

END ANNUAL VEHICLE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

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TOPLINE: Mandated annual and biennial safety inspections for personal vehicles are ineffective at improving road safety, but they are a significant [imposition](#) on people's time and [resources](#).

BACKGROUND: Ten states (Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Virginia) [require](#) annual vehicle safety inspections. An additional [four](#) states (Delaware, Missouri, Rhode Island, and West Virginia) plus Washington, D.C. require them every other year. Inspections are performed at state-licensed inspection stations—often repair shops that can turn failed inspections into new business. Inspections vary by state but generally [include](#) (at a minimum) checks of brakes, steering, suspension, tires, and wheel assemblies. But usually, when vehicles' critical functions like steering or brakes begin to fail, drivers notice the [development](#) of the issues over days or a couple of weeks, so annual or biennial inspections are unlikely to catch critical problems at the right time.

“Safety Checks” Don’t Make Safe Drivers:

- A U.S. Department of Transportation crash analysis found that vehicle defects were the factor immediately preceding only [2%](#) of car and light truck accidents.
 - By contrast, driver-related causes were the factor in [94%](#) of the accidents.
- Studies have [typically found](#) no significant relationship between vehicle safety inspection requirements and crash rates, injuries, or fatalities.
- One Norwegian [study](#) even [found](#) that the “accident rate of inspected cars did not decline [following inspections] but rather showed a weak tendency to increase.”
 - The study's authors suggest that drivers may adapt their driving habits to the condition of their vehicles.

Action Items (States):

- **Eliminate mandates requiring that drivers have safety inspections performed on personal vehicles** on an annual or biennial basis.

How Mandated Vehicle Inspections Make Life Less Affordable:

- Failed vehicle inspections can leave Americans stuck without reliable transportation and forced to decide between expensive repairs; buying, leasing, or renting another vehicle; or simply not driving.
- Low-income drivers, in particular, dread annual vehicle inspections because they are more likely to have put off repairs on older vehicles out of financial necessity.
- The total cost imposed on Americans between the cost of inspections, the value of lost time, repair costs, taxpayer funds to administer, and drivers being forced to find alternative transportation is almost certainly in the [billions](#) of dollars per year.

BOTTOMLINE: Vehicle inspection mandates can help [protect](#) the bottom line of tire and auto shops (at drivers' expense), but they do little to nothing to protect drivers.