

# TRUE AND ACCURATE INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS WHO BUY A CAR

**i** When consumers buy a new car, they rely on the data provided about fuel consumption and exhaust emissions. But this data often does not reflect the reality. Higher fuel consumption means higher costs for consumers, while exhaust emissions harm the environment and cause illness. More realistic tests and stringent monitoring of vehicles even after type approval are intended to ensure that more reliable information is available.

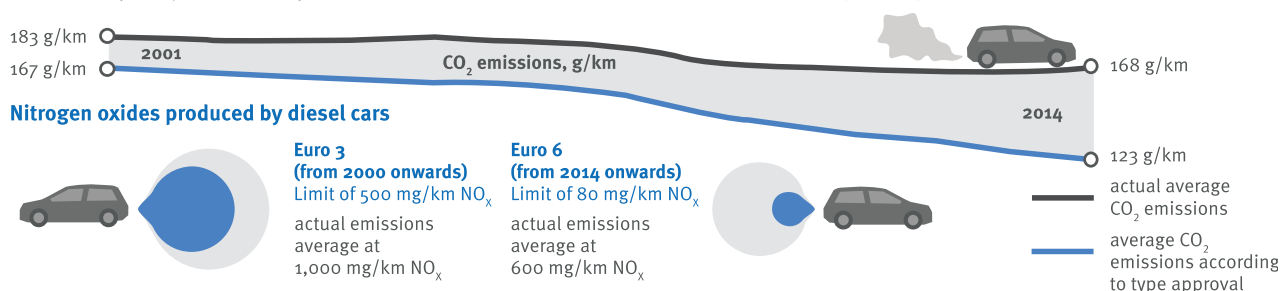
Opaque type approval processes, unrealistic measuring methods and a lack of market surveillance helped to create the conditions that led to the emissions scandal surrounding the 'defeat device' software fitted in some diesel vehicles. To prevent similar scandals in the future, the European Union (EU) has agreed a new type approval procedure (Regulation (EU) No 2018/858). From 1 September 2020, stricter rules will apply to the type approval system for cars. There will also be mandatory follow-up testing for vehicles that have already been approved and tighter checks on technical services and national type approval

authorities. New tests for fuel consumption and exhaust emissions are in place since 1 September 2018: an improved laboratory test (Worldwide Harmonized Light-Duty Vehicles Test Procedure – WLTP) and a road test for nitrogen oxide emissions (Real Driving Emissions – RDE) are intended to make the information more reliable.

**!** The Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband – vzbv) is calling for additional measures to ensure that consumers receive reliable information when they buy a car.

## EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY OF EXHAUST AND CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS

The discrepancy between specified and actual emission values for new cars is growing wider and wider.



Source: ICCT, <http://www.theicct.org/laboratory-road-2015-update>, [http://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/ICCT\\_PEMS-study\\_diesel-cars\\_2014\\_factsheet\\_DE.pdf](http://www.theicct.org/sites/default/files/ICCT_PEMS-study_diesel-cars_2014_factsheet_DE.pdf)

## VZBV'S POSITION

**Test fuel consumption in real driving tests:** Low fuel consumption is an important consideration for consumers when choosing a car, as higher consumption means higher costs. Road tests of the type already required for air pollutants must be used to measure fuel consumption and provide realistic information.

**Standardised EU-wide energy efficiency labelling:** Fuel consumption and the associated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions must be stated in a clear and simple format. The German 'CO<sub>2</sub> label' for cars must be modified. The carbon emissions should no longer be stated in relation to the vehicle mass. In the medium term, harmonised Europe-wide rules on energy efficiency are needed in the form of a Regulation.

**Effective market surveillance and sanctions:** The European Commission must monitor the implementation of the new type approval procedure closely so that follow-up checks will be made and violations penalised. Any recalls must be communicated rapidly and sanctions must be imposed.

**Ensure openness and transparency:** Secret agreements between policymakers and the automotive industry must be a thing of the past. The German Federal Motor Transport Authority (KBA) must be more transparent and consumer friendly. The newly established KBA Advisory Board must strengthen market surveillance, transparency and consumer protection.

## FACTS AND FIGURES

**i** 80 percent of consumers believe that politicians represent the interests of the automotive industry rather than those of the car owners affected by the diesel scandal – a 17 percent increase compared to 2017. In addition, 82 percent would like to see the German Federal Government impose fines on the manufacturers.<sup>1</sup>

**i** There is no central register listing the country that granted the type approval for each vehicle model and the technical service commissioned to carry out the testing.

**i** Consumers spend around 450 euros more per year on fuel than is suggested by the official consumption figures provided when purchasing their cars.

Based on the average life span of a car in Germany, that is an additional cost of more than 8,000 euros.<sup>2</sup>

**i** The new WLTP test will be significantly more realistic than the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC) currently used. However, it is expected that the new test will only reduce the current gap between the test figures and the real-life fuel consumption figures by around 50 percent.<sup>3</sup>

**i** From 1 September 2020, when the new EU Type Approval Regulation comes into effect, Germany will have to test around 86 vehicles each year that have already been type-approved, and review the fuel consumption and emissions figures.

## ... WHEN THE CAR DOESN'T DO ...



**... what the manufacturer says it will** | Birgit is one of around 2.4 million Volkswagen (VW) customers in Germany who are affected by a massive nationwide recall campaign. Her diesel Passat is one of the many VW cars that had a defeat device installed. This special piece of software manipulates the emissions produced by her car. She has also discovered that her car uses more fuel than the 4.1 litres of diesel per 100 kilometres she was told it would use when she bought it. 'But aren't all cars tested before they're approved to be driven on the roads?' Birgit wonders. She is right: her model was tested prior to approval. But the defeat device manipulated the emissions in such a way that her car produced much lower values

in the test than it would in normal road traffic. And cars consume far less fuel on the rolling road used in the lab than in normal life.

### Anger and uncertainty remain

The new road test for exhaust emissions should make it impossible for manufacturers to manipulate these kinds of test in future. But because real driving conditions are not used to test fuel consumption, Birgit will not know for certain even when she buys her next car how much fuel it will use in practice. She has been told her Passat needs to come into the workshop for a software update. But she still has doubts about whether her car will then actually remain within the limits. Her uncertainty is increased by the knowledge that a number of cities are planning to ban diesel vehicles in city-centres. There is very little information on the updates and recalls on the KBA website. She would like policymakers and government agencies to provide more information on the potential effects of the retrofit. She worries that she will be left to pick up the tab for the knock-on costs of the defeat device.



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1 Representative survey conducted by forsa on behalf of vzbv (August 2018); representative survey conducted by forsa on behalf of vzbv (July 2017) <https://www.vzbv.de/pressemitteilung/autogipfel-hersteller-die-verantwortung-nehmen>

2 [https://www.transportenvironment.org/sites/te/files/publications/DE\\_TE\\_Mind\\_the\\_Gap\\_2015\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.transportenvironment.org/sites/te/files/publications/DE_TE_Mind_the_Gap_2015_FINAL.pdf)

3 <http://www.sipotra.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/How-much-difference-in-type-approval-CO2-emissions-from-passenger-cars-in-Europe-can-be-expected-from-changing-to-the-new-test-procedure-NEDC-vs.-WLTP.pdf>