

Car Rules Delayed Amid Outcry

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September 23, 2010



A truck making a Manezh Square delivery. "It is idiotic and full of inconsistencies," Lysakov said of new car rules. **Igor Tabakov**

Motorists' groups on Thursday lambasted a host of new car regulations as illogical and biased, just as it emerged that most of them would be delayed for nine months.

Drivers of foreign-made cars must present Russian-language instructions for onboard computers, change indicator lights from red to orange in vehicles from the United States and equip headlights on cars imported from Japan with stickers correcting their direction, according to a [decree](#) published Wednesday by the government newspaper Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

But Channel One state television reported late Thursday that everything in the decree that relates to passenger vehicles (cars and light trucks) would only come into force in July 2011.

Spokespeople with the Industry and Trade Ministry, which is responsible for the decree, were not immediately available for comment after the report.

But the Federation of Russian Car Owners confirmed the delay. "They probably reacted to the many flaws. This gives them more time to address them," said Dmitry Samarin of the organization's Moscow branch.

One change that came into force Thursday is that the fine for tinted front windows was increased to 500 rubles (\$16) from 100 rubles. Motorist groups said this raises the chances of enforcement because traffic police officers rarely bother with 100 ruble violations.

Another change aimed at increasing safety is a ban on bull-bars, known in Russian as ***kanguryatniki,*** or "roo bars." The large metal bars typically found on the front of large SUVs have been found to cause serious injuries in accidents involving pedestrians.

The new regulations do not apply to cars older than 30 years, racing cars and diplomats' vehicles, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported.

"It is idiotic and full of inconsistencies," Vyacheslav Lysakov, who heads the Svoboda Vybora motorists' movement, said of the rules before the delay was announced.

He said the government had failed to address numerous complaints that his group forwarded over the past year. The regulations were originally published in September 2009 but then delayed until this Thursday.

Lysakov said amendments made during the delay allow stickers instead of demanding new headlights, but the stipulation was not removed from a subsequent paragraph.

"The sole aim of the decree is to protect national car producers from foreign competition," he said.

An Industry and Trade Ministry spokeswoman denied the allegation earlier Thursday. "The decree will greatly increase road safety in the country," she said, requesting anonymity in line with ministry policy.

The Federation of Russian Car Owners pointed out that there was no provision to make the necessary technical changes for imported cars inside the country, so importers will have to do this in Japan or Finland.

Another new rule is that all buses will be required to have Glonass or GPS navigation equipment by January 2012. Channel One on Thursday showed the first of Moscow's vast public bus fleet being equipped with the Russian-made satellite navigators.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/09/23/car-rules-delayed-amid-outcry-a1688>