



E10 is blended with up to 10 per cent bioethanol, double the bioethanol of the existing E5 petrol

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Greener E10 petrol bars older cars from one in five forecourts

[Graeme Paton](#), Transport Correspondent

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About a fifth of petrol stations will be effectively out of bounds to drivers of older cars after the shift towards a new eco-friendly alternative fuel, *The Times* has learnt.

An estimated 1,800 forecourts will only sell the E10 petrol even though drivers of some 600,000 older and classic cars have been told not to use it. The switch, which is expected to take until the end of this month to complete, could leave these motorists struggling to fill up cars, particularly in rural areas.

The new petrol is blended with up to 10 per cent bioethanol, which is made from materials such as grains, sugars and waste wood, to cut greenhouse gas emissions. It has about double the bioethanol of the existing E5 petrol.

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Retailers are required to sell E10 as the standard grade of petrol from the start of this month. Owners of about 600,000 cars registered before 2011 have been warned against using the fuel because bioethanol's corrosive properties can cause damage to seals, plastics and metals in engines if used over a long period.

This is denied by Ethanol Europe, the industry group, which said yesterday that E10 caused no damage to older vehicles, pointing out that it is the only form of petrol used in the US and most of Europe.

Fuel stations in the UK will continue to sell E5 as the more expensive “super grade”, specifically for drivers of older cars. However, it emerged yesterday that about one-in-five petrol stations do not stock a super grade at all, meaning that petrol pumps at these forecourts will only dispense E10, effectively barring drivers of older cars.

Asda confirmed that all 323 of its forecourts only sold one standard petrol, with no super grade. Morrisons will not sell E5 in 219 out of 338 petrol stations, while it will not be offered in 70 out of about 700 Tesco forecourts. Esso said that 200 out of 1,200 of its branded service stations will also not stock E5 “due to technical supply reasons”.

The Petrol Retailers Association, which represents independent forecourts, estimated that between 500 and 1,000 of its members would not supply E5. Other major retailers such as BP, Shell and Sainsbury’s said that the vast majority of their outlets would sell both E5 and E10. This suggests that as many as 1,800 out of 8,300 petrol stations will not sell the petrol used by older vehicles. E10 will be extended to Northern Ireland early next year.

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