

ADVANCING BS-VI EMISSION NORMS

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development & EIA

Representational image

On October 24, the [Supreme Court banned the sale and registration of vehicles](#) conforming to Bharat Stage (BS)-IV emission standards across the country, from April 1, 2020, citing “alarming and critical” pollution levels. With this decision, vehicle makers will only be able to sell BS-VI compliant vehicles from April 2020. However, BS-IV vehicles already sold will continue to ply.

In India, the first stage of mass emission norms came into force for petrol vehicles in 1991 and for diesel vehicles in 1992. However, it was in 2000 that vehicles — both passenger and commercial — met the Euro-I standards. The BS-II (equivalent to Euro-II standards) norms came into force in 2001 and were implemented in a phased manner. Gradually, BS-III was introduced, paving the way for implementation of BS-IV by April 2017.

According to an earlier road map by the government, BS-V emission norms were to come into effect by 2020-21, while BS-VI was to be implemented 2024 onwards. However, given the drastic increase in air pollution levels, particularly in the Delhi-NCR region, the government decided to leapfrog BS-V, while also advancing the introduction of BS-VI emission norms to 2020. The implementation of BS-VI norms will bring Indian emission regulations almost on a par with EU regulations.

The Supreme Court order impacts both the industry and consumers. For the industry, the decision brings clarity on the timelines for sale. However, the challenge will be to meet the new target date. The government had earlier proposed a grace period of three months for manufacturers to sell BS-IV compliant passenger vehicles and six months for buses and trucks that may remain unsold with the dealer or manufacturer post April 1, 2020. The industry had also argued in court that since they were allowed to manufacture BS-IV vehicles till March 31, 2020, they should be granted reasonable time to sell that stock. An industry expert pointed out that manufacturers will need to start manufacturing BS-VI compliant vehicles by February 2020, while phasing out BS-IV compliant vehicles. The industry has pointed out that this advancement will lead to shorter time for vehicle-testing and validation.

On the other hand, customers will get access to better technology and hopefully better air. However, BS-VI compliant vehicles will be more expensive. According to research agency ICRA, the price of diesel cars is expected to go up by about 75,000 compared to an increase of about 20,000 for petrol cars. The BS-VI fuel is also expected to cost more.

For BS-VI compliant vehicles to comply, it will be critical that the fuel of the desired specification be made available across the country before the deadline. While it will be possible for BS-IV compliant cars to run smoothly on BS-VI fuel, BS-VI vehicles will not be able to operate optimally on lower-grade fuels.

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