in a single month – 21,914, a fraction higher than September’s figure of 21,903.

In total in 2020, 108,205 battery-electric vehicles were sold, making them more popular than plug-in hybrid models (66,879 registered) and only a little less popular than conventional (non-plug-in) hybrids (110,087 registered) – although all electrified types of vehicles still saw record high sales in 2020 when compared to previous years.

Though starting from a lower base, the growth in electric car sales is impressive, with 6.6% of all new vehicles registered in 2020 being zero-emission, up from just 1.6% in 2019 and 0.7% in 2018. This means that getting on for a fifth of all cars registered last year (17.5%) were zero-emissions capable – up from just 7.4% in 2019.**

[View embedded content here](#)

RAC data insight spokesman Rod Dennis said:

“The end to an unexpected and, from the motor industry’s perspective unwanted 2020, saw record sales of battery-electric vehicles, providing evidence that, from small beginnings, momentum is now gathering pace. There’s a long way to go, with only a tiny fraction of the total 31.2m cars on the UK’s roads fully zero-emission, but the direction is becoming clear.

“The sight of more electric vehicles on our roads, many sporting number plates with the new ‘trademark’ green flash, might begin to make drivers who are considering changing their car look into whether ‘going electric’ makes

sense for them. Issues around charging infrastructure aside, it's the cold hard economics of buying or leasing a car that might yet hold them back with pure electric cars continuing to command a premium list price over their petrol and diesel equivalents.

“While petrol car registrations will likely recover somewhat in 2021, the question is how many drivers are prepared to switch to an EV at the expense of conventionally fuelled vehicles.– As the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt the inclination of drivers and businesses to continue acquiring new cars will be critical, as will the effectiveness of dealers in being able to conduct new car sales entirely online during lockdowns. But there is surely little doubt that 2021 will shape up to be a very exciting year for the UK's electric car market.”

The RAC is the first UK breakdown assistance organisation to introduce EV Boost technology into its vans, giving peace of mind to drivers who have, or want, to go electric. The lightweight mobile charging units, which are fitted to existing RAC vans, are designed to be the equivalent of a fuel can for a petrol or diesel vehicle. Find out more at rac.co.uk/innovation.

Track the UK's progress towards zero-emissions driving in charts using [the RAC's 'Road to Electric' webpage](#).

Notes to Editors

* SMMT new car registration statistics, released 6 January 2021:
<https://www.smmt.co.uk/2021/01/uk-automotive-looks-to-green-recovery-strategy-after-29-4-fall-in-new-car-registrations-in-2020/>

** Covers battery electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid vehicles and (conventional) hybrid vehicles only

The press office email address is press.enquiries@rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

ISDN radio studio facilities are available for interviews Monday to Friday.

About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the UK, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **[Insurance](#)**. The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers '[black box](#)' [telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **[Other motoring services](#)**. The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the RAC Opinion Panel. The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request