

Press Release

DEKRA brand ambassador on UN Global Road Safety Week



Bernd Mayländer: Sensible and anticipatory driving is indispensable

- ▶ Don't blindly rely on assistance systems, but know their limits
- ▶ Comprehensive introduction when buying a vehicle is essential
- ▶ Practice proper braking and evasive action in driver safety training

The United Nations has declared the coming week (May 12 to 18) Global Road Safety Week. The aim is to focus particular attention on the issue of road safety worldwide. This is what DEKRA has been doing for 100 years – the expert organization was founded in 1925 with the explicit mission of improving safety regarding motor vehicles. DEKRA brand ambassador Bernd Mayländer, who has been the official safety car driver in Formula 1 for 25 years, is also committed to the topic of road safety. On the occasion of UN Global Road Safety Week, he calls for sensible and anticipatory driving. Another very important point: anyone who has assistance systems in their vehicle should be fully aware of how they work and what their limits are.

“If we don't know exactly how the assistance systems in our vehicles work, they can't reach their full potential,” says Mayländer. “A simple handover at the dealership is usually not enough to understand the intricacies of these systems. Of course, it's all in the manual, but you have to read and understand it first. A comprehensive introduction is, of course, something completely different.”

From the experienced racing driver's point of view, the right setup of the respective systems, depending on the driving style, is also crucial. “For example, the lane departure warning system can often be individually adjusted in terms of the point at which it intervenes as well as in terms of its sensitivity. The same applies to the advance warning time for the emergency braking assistant or for the distance you want your assistance system to keep to a vehicle in front.”

Regardless of which assistance systems are on board, you should never rely on them blindly, says Bernd Mayländer: “The best safety system cannot override the laws of physics.”

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In his view, this makes anticipatory driving all the more important – paying full attention to the task of driving. “This way, many a critical situation never arises in the first place,” says Mayländer.

If it does come to a critical situation, however, drivers can benefit from having completed a driver safety training course. Mayländer thinks this should actually be standard. “It's simply a great advantage to have first-hand experience of how modern vehicles with ABS and ESC can be safely controlled in a critical situation.” Proper counter-steering and a rapid reduction of speed can, in many cases, prevent a collision – or at least significantly reduce the severity of a crash.

That is why Mayländer advocates impactful training in emergency braking maneuvers: “Accident analyses show that many people react too late and not with the necessary intensity. That is a mistake. With the ABS in today's vehicles, it is impossible to brake ‘too hard’. Therefore, the motto can only be to really slam on the brakes in an emergency,” advises the DEKRA brand ambassador.

To ensure that the steering and braking intervention is successful, for example when swerving, the correct sitting position and steering wheel grip are also important. Mayländer recommends sitting relatively upright and holding the steering wheel with both hands at around “9 and 3 o'clock” on the spokes, with slightly bent arms. Your legs should also be bent at a normal driving angle so that you can muster maximum strength for a quick reaction.

Particularly at high speeds and in critical situations, your line of vision is also an important factor, Mayländer says: “Wherever you look, that's where you steer.”

Caption

On the occasion of UN Road Safety Week, DEKRA brand ambassador and Formula 1 safety car driver Bernd Mayländer calls for sensible and anticipatory driving.

About DEKRA

For 100 years, DEKRA has been a trusted name in safety. Founded in 1925 with the original goal of improving road safety through vehicle inspections, DEKRA has grown to become the world's largest independent, non-listed expert organization in the field of testing, inspection, and certification. Today, as a global partner, the company supports its customers with comprehensive services and solutions to drive safety and sustainability forward—fully aligned with DEKRA's anniversary motto, "Securing the Future." In 2024, DEKRA is expected to generate revenue of 4.3 billion euros. Around 48,000 employees are providing qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries across five continents. DEKRA holds a Platinum rating from EcoVadis, placing it among the top 1% of the world's most sustainable companies.