

Press Release



DEKRA: Traveling in an elevator is often nothing like in action movies

The World's Safest Means of Transportation

- ▶ Elevators have been fitted with safety brakes since 1853
- ▶ Comprehensive safety measures are in place
- ▶ Don't get distracted when stepping into and out of an elevator car

Although nail-biting scenes involving elevators are often part of action movies, they bear very little resemblance to what happens in real life. There are around 700,000 elevators in Germany, and the truth is that traveling in them is a mundane experience. "Well over 99 percent of all trips in elevators pass entirely without incident," says Karl-Friedrich Schöps, Head of Elevator Technology at DEKRA in Germany. "Elevators are the world's safest means of transportation."

The biggest advancement in elevator safety was made by an American, Elisha Graves Otis, back in 1853. To demonstrate his new safety brake, he stepped into an elevator car at the World's Fair in New York and ordered the cable to be cut, whereupon the brake system engaged and automatically stopped the elevator from falling. With his invention, the mechanic from Halifax paved the way for the construction of skyscrapers. Today, one of Manhattan's most popular tourist attractions is riding the glass elevator to the 93rd floor of the One Vanderbilt building.

The elevators that take people to their own front door also have these safety brakes. Elevator safety features generally include three holding cables and brake monitoring switches. The systems are also inspected every year by an authorized inspection agency such as DEKRA, which involves a main inspection every two years, like the German rules for cars, as well as an interim inspection.

An emergency call center is available around the clock

The worst thing that could happen is the elevator car coming to an unexpected stop between two floors, such as during a power outage. While these incidents are rare, precautions have been taken for such an eventuality. Elevators are linked to a call center around the clock – simply press a button to request assistance. Rescue operations must have been started within 30 minutes at the latest. The elevator cars have ventilation openings to ensure the air does not run out.

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Trying to free yourself puts your life at risk!

"If an elevator gets stuck, the most important thing is to keep calm – even though that might be easier said than done," stresses DEKRA expert Schöps. "The biggest mistake someone could make is to try to free themselves." His advice: "Be patient and wait for external help. Do not pry open the doors under any circumstances, and never try to climb out of the elevator car when it is between floors – you'll put your life at risk!"

Pay attention when stepping into and out of an elevator car

However, as the elevator expert reminds us, no elevator safety system can change the fact that elevators are machines, and people need to behave in the right way when using them. "Pay careful attention when stepping into and out of an elevator car, and don't allow yourself to be distracted by your smartphone or anything else." With older elevators in particular, you might find there is a small step of a few centimeters between the hallway floor and car floor when it stops. If you don't watch out here you may get stuck or trip. Steps like this can also be an obstacle for wheelchair users or baby strollers.

Similarly, the elevator doors pose a risk. People need to keep clear of them and remain attentive as they are moving parts that could trap people's fingers or feet. Keep a particularly close eye on children, the elderly, and animals. Moreover, never use an elevator in the event of a fire as there is a risk of being poisoned by combustion gases.

If there is an incident, what can bystanders do?

If a bystander outside the elevator witnesses an incident, they can also make an emergency call to the call center. With many elevators, information about the maintenance company is located nearby. The bystanders should reassure those in the elevator and call an emergency doctor if required.

Key points for traveling safely in an elevator

- Keep calm if there is an incident
- To call for help, hold down the emergency call button for three seconds
- Never try to free yourself – you will put your life at risk!
- Wait for external help and follow the instructions given by the rescue personnel
- Watch out for small steps when entering and exiting an elevator car. Don't get distracted
- Keep clear of the elevator doors
- In the event of a fire, never use the elevators. The combustion gases are dangerous!
- If you witness an incident, reassure the people in the elevator and, if necessary, call the emergency call center and an emergency doctor

www.dekra.de/de/aufzugs-und-foerdertechnik/

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.