

Medvedev Offers Hope to Weary Car Owners

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Motorists may be spared the notoriously cumbersome and corruption-ridden procedure of mandatory car inspections, with President Dmitry Medvedev suggesting that the practice be abolished.

The proposal, which promises to win the Kremlin the support of millions of car owners, follows a wave of complaints over changes in inspection rules. Disgruntled car owners have complained in recent months that they have spent days waiting in line at inspection checkpoints in Moscow.

The lines appeared after traffic police stepped up an anti-corruption campaign linked to the Kremlin's sweeping police reform in March. Illegally passing the inspection became impossible, but it turned out that the city police was unequipped and understaffed to properly handle all motorists in need of the check, which has to be passed every one or two years, depending on the age of the car, [Novaya Gazeta reported](#).

Medvedev called the certificate obtained during the car inspection "a worthless slip of paper" because new cars did not need it and owners of old "screw nut buckets" could purchase it illegally, the Kremlin web site [said](#) Thursday.

He later gave the government until July to draft proposals to simplify or cancel the car checks, the Kremlin web site said Saturday.

Mayor Sergei Sobyenin echoed the president Friday, sacking a top official in charge of car inspections, RIA-Novosti [reported](#). He also ordered proposals on how to "improve" the inspections to be presented within two days.

The sacked official, Igor Klimakov, allowed his subordinates to turn the inspections into a "feed trough" by "uniformly taking bribes," Sobyenin said.

City prosecutors hurried to open a check into traffic police procedures for car inspections, acting on "multiple media reports about violations of people's rights during technical inspections," a spokeswoman for the Prosecutor General's Office [told](#) RIA-Novosti on Friday.

There are 4.9 million cars in Moscow, an increase of 240,000 vehicles over the last year, city traffic police chief Alexander Ilyin said Thursday.

The market for car inspection certificates in the capital may be worth \$400 million, with the standard price for an illegal certificate hovering around 4,000 rubles (\$145), judging by the numerous web sites offering the service, Polit.ru said Friday. The cost of a legal inspection for a sedan is 690 rubles.

It remains unclear whether the procedure will be abolished or changed. Medvedev did not rule out either option last week, saying the inspection may become voluntary and transferred from the Interior Ministry to some other unspecified agency.

Sixty-six percent of motorists support the abolishment of mandatory car inspections, according to a [poll](#) held by recruitment web site Superjob.ru. The poll, released Friday, covered 1,600 car owners nationwide and did not indicate a margin of error.

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