

# Press Release



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Global road safety

24 January 2024

## WHO to focus on periodic technical vehicle inspections

**Geneva / Brussels / Munich.** The latest “Global status report on road safety” for 2023, published by the World Health Organization (WHO), has now added periodic technical inspection of vehicles (PTI) to its list of main factors for reducing risks of road traffic-related injuries or fatalities. This is the first time the report has listed PTIs in this context, and marks a major milestone for road safety throughout the world. The recognition will now pave the way for the establishment of a system of periodic technical inspections to boost road safety, particularly in emerging countries such as the global south. However, it is also a success for the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee (CITA) and for TÜV SÜD, both organisations that have intensively advocated for the importance of PTIs on the advisory boards and committees of the WHO.

“It’s a giant leap forward”, enthuses Gerhard Müller, Head of Public Policy and Economic Affairs of the Mobility Division at TÜV SÜD and long-standing president of CITA. “The PTI is an important building block for road safety because regular technical inspections are the only way of ensuring that vehicles continue to function safely throughout their life.” And Patrick Fruth, CEO of TÜV SÜD’s Mobility Division, adds, “This is a key milestone along the way to reaching Vision Zero. Few goals are more sustainable than that of reducing fatalities or injuries from road accidents caused by technical faults.” The effectiveness of PTIs is shown by the accident statistics in countries where the procedure has been introduced for the first time. Turkey is one such example. In 2009 TÜVTURK began conducting periodic technical inspections of vehicles from Diyarbakir to Istanbul, checking that their safety-relevant components like lights, brakes and steering functioned correctly and emission values were being met. TÜV SÜD served as TÜVTURK’s partner in the introduction of a national PTI. Müller explains, “Turkey is the blueprint for the launch of PTIs around the world. Now running for 15 years, the operations there provide us with vital information – including insights concerning public acceptance of PTIs.”

And on the subject of emission values, the PTI's exhaust emissions test also helps to reduce toxic emissions such as carbon particulate.

### **Focusing on vehicles**

As detailed in the WHO's 2023 Global status report on road safety, 30 per cent of the victims in global road fatalities in 2021 were in a four-wheeled vehicle at the time, most of them cars. This means that car passengers or drivers accounted for almost 360,000 traffic deaths out of a total of 1,190,000. By way of comparison, global figures show that 23 per cent of fatal accidents involved pedestrians, and 21 per cent riders or drivers of motorised two- or three-wheeled vehicles.

While not all those deaths were caused by a technical vehicle fault, the figures clearly show that cars play a critical role in global road safety in general, with impacts that go beyond drivers or passengers. For example, an accident may result if a motorcyclist is blinded by the headlights of an oncoming car, and pedestrians may be injured or killed by car drivers on the road with no lights at all.

Comparison of these figures against average income levels may allow inferences as to the vehicles' condition to be made. 79 per cent of all road accident victims are in countries with roughly middle income levels, while 13 per cent are from low-income countries and just eight per cent from wealthier regions.

One potential conclusion could be that accident rates are particularly high in countries where cars are only just affordable, leaving no money to pay for maintenance or repair costs. The accident rate is lowest in wealthy countries, where the newest and best-maintained cars are on the road. In low-income countries, however, cars play a less central role in mobility overall, resulting in fewer road traffic victims.

In summary, the technical condition of a vehicle is of significance for road safety. This is all the more relevant because cars will dominate our roads even more in future with the growing presence of driver assistance systems, even extending to autonomous driving. "When the responsibility transferred from driver to vehicle becomes ever greater, the importance of that vehicle in terms of road safety naturally increases", notes Müller. A further key factor behind the increasing importance of cars is that as prosperity levels rise in emerging countries, more and more people will become car owners.

All those vehicles will need to undergo regular inspection to ensure they are in good technical order when on the road. Müller explains, “The PTI is the most effective way of ensuring that cars stay safe and clean throughout their life cycle and thus make a major contribution to improving road safety. At CITA, we successfully used this line of argument to convince the WHO to include periodic technical inspections as a cornerstone of global road safety strategies.”

### **System set-up according to plan**

The implementation and development of a periodic technical inspection system is supported by Assessment of Vehicle Inspection Systems (AVIS), a now internationally recognised CITA-developed assessment tool that provides countries with important data. “At CITA, we are very proud of our AVIS tool. AVIS is supported by international development banks because it makes it easier for countries to set up an independent, smoothly functioning vehicle inspection system”, says the CITA president.

### **Saving lives with technology that works**

AVIS leads back to Turkey, and thus to further proof of the effectiveness of periodic technical inspections. According to OECD figures, the number of road accident fatalities in Turkey fell significantly in the wake of the introduction of PTIs, from 61 per million inhabitants in 2009 to 46 per million in 2014 – the first reversal in years of an upward trend in fatalities. Just one year after PTIs had been launched, that figure fell by five per million inhabitants, to 56 (2010). As mentioned, TÜV SÜD played a leading role in setting up the PTI system in Turkey. TÜVTURK’s launch of the scheme got off to a flying start, with over 190 service centres and an additional 70-plus mobile inspection units. Since then, the company has conducted over 12 million periodic technical inspections in accordance with EU standards every year – and rising. The launch of PTIs throughout Turkey was TÜV SÜD’s biggest international investment project in the mobility sector in the company’s history. Data from 15 years of operation are now delivering important findings for the experts, and are also used by CITA to advance its AVIS assessment tool. And further international PTI projects by TÜV SÜD are being added in countries including Spain, Austria, Slovakia and South Africa.

### **Sourcing funds**

The inclusion of periodic technical inspections of vehicles in the WHO’s road safety catalogue is already having an effect. After the health organisation’s publication of its 5<sup>th</sup> Global status report on road safety in December 2023, the Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) at the World Bank also moved swiftly to include the example of PTIs. Its Annual Report, released before Christmas 2023, likewise highlighted the significant role of technical vehicle inspections.

Gerhard Müller comments, “This recognition will make it easier for countries to access funding for investment in their introduction or development of PTIs in future. All in all, it’s a great success – as well as a clear demonstration of the immediate impact of both technical inspections and the WHO’s reports!” “

The GRSF is a fund managed by the World Bank which supports governments in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) in setting up road safety programmes.

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