

Pandemic drives average age of cars in US to a record high

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In this file photo dated June 7, 2020, a long row of unsold cars at a Honda dealership in Highlands Ranch, Colo. The coronavirus pandemic is causing drivers to keep their cars and trucks longer. The IHS Markit consulting firm says the pandemic has caused consumers to put the brakes on spending and hold onto their current vehicles for a longer period. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski, File)

Drivers are holding on to cars and trucks longer during the coronavirus pandemic.

The average age of a vehicle on U.S. roads rose by a month this year to a record 11.9 years.

The IHS Markit consulting firm says the pandemic has caused consumers to put the brakes on spending and hold onto their current vehicles for a longer period. As a result, fewer [new vehicles](#) are coming onto the roads, pushing up the average age.

IHS said Tuesday that it expects the shift will create opportunities for [repair shops](#) and parts sellers because older vehicles need more service. It "anticipates significant upward pressure on average age in 2020 and subsequent years as consumers work toward a new normal both economically and in how they use personal vehicles in a post-COVID-19 era," said Todd Campau, IHS associate director of aftermarket solutions.

Before the pandemic, U.S. new vehicle sales were expected to be a little under 17 million in 2020, short of the record 17.55 million in 2016, but still at a healthy level. Now most analysts are expecting sales to be around 14 million for the full year.

The average vehicle age has been inching toward 12 years for several years now, and the pandemic is likely to raise it by four to six months in the coming years, IHS said. A decade ago, the average age was 10.6 years.

IHS says that new vehicle sales were trending down even before the [pandemic](#). New vehicles accounted for 6.1% of the vehicles in use last year, compared with 6.7% in 2016. This year, IHS Markit expects the percentage to fall to 5% or less. "Declining new [vehicle](#) share in the overall population means fewer younger vehicles to temper average age

growth," the company said in a statement.

There are about 280 million vehicles registered in the U.S., up 1% from 2019.

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