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Press release

Ground-breaking initiative by Allianz, DaimlerChrysler and DEKRA

"Safetyplus Truck" initiative: safety technology pays economic dividends

- **Assistance systems and training reduce accidents and costs**
- **Attractively priced equipment packages and favourable insurance rates**
- **New certification in two safety classes**

Hanover – Allianz Insurance, DaimlerChrysler Commercial Vehicles and the testing agency DEKRA are taking part in a joint initiative to promote both safety and economic operation in the transport industry. The ground-breaking "Safetyplus Truck" concept will be launched at the IAA Commercial Vehicle Show 2006. The aim of the initiative is to significantly reduce the number and consequences of accidents involving trucks. For the transport companies, investment incentives have been developed in the form of low-cost special equipment packages and attractive insurance discounts.

"Safety pays economic dividends" is the maxim project partners Allianz, DaimlerChrysler and DEKRA have chosen to illustrate their long-term commitment to enhanced safety and reduced costs in the transport industry. By improving active and passive vehicle safety, it is possible to reduce the number and consequences of accidents and to provide enhanced transport security, while lower insurance premiums cut costs for fleet operators and improve profitability.

Allianz Versicherungs-AG
Unternehmenskommunikation
Königinstraße 28
D-80802 München
www.allianz.de

DEKRA e.V.
Presse & Information
Handwerkstraße 15
70565 Stuttgart
www.dekra.com

DaimlerChrysler AG
Produkt-Kommunikation Nfz
D-70322 Stuttgart
www.daimlerchrysler.com

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|----------------|--|--|--|
| Date | 20.09.2006 | | |
| Company | Allianz Versicherungs-AG | DEKRA e.V. | DaimlerChrysler AG |
| Contact | Christian Weishuber | Stephan Heigl | Raimund Grammer |
| Tel. direct | 089.3800-1 81 69 | 0711.7861-28 75 | 0711.17-9 50 24 |
| Telefax direct | 089.3800-1 82 65 | 0711.7861-27 00 | 0711.17-9 15 95 |
| E-mail | christian.weishuber@allianz.de | stephan.heigl@dekra.com | raimund.r.grammer@daimlerchrysler.com |

Studies prove effectiveness of safety systems

On the technical side, the "Safetyplus Truck" initiative aims to reduce or prevent three main types of accident:

- Rear-end accidents
- Lane departures and
- Accidents with oncoming traffic

According to the findings of the DEKRA accident researchers these three types of accident account for some 45 percent of all accidents involving trucks. The "Safetyplus Truck" initiative therefore aims to ensure that more trucks are equipped with state-of-the-art vehicle control and driver assistance systems. A study of serious accidents involving commercial vehicles by the Allianz Centre for Technology demonstrates the high accident prevention potential of vehicle dynamics systems like ESP, proximity control systems (also known as ACC, autonomous cruise control) and electronic lane-keeping systems. Universal equipping of vehicles with vehicle dynamics systems, proximity control systems and electronic lane-keeping systems could lead to reductions of up to 8%, 7% and 4% respectively in the number of serious accidents involving injury – or at the very least could mitigate the consequences of such accidents. Such systems are particularly effective in motorway traffic. They assist the driver in typical situations resulting from inattention such as failure to maintain a safe following distance or unintended lane departures. The AZT study comes to the conclusion that 70 percent of rear-end collisions involving trucks on motorways could be prevented if all trucks were equipped with an ACC system. ESP is particularly effective in preventing serious single-vehicle accidents, for example due to adverse road conditions or if the driver has to swerve suddenly or takes a corner too fast. The systems complement and support one another very effectively and constitute a highly efficient safety package. The "Safetyplus Truck" safety initiative therefore calls for all trucks to be fitted with the latest control and driver-assistance systems.

Innovative technology

The take-up rate for state-of-the-art safety technologies which are not fitted as standard specification is too low. In the case of heavy-duty commercial vehicles, the proportion of vehicles fitted with ESP is in the order of five percent. The equipment packages DaimlerChrysler has now put together for the new generation of Safetyplus trucks are therefore very attractively priced. In Hanover, following the successful start made with the Sprinter class, the manufacturer will now be presenting Safetyplus vehicles in Actros tractor units for long-distance road haulage.



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Two certification classes

The "Safetyplus Truck" certificates come in two different classes. Safetyplus trucks earn one star if their basic specification is supplemented by vehicle dynamics control, proximity control and an electronic lane-keeping system. Two-star Safetyplus trucks add Brake Assist, an automatic braking system such as Active Brake Assist and optimised driver protection, e.g. a driver airbag plus belt tensioner. Basic equipment in both categories must at least include longitudinal dynamics control (ABS/ASR), an electronically controlled braking system, a front underride guard, a cab with built-in occupant protection features, an optimised mirror system, a reversing warning and spray guards.

Economic benefits

Within the framework of "Safetyplus Truck", and with immediate effect, Allianz is rewarding improvements to the technical safety features of commercial vehicles by offering particularly favourable conditions for liability and comprehensive insurance over a three-year trial period in the commercial vehicle rates for semitrailer tractors, depending on their respective class within the commercial vehicle rate. In the two-star category, more than 70% of the additional costs of "Safetyplus" are compensated by insurance discounts and preferential prices for equipment packages and services.

A reduction in the number and consequences of accidents not only improves profitability for the individual operator but also has benefits for the economy as a whole. For this reason Allianz is also assessing the quantitative benefits of "Safetyplus Truck" in real-life accidents during the three-year trial period. The project partners Allianz, DaimlerChrysler and DEKRA are already convinced that their "Safetyplus Truck" initiative will make a major contribution to improving safety on Europe's roads. It will also be a contribution to the EU Road Safety Charter, whose goal is to cut the current number of deaths on European roads by half by the year 2010, to 25,000.

To further support efforts to meet this goal, the project partners Allianz, DaimlerChrysler and DEKRA are inviting further commercial vehicle manufacturers and insurance companies to join – and actively contribute to the development of – the "Safetyplus" initiative. The project initiators believe that the political sector can also contribute in promoting the project with general framework conditions.



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“Safetyplus” certified safety for vehicle and driver

“Safetyplus”, however, does not just mean improving vehicle safety as an isolated technical concept; rather, it was developed as an overall system for the vehicle and the driver. Around 70 percent of all accidents ultimately owe their causes to an error on the part of the truck driver. For that reason, the person at the wheel is an integral part of the safety initiative. This means that the specialists at DEKRA, the organisation of independent experts, not only certify the “Safetyplus” vehicles, they also train and qualify the personnel.

With its network of training centres and project-related bases all over Germany, the DEKRA Academy is able to provide comprehensive theoretical and practical training for drivers, including a professional course in a Thales truck simulator. All courses comply with the new EU drivers’ directive. The same applies to the courses offered by the Mercedes-Benz Profi-Training unit. This institution gives training to about 65,000 truck drivers per year all over the world. As part of the safety initiative DEKRA awards successful training course participants the “Safetyplus Driver” certificate, which is valid for two years and can be renewed by visiting regular further-training courses.