

Press Release

Why DEKRA was founded



As important as 100 years ago: vehicle inspection plays an essential part in road safety

- ▶ As early as 1928, DEKRA called for mandatory vehicle inspections
- ▶ Ensuring that cars, trucks, and motorcycles are roadworthy
- ▶ Today, DEKRA is the world's no.1 in the field

Do you regularly check that all the lights on your car are working? Can you tell if your brakes are still in good condition? And do you always feel safe when another car approaches you? Here is where regular vehicle inspections, known as PTI (periodical technical inspection) come into play. PTI is designed to ensure that vehicles are roadworthy and do not pose a danger to drivers, passengers, and other road users. This was precisely the reason why DEKRA was founded 100 years ago.

Taking your vehicle in for PTI is a bit like going to the dentist: the visit may be unpleasant, but if you go regularly, you save yourself risks, hassle, and costs. In any case, regular vehicle inspections contribute enormously to road safety. This was already recognized by the founders of the German Motor Vehicle Inspection Association ("Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachtungsverein") in 1925.

Long before there were state-regulated vehicle inspections, they relied on voluntary technical checks of their growing fleets. Today, the association founded back then, which is today called DEKRA, has become the global leader in vehicle inspection.

Shortly after it was founded, DEKRA called for cars, trucks, and motorcycles to undergo regular technical inspections not just voluntarily, but as a mandatory requirement. The reason for this was the increase in traffic. In 1925, there were around 98,000 cars and just as many motorcycles on German roads. As many vehicles were poorly maintained and often had defective brakes, worn tires, or broken frames, the number of accidents was rising rapidly. If at all, such vehicles only came to attention during traffic checks. Only horse-drawn carriages had to undergo regular technical inspections.

In 1928, the "DEKRA Magazine" wrote:

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"Many collisions, especially in city traffic, are due to the poor condition of brakes and steering systems. And if the preventive work of the inspection engineers were to eliminate even the aforementioned defects and thereby restore the road safety of the vehicles, then the work of the inspection engineers would already pay for itself, as people would be at less risk."

And, again, in 1929:

"This is where motor vehicle inspection should come in. Its purpose is to provide motor vehicle owners with an unbiased picture of the condition of their vehicles so that they can take preventive measures to avoid premature deterioration and monitor their drivers' activities with regard to the proper maintenance of their vehicles."

However, it took a good two decades before what is called a "general inspection" in Germany was introduced. It has been mandatory since 1951 for vehicles to regularly prove that they comply with the provisions of the road traffic licensing regulations. In the nearly 75 years that followed, the general inspection has contributed greatly to road safety.

Today, in many countries across Europe and around the world, PTI is a matter of course for vehicle owners. DEKRA as the world's no. 1 in the field, performs way over 30 million vehicle inspections in 24 countries, from Chile to Poland, from France to New Zealand, from Sweden to Morocco. The latest addition to the network of DEKRA's PTI countries is Saudi Arabia, where the first inspection station was opened just a few weeks ago. 14 more are to follow by the first quarter of 2026.

About DEKRA

For 100 years, DEKRA has been a trusted name in safety. Founded in 1925 with the original goal of improving road safety through vehicle inspections, DEKRA has grown to become the world's largest independent, non-listed expert organization in the field of testing, inspection, and certification. Today, as a global partner, the company supports its customers with comprehensive services and solutions to drive safety and sustainability forward—fully aligned with DEKRA's anniversary motto, "Securing the Future." In 2024, DEKRA generated revenue of 4.3 billion euros. Around 48,000 employees are providing qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries across five continents. DEKRA holds a Platinum rating from EcoVadis, placing it among the top 1% of the world's most sustainable companies.