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Substantially more traffic accidents on heat days

Inattention increases at temperatures of 30 degrees and more

Vienna, 2022-06-27 – According to Statistics Austria, on heat days in 2021, a quarter more road accidents with personal injury occurred in Austria than on days with maximum temperatures below 30 degrees Celsius. Especially accidents due to inattention or distraction increased sharply.

“High temperatures have an impact on the number of road accidents. This is shown by an analysis of accident statistics data from Statistics Austria in combination with data from the Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics. At a daily maximum temperature of 30 degrees Celsius or above, inattention increases and 25 % more accidents with personal injury occur compared to less hot days”, says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

In 2021, 32 774 road accidents occurred in Austria, in which 41 251 people were either injured or killed. This corresponds to an average of 90 accidents with 113 casualties per day. In the warmer months from May to September 2021, an average of 123 accidents occurred per day, with clear differences between a heat day and a non-heat day. On a heat day with 30 or more degrees Celsius, an average of 150 accidents per day occurred, while on a less hot day 120 accidents took place, which corresponds to an increase of 25 %.

More accidents on heat days in all federal provinces

The highest number of heat days among the regional capitals were recorded in Vienna, Eisenstadt and Graz (24 each, ZAMG: Open Weather Data Hub), followed by Klagenfurt (23), St. Pölten (20) and Innsbruck (19).

Increases in the number of accidents on heat days were registered in all federal provinces. The increase was particularly large in Vorarlberg (+94%), from 6 accidents on non-heat days to 12 accidents on heat days. Other significant increases were recorded in Burgenland (+38 %), Tyrol (+37 %) and Salzburg (+32 %). A fifth more accidents also occurred in Lower Austria, Upper Austria (both +20 %) and Carinthia (+19 %, see Table 1).

Increase in accidents due to inattention on heat days

Not only the number of accidents changed on heat days, but also the presumed main cause of accidents differed, as accidents due to inattention or distraction increased strongly. While on a non-heat day from May to September 2021 an average of 39 accidents per day in Austria were attributed to this cause, the number of accidents on heat days was significantly higher at 54 (+36 %). The highest rates of increase of accidents due to inattention/distraction were registered in Vorarlberg (+115 %), Tyrol (+44 %) and Salzburg (+42 %), with an increase recorded in all federal provinces. The rise in accidents due to this cause was not exclusively due to the generally higher number of accidents on heat days, as the relative share of inattention/distraction of all causes, increased on heat days as well. In Lower Austria, for example, 35 % of all accidents on non-heat days were due to inattention/distraction. This share increased to 39 % on heat days (see Table 2).

More detailed results and further tables are available at the [website of Statistics Austria](#). The "[interactive road accident map](#)" provides additional location data of all accidents that occurred in 2021.

Table 1: Accidents on heat days per federal province May–September 2021

Federal province	Heat days	Accidents/ day	Accidents/ heat day	Accidents/ non-heat day	Increase of accidents on heat days in %
Burgenland	24	3.0	3.9	2.8	38.4
Carinthia	23	11.4	13.3	11.1	19.3
Lower Austria	20	23.2	27.2	22.6	20.1
Upper Austria	13	20.7	24.5	20.3	20.4
Salzburg	10	9.2	11.9	9.0	31.9
Styria	24	18.1	20.1	17.7	13.7
Tyrol	19	14.3	18.7	13.7	36.8
Vorarlberg	6	6.5	12.2	6.3	93.6
Vienna	24	16.5	18.0	16.2	10.9
Austria	163	122.9	149.7	119.8	25.0

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Road traffic accidents.

Table 2: Accidents due to inattention/distraction on heat days per federal province May–September 2021

Federal province	Heat days		Non-heat day	
	Accidents/ day	Share of all accidents	Accidents/ day	Share of all accidents
Burgenland	2.1	54.3%	1.5	53.7%
Carinthia	4.3	32.1%	3.4	30.3%
Lower Austria	10.6	39.0%	7.9	34.7%
Upper Austria	6.2	25.5%	5.4	26.8%
Salzburg	5.7	47.9%	4.0	44.6%
Styria	5.5	27.1%	4.5	25.5%
Tyrol	10.8	57.6%	7.5	54.6%
Vorarlberg	5.2	42.5%	2.4	38.2%
Vienna	3.2	17.9%	2.9	17.8%
Austria	53.5	.	39.5	.

Q: STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Road traffic accidents.

Information on methodology, definitions: Statistics Austria has been compiling and publishing statistics on road traffic accidents with personal injury since 1961. The traffic accidents are recorded electronically by the police authorities and transmitted to Statistics Austria via a web service.

Injury accident: Any accident involving at least one road vehicle in motion on a public road, resulting in at least one injured or killed person.

Heat days are days on which 30 degrees Celsius and more are reached. In the analysis, the maximum temperature of the regional capital was compared to the total number of accidents per day for each federal province. The weather data was obtained from the Open Data Hub of the Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics (ZAMG).

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