

For immediate release

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Upgraded Mazda6 set to drive fleet sales demand

- Improved fuel economy and CO₂ emissions down to 138g/km
- Reduced BIK for company car drivers and lower VED
- New model to win premium badge conquest business

Fleet manager and company car driver demand for the Mazda6 is set to rise with the May introduction of an upgraded model delivering lower CO₂ emissions and improved fuel economy.

The Mazda6 was the car that put the brand on the fleet map almost a decade ago, and the new 19-strong range featuring refreshed exterior and interior styling, additional equipment and a range of significant technical enhancements that improve fuel economy by up to 6.4 percent and reduce CO₂ emissions by up to 6.1 percent is set to win more converts, particularly from the premium end of the segment.

CO₂ has been cut by up to 10g/km on a model-for-model basis delivering benefit-in-kind tax savings for company car drivers and financial savings on a range of other vehicle-related taxes for companies - Class 1A National Insurance contributions paid on benefits-in-kind, Vehicle Excise Duty and capital allowances.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2011, Mazda expects to sell more than 10,500 Mazda6 models of which about 7,600 (72 percent) are predicted to be fleet sales - approximately 1,500 more than in Mazda's current fiscal year.

"With its well positioned list price and lower rates of depreciation, I expect the upgraded Mazda6 to retain its fleet leadership position and the model to provide a springboard for further growth as it appeals to more company car drivers," comments Peter Allibon, fleet and remarketing director, Mazda UK.

Fleets and company car drivers have a choice of hatchback and estate models - there is no saloon option in the new upgraded Mazda6 line-up - three petrol and three diesel engine options and four equipment levels - S, TS, TS², and Sport.

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The power output on the 2.0 litre petrol model is increased to 155ps (from 147ps) with the largest CO₂ reduction coming on the 2.0 five-door model, down from 168g/km to 159g/km, putting the car in the 20 percent company car tax bracket for 2010/11. Power output on the entry-level diesel engine rise from 125ps to 129ps, although CO₂ emissions reduce from 147g/km to 138g/km putting the model in the 19 percent company car tax bracket in 2010/11.

Emissions on the 163ps output option drop to 142g/km (from 147g/km), while power on the third engine option reduces from 185ps to 180ps but performance is not impacted and emissions also drop to 142g/km (from 149g/km). Estate diesel model emissions all reduce to below 150g/km to help offset April 2010 5g/km increases in company car tax thresholds and rises in VED rates on cars with emissions of 151g/km and above.

All engines in all models are Euro Stage V compliant for emissions except the 1.8-litre which will be Euro Stage V compliant from July 2010 production.

List prices across the upgraded Mazda6 range have increased by an average 4.8 percent, however increased specification, the use of higher quality interior materials, fuel consumption improvements of up to 2.9mpg and the emission savings mean the model remains competitive versus the competition. On-the-road prices for the revised line-up range from £16,995 to £23,445.

Upgraded equipment encompasses 'smart' turn indicators and Emergency Stop Signal (ESS) for the 'S' grade and all other models. Additional items moving up the range include: rear spoiler (TS upwards), front and rear parking sensors and Hill Hold Assist (HHA), (TS² upwards), and swivel-type AFS front lights (Sport). Full leather trim is now available as an option on all TS² and Sport models and includes powered driver and front passenger seats with a memory function on the driver's seat.

Allibon anticipates that user-chooser company car drivers will continue to be attracted to higher specified models. Meanwhile, essential 'job need' drivers and eco-conscious drivers are expected to gravitate towards the 2.2D 129ps in TS trim.

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“Many company car choice lists are imposing a sub 140 g/km cap on some grades of drivers so we expect there to be significant demand for the 129ps diesel. That model will also prove attractive to employees who opt into new salary sacrifice schemes being offered by an increasing number of employers. I expect diesel models to account for about 90 percent of core end-user fleet sales.” said Allibon.

The benefit-in-kind tax bill on the 2.2D 129ps in TS trim will be just £113.37 a month for a 40 percent taxpayer, on the 2.2D 163ps TS² it will be £138.43 a month and on the range-topping 2.2D 180ps Sport it will be £150.77 a month.

Meanwhile, April 2010 data from CAP reveals that the upgraded model will benefit from continuing strong residual values as a result of the improved emissions and specification and that it will retain up to 35 percent of its value at three-years/60,000 miles (2.2D 180ps Sport 5dr and three estate models - 2.2D 163 TS, 2.2D 163ps TS² and 2.2D 180ps Sport).

Jeff Knight, forecast manager at CAP, said: “The Mazda6 has achieved first-class residual values throughout its history and that is unlikely to change with the latest version.”

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