



Senseco: Carbon-Neutral, and Positive About Prius

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One of the new generation full hybrid Toyota Prius hatchbacks, has joined the fleet of a company with leading-edge green credentials. Senseco Systems, an independent fire and security systems supplier based in Chatham in Kent, is the first in its industry to be certified as wholly carbon-neutral.

The new Prius joins a mixed fleet of cars and small vans that includes an example of the previous model, and Senseco's Finance Director Sean Ashton plans to introduce more of the hybrid hatchbacks, as the leased diesel vehicles come up for renewal.

"We may be ordering at least ten new vehicles over the coming year, because it fits so well with Senseco's image," he says. Based on positive experiences with the Toyota Prius at his previous company, Mr Ashton believes the model can be implemented across various levels of the company including service engineers, sales team and management.

"The Prius has improved all round," says Mr Ashton. "It has everything it used to have, plus a bit more. It's even more fuel-efficient, it saves on congestion charge, the head-up display is very useful and the styling has been improved.

"The higher-spec engine makes it a lot more powerful, but without suffering any loss of fuel economy, and the boot is slightly bigger, so our service engineers can carry more stock."

Senseco Systems provides round-the-clock service and maintenance cover for its customers, including many blue chip companies, mainly in London and the South-east, so reliability, performance and comfort are important for its technical team.

"The drivers like the revised styling and the low personal tax liability, which works out about 50 per cent cheaper than on some of our other cars. With all the stop-start driving they have to do, they also like the fact that the Prius is automatic."

The new Toyota Prius is powered by a 1.8-litre VVT-i petrol engine and an 80bhp electric motor. Combined fuel economy is 72.4mpg and CO2 emissions 89g/km, yet it has a maximum speed of 112mph and 0-62mph acceleration of 10.4sec.

The base T3 model includes as standard the head-up display, three different drive modes EV (electric vehicle) ECO and Power, Touch Tracer controls, seven airbags, automatic air-conditioning, Smart Entry and Start, driver's electric lumbar support, electric heated mirrors, front fog lamps, and CD player with six speakers.

Senseco Systems buys its Prius cars from Beadles of Maidstone through Toyota Financial Services, and reckons to renew the vehicles on a three-year/75,000-mile basis.

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