

German prosecutors probe VW carbon emission allegations

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German prosecutors are probing new allegations that Volkswagen understated the carbon dioxide emissions of up to 800,000 cars

German prosecutors said Thursday they have launched a preliminary investigation against auto giant Volkswagen regarding new allegations it understated the carbon dioxide emissions of up to 800,000 cars.

"We have launched a preliminary investigation, but have not yet decided whether to launch a formal inquiry," a spokeswoman for the public

prosecutors in Brunswick, north Germany, told AFP.

That decision would likely be made next week, she explained, adding that the aim of a preliminary probe was to gather and evaluate the available information to determine whether it was sufficient to launch a formal inquiry.

VW is currently engulfed in a massive pollution-scandal that has so far centred on so-called defeat devices, sophisticated software fitted into diesel engines to skew the results of tests for [nitrogen oxide emissions](#).

Those allegations are the object of both regulatory and criminal investigations in a range of countries, including Germany.

But late Tuesday, the embattled auto giant said an internal probe had uncovered "inconsistencies" on carbon emissions as well, affecting not only [diesel engines](#) but petrol engines, too.

Nitrogen oxide is a pollutant associated with respiratory problems. In contrast, CO₂ is a greenhouse gas which traps heat from the sun and is blamed for man-made climate change.

Tackling CO₂ is becoming a rising priority in many countries, especially in Europe, where cars are often taxed according to their [carbon emissions](#).

If the prosecutors do decide to launch a formal inquiry into the CO₂ allegations, it will be completely separate from the other investigation into the diesel engine manipulation, the spokeswoman said.

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