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Your ref:

Our ref: 12/0754

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Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your e-mail of the 14th May requesting information on the use of private vehicles by Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) staff for business use. DECC was created in October 2008 and so will only hold any information from that date.

You specifically asked:

1. How many employees claimed mileage expenses for using their own private cars for departmental business in each of the years; 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011?

53 in 2008-09, 123 in 2009-10, 108 in 2010-11 and 132 in 2011-12. Please note that DECC was established in October 2008 so the number of claims cover only half a year.

2. What was the total number of business miles claimed by employees using their own cars in each of the years; 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011?

DECC does not hold this information centrally. To provide the requested information would involve reviewing individual T&S claims and related records to obtain information for individual car journeys. Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Our assessment of this aspect of your request is that it would exceed the cost limit.

3. What was the Department's reimbursement rate for business mileage driven in an employee's private car for each of the years; 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011?

Please see Annex A to this letter

4. What was the Department's total number of employees in each of the years; 2008, 2009, 2010 & 2011?

The information for the years 2008-09 to 2010-11 is published on the DECC website at

<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/annual%20reports%20accounts%20and%20business%20plans/2010/218-decc-resource-2009-10.pdf> (page 75 of the Report) and at

<http://www.decc.gov.uk/assets/decc/11/about-us/goals-commitments/2212-decc-annual-report-20102011.pdf> (page 96 of the Report).

The 2011-12 data is being laid before Parliament in July and will be published in due course.

You also asked as to what controls the Department has in place to limit grey fleet mileage.

Please see Annex B to this letter the Department's current policy on use of private vehicles for business use.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the department. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Annex A

DECC's reimbursement rates for business mileage in an employee's private car

Motor mileage rates

The use of a private vehicle should only be used where there is no suitable alternative to public transport or where it is the cheapest option after considering car hire.

The current rates from January 2012 are shown in the following table.

Cars and vans	Rate
Standard rate for the first 10,000 miles in the tax year	45p per mile
Lower standard rate for each additional mile over 10,000 miles	25p per mile

The previous rates are shown in the following table.

Cars and vans	Rate
Standard rate for the first 10,000 miles in the tax year	40p per mile
Lower standard rate for each additional mile over 10,000 miles	25p per mile

DECC's Policy on use of private vehicles for business use

Own car

If you use your own car or motorcycle for Departmental business you can claim motor mileage allowance.

A vehicle is considered yours if it is registered in your name or in the name of your spouse or partner.

Approval for car use

Before you embark on your journey you should make sure that your line manager has agreed the use of your car for the journey and that it is the most reasonable and cost-effective form of travel for the journey. This is particularly important given the greater impact on the environment of car use relative to some other forms of transport.

Line managers may refuse claims for the standard rate mileage and only allow lower standard rate for journeys where:

- It was unreasonable to use the car in the circumstances
- The journey was undertaken without prior approval
- The driver or vehicle did not meet insurance requirements

Your responsibilities as a driver

The driver of a car being used on Departmental business is acting on behalf of the Department. You must make sure that:

- You have a current driving licence, which covers the vehicle being driven
- You have suitable insurance allowing for business use of the vehicle
- The car has a current MOT and is roadworthy
- You allow adequate time for journeys (including breaks for long journeys)
- You follow all advice, guidance and legislation relating to road safety – you will have to pay any fines incurred as a result of any driving offence (speeding, parking etc) as the Department will not meet these costs.
- You drive showing consideration for the safety of passengers and other road users.

Insurance

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have adequate insurance cover which allows business use. The Department does not accept or have any liability in the event of any accident, damage, injury or death, beyond that which would exist if the car had not been used.

What to claim

The standard rate of motor mileage allowance is paid if:

- You are driving your own car, and
- You are using the car for a journey where it is reasonable and cost effective to travel by car, and
- You have suitable comprehensive insurance, and
- You have not exceeded the current 10,000 mile per year threshold.

The lower standard rate of motor mileage allowance is paid if:

- You have exceeded the 10,000 mile threshold at standard rate, or
- You have only third party insurance cover, or
- You are using the car for a journey where it was no cost-effective or reasonable to do so, or where there are suitable and convenient public transport alternatives.

Home to office journeys

Daily travel between your home and your normal place of work is your own responsibility. Only exceptionally can you be paid mileage allowance when you use your car for this journey. The main exceptions are:

- when you are required to come in to work outside your normal working hours (for instance overtime)
- when you need to stay very late at the office and public transport has stopped running or the service is severely restricted
- when you travel under emergency arrangements operated by the Department when public transport is disrupted.

Disabled drivers

If you are disabled and cannot use public transport and have to travel by car, you may claim standard rate mileage allowance (assuming you have adequate insurance cover) for all business travel.

Passenger supplement

If you use your car and carry passengers you can claim a passenger supplement for each passenger.

Equipment supplement

You can claim an equipment supplement when you have to carry equipment inside your own car. No supplement will be paid if the equipment could either be carried in the boot or on the luggage rack of a car, or is carried in a trailer.

Garage expenses, tolls and ferries

If you use a car on Departmental business you can claim the cost of garaging and parking fees, tolls and ferry charges. In order to claim these charges your line manager must agree that the charges are reasonable and you must provide receipts with your claim unless these are not available e.g. parking meter charges. The full cost will only be met if the total of your claim is less than the cost of the journey by public transport.