

EU pollution clampdown for car makers

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Warmer

What problems do cars and other vehicles cause in cities?

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

emissions
lead-time

minimize
particulates

stationary
whinge

hurdle
urban

exhaust
outpaced

- _____ are substances, especially gases, that go into the air.
- _____ are extremely small particles of a substance or substances, especially those that cause air pollution.
- If you are _____, someone else makes more progress than you.
- If you _____ something harmful or unpleasant, you reduce it to the smallest amount or degree.
- If something is _____, it isn't moving.
- A _____ is one of several problems you must solve before you can do something successfully.
- _____ means *relating to towns or cities*.
- If people _____, they complain, particularly in a way that annoys other people.
- _____ is the time between planning something and starting to do it.
- The _____ is a pipe that carries gases out of a vehicle's engine.

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- How many cars meet the nitrogen oxide limit of 80mg per kilometre?
- When will the Real Driving Emissions regulation begin to apply to new cars?
- How many EU citizens are killed by air pollution each year?
- How long is the lead-time that the car industry is asking for before reforms to car test cycles are introduced?
- How many people die from pollution in the UK each year?
- What does ACEA stand for?

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Car makers face 'real-world' emissions tests in EU pollution clampdown

Europe to become first place in world to force car makers to undergo more realistic tests in bid to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions

Arthur Neslen

3 February, 2015

- 1 Europe is to become the first place in the world to force 'real-world' emissions tests on car makers, opening up a new front in the fight to tackle air pollution. New regulations will introduce the tests to reveal what cars' emissions are like when driving on roads and in traffic rather than in ideal, laboratory-like conditions, as is currently the case.
- 2 Green lit by European Commission Vice President, Frans Timmermans, the tests are designed to enforce a limit of 80mg of nitrogen oxide per kilometre, a level met by only one car out of 16, according to researchers. Other countries, such as China and Korea, which are also considering real-world emissions tests, will be watching what happens next closely.
- 3 Pollutants from diesel engines such as nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide and particulates are thought to be responsible for at least one quarter of the 29,000 annual pollution-related deaths in the UK alone. That figure is likely to rise, when the committee on the medical effects of air pollutants publishes what it calls "strengthening evidence" of damage to public health from nitrogen oxide emissions later in 2015.
- 4 But the current 'New European Drive Cycle' laboratory test for measuring these emissions is a quarter of a century old and has been outpaced by technological developments in the car industry. Studies have shown that the results of lab techniques to measure car emissions can easily be fixed by using techniques such as taping up doors and windows to minimize air resistance, driving on unrealistically smooth roads and testing at improbably high temperatures. Campaigners say that car makers also use tricks such as programming vehicles to go into a low emissions mode when their front wheels are spinning and their back wheels are stationary, as happens in such lab experiments.
- 5 "The Commission is finalizing a proposal to introduce a new emissions testing procedure that will allow proper assessment of the vehicles in real driving," said Lucia Caudet, a Commission spokesperson. The proposal still needs approval from other commissioners and a technical committee but "we don't expect any major internal hurdles," a European Union (EU) source added.
- 6 "One key reason why air pollution kills 400,000 citizens annually is that car makers cheat the tests for diesel cars, causing many times more pollution on the road," said Greg Archer, the clean vehicles manager for Transport and Environment. "The development of a new, real-world driving emission test is an important step forward in tackling urban air pollution. EU states should now support the Commission's proposals and ignore the whingeing from car makers that the rules are too tough."
- 7 According to research by the International Council on Clean Transportation in 2014, actual nitrogen oxide emissions from cars are seven times higher than the 80mg/km standard, with some models running at 22 times above the recommended limit. Only one car out of 16 met the 80g target. Around one third of all nitrogen oxide pollution comes from road transport – mostly diesel – and, in urban areas, concentrations can rise as high as 64%, European Environment Agency figures indicate.
- 8 Campaigners say that the car industry has tried to delay reforms to car test cycles but industry groups deny this, arguing that a five-year lead-time is necessary for technical and economic reasons. "Real Driving Emissions (RDE) is a totally new regulation that will force significant emission control hardware changes that may be demanded in the middle of a vehicle's production lifetime," said Cara McLaughlin, a spokesperson for the European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA). "However, ACEA fully accepts that RDE will apply to new types of cars from September 2017."
- 9 In an unusual move, the car association sent Timmermans a draft regulation of their own for him to consider, after EU representatives finally agreed a regulation to implement the nitrogen oxide limits with beefed-up road trials and strict monitoring of exhaust fumes. ACEA's draft regulation would have covered fewer pollutants

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and further delayed the regulation's phased introduction until 2020. Test distances would have been shortened from 1,300m to below 700m, minimum temperatures would have been raised from -7C to -3C and more rural roads would have been used. "The lobbyists were all over this," Archer said. "This was a real attempt at subversion of the legislative process."

- 10 After Timmerman's apparent rejection of the ACEA proposal, the regulation will now pass to commissioners for a rubber stamp, and member states for final amendments, before an expected

introduction in September. By 2017, the first real-world car emissions tests are expected to begin in earnest. With a similar battle already looming over the testing of CO₂ emissions for cars at the end of 2015 – and with comparable debates in other countries – the introduction of the EU's new emissions tests will be watched closely.

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4 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

- What is the current problem with emissions tests conducted by car manufacturers?
 - Cars tested by manufacturers still produce nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide.
 - The cars are tested in laboratory conditions and not in the real world.
 - Car manufacturers want more time before introducing new, tougher tests.
- How many UK citizens are killed each year by pollutants from diesel engines?
 - around 29,000
 - at least 7,250
 - more than 29,000
- What is the origin of around one third of all nitrogen oxide pollution?
 - car factories
 - petrol engines
 - road transport
- What was the problem with ACEA's draft regulation sent to the European Commission?
 - It did not cover as many pollutants and would have delayed the introduction of new rules until 2020.
 - It only proposed using rural roads in the test and not urban roads.
 - It proposed monitoring carbon dioxide as well as nitrogen oxide.

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5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a verb meaning *make an organized and determined attempt to deal with a problem* (para 1)
2. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *seal something using tape* (para 4)
3. a noun meaning *an important official in the EU in charge of a particular department* (para 5)
4. a two-word adjectival phrase meaning *improved or strengthened* (para 9)
5. a noun meaning *someone who tries to influence politicians or people in authority* (para 9)
6. a two-word noun phrase meaning *official approval of something* (para 10)
7. a two-word phrase meaning *more seriously or with more energy and determination than before* (para 10)
8. a verb referring to something unpleasant and meaning *likely to happen soon* (para 10)

6 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column to make phrases from the text.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. open up | a. temperatures |
| 2. tackle | b. a new procedure |
| 3. enforce | c. a test |
| 4. introduce | d. a new front |
| 5. raise | e. a limit |
| 6. green light | f. air pollution |

7 Word-building

Fill the gaps in the sentences with the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. The current emissions test has been outpaced by _____ developments in the car industry. [TECHNOLOGY]
2. Taping up windows can minimize air _____. [RESIST]
3. Driving on _____ smooth roads can give unreliable test results. [REALISTIC]
4. The new emissions procedure will allow proper _____ of vehicles in real driving. [ASSESS]
5. The new regulation will include strict _____ of exhaust fumes. [MONITOR]
6. Cars are sometimes tested in laboratories at _____ high temperatures. [PROBABLE]

8 Discussion

- Should diesel vehicles be banned completely? Why? Why not?
- Should cars be banned from all city centres? Why? Why not?
- Are EU pollution regulations like the ones in the article strong enough? Why? Why not?

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KEY

2 Key words

1. emissions
2. particulates
3. outpaced
4. minimize
5. stationary
6. hurdle
7. urban
8. whinge
9. lead-time
10. exhaust

3 Find the information

1. one in 16
2. September 2017
3. 400,000
4. five years
5. 29,000
6. European Automobile Manufacturers Association

4 Comprehension check

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. a

5 Find the word

1. tackle
2. tape up
3. commissioner
4. beefed-up
5. lobbyist
6. rubber stamp
7. in earnest
8. looming

6 Verb + noun collocations

1. d
2. f
3. e
4. b
5. a
6. c

7 Word-building

1. technological
2. resistance
3. unrealistically
4. assessment(s)
5. monitoring
6. improbably