

Press release

DEKRA expert dispels myths: How safe is traveling in an elevator?

Elevators: The Safest Means of Transportation

- The worst thing that could happen is coming to a standstill
- An elevator car is a totally safe place to be
- Pay attention when traveling in an elevator

Not everyone feels comfortable stepping into an elevator. Some people even prefer to take the stairs because they're afraid of placing their trust in the elevator car. "But they have no reason to worry," explains Karl-Friedrich Schöps, elevator expert at DEKRA. "Elevators are the safest means of transportation that we know."

To ensure nothing happens when traveling in an elevator, passengers are protected by multiple safety mechanisms, state-of-the-art technology, and legal requirements, which together ensure a high level of safety. Passenger elevators are designed so that they cannot plummet down, and they are suspended with multiple safeguards. They also feature door systems with a soft-close mechanism or light barrier systems that prevent someone getting caught in the doors. To ensure this standard is maintained, the units are thoroughly inspected every year by an authorized inspection agency (ZÜS) such as DEKRA.

The worst-case scenario: Coming to a standstill

Essentially, the worst thing that could happen is the elevator car coming to an unexpected stop between two floors. Even if this happens, the DEKRA experts state that there is no need to worry as there are clear legal regulations governing the emergency call and emergency response plan. Elevators are linked to an emergency call center around the clock, so a press of a button is all it takes to request assistance or ask a question. Simply press it for three to five seconds and the alarm will be triggered.

The relevant regulations state that rescue operations must have been started within 30 minutes at the latest. There is also no need to fear running out of air in the elevator while waiting for the rescue services to arrive. Elevator cars are not enclosed boxes; instead they have sufficient ventilation and an emergency power supply in the event that the power should fail.

An elevator car is a totally safe place to be

"If the elevator car comes to a standstill, the most important thing is to remember the famous rule: Keep calm!," says DEKRA expert Schöps. "If there are problems

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with the elevator, the car with the doors closed might not be the most comfortable place, but it is totally safe.”

He has the following advice:

- The biggest mistake someone could make in this type of situation is to try to free themselves.
- Be patient and wait for external help from the specialist rescue team. Any other actions will put your life in danger.
- Do not pry open the doors under any circumstances, and never try to exit the elevator car when it is between floors as the elevator could start moving again.
- Trying to climb out of the top of the elevator car will also put your life at risk as there is a danger of falling.

Mistakes that have caused serious injury in the past are analyzed on an ongoing basis, incorporated in the latest safety and inspection standards, and recorded during inspections if required.

Incidents when traveling in an elevator are very rare

“If you compare traveling in an elevator with traveling on the road or by plane, incidents are very rare. However, no safety system can change the fact that people need to behave in the right way if they travel in an elevator,” sums up Schöps. “Pay careful attention when stepping into and out of an elevator car, and don’t allow yourself to be distracted by your smartphone.” This is particularly true when traveling in older elevators where there might well be a step of a few centimeters between the hallway floor and car floor. If you don’t watch out here you may trip and fall.

Another important aspect is to keep back from the elevator door as fingers, objects, or pets could be trapped by the door mechanism. “In particular, keep an eye on children, vulnerable people, and animals,” stresses Schöps, “as an elevator is a machine with exposed mechanics.”

Moreover, never use an elevator in the event of a fire as toxic combustion gases may also enter the elevator shaft.

About DEKRA

DEKRA was originally founded in 1925 to ensure road safety through vehicle inspection. With a much wider scope today, DEKRA is the world’s largest independent non-listed expert organization in the testing, inspection, and certification sector. As a global provider of comprehensive services and solutions, we help our customers improve their safety, security, and sustainability outcomes. In 2022, DEKRA generated sales totaling nearly EUR 3.8 billion. The company currently employs almost 49,000 people who offer qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries on five continents. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.