

## Press Release

DEKRA Accident Research Offers Tips and Warns

### **“If there is even the slightest doubt, passing is not an option”**

- ▶ Risks often underestimated: many accidents during passing maneuvers
- ▶ One of the most critical driving situations of all
- ▶ Time saved is usually negligible

**DEKRA Accident Research warns against reckless passing maneuvers on rural roads. “Drivers often begin to pass without adequately assessing the traffic situation. The consequences of misjudging the situation can be very severe when encountering oncoming traffic”, explains DEKRA expert Luis Ancona. “Passing maneuvers are among the most critical driving situations of all. Therefore, if there is even the slightest doubt, passing is not an option.”**

Overtaking accidents are often the result of misjudgments, says the accident researcher. “Drivers often begin to pass without leaving sufficient safety margins. If you misjudge speeds, distance, or oncoming traffic, there is a high risk of being seriously injured or killed in an accident.” Stretches of road with many curves, crests, dips, and intersections pose particular dangers. Oncoming vehicles can be hidden in these “blind spots”, and they are often closer than expected. It’s also easy to overlook a dirt road from which a tractor or cyclists might turn onto the road or cross it.

#### **Do not endanger oncoming traffic**

There are clear recommendations for passing, which are also enshrined in law in many countries: You should only pass if the entire passing lane is fully visible. Throughout the entire passing maneuver, any obstruction or danger to oncoming traffic must be ruled out. This means: Overtaking is not an option when traffic conditions are unclear. Therefore, an overtaking maneuver must be stopped immediately if oncoming traffic appears.

Many drivers also underestimate the distance required for overtaking. For one thing, both the speed limit and the required safety distances must be observed. “Because

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oncoming traffic can approach just as quickly, the visible distance must also be sufficient for that. Especially when there are small differences in speed relative to the vehicle ahead, the overtaking distance increases considerably,” says the accident researcher. If, while pulling out, it becomes apparent that the available distance or speed is insufficient, the maneuver must be stopped decisively early on.

“Frequent passing maneuvers make driving more challenging and create risks for yourself and others. Moreover, this generally doesn’t result in any significant time savings, especially in heavy traffic. In most cases, we’re talking about just a few minutes at best—a risk that simply isn’t worth taking”, says Ancona. “And often, the next obstacle is already waiting just a few curves ahead.”

### **Keep an eye on traffic behind you**

One of the most common mistakes in passing-related accidents is failing to pay attention to traffic behind you. “Anyone who wants to pass must first check whether a vehicle behind them has already begun to pass,” says Ancona. In addition, you must signal clearly and well in advance before moving out and back into your lane. Under no circumstances should you “cut off” the vehicle you’re passing.

In summary, when passing, it’s always important to act cautiously and thoughtfully. From the perspective of DEKRA Accident Research are, the key questions to ask are:

- Is the road fully visible and free of oncoming traffic?
- Is there enough space available to pass?
- Can my vehicle accelerate quickly enough?
- Has a vehicle behind me already begun to pass?
- Did I signal in time?
- Can I safely abort the passing maneuver at any time if traffic conditions change?

Accident researcher Ancona urges drivers to act responsibly when passing and to be aware of the dangers to themselves and others. “Before every passing maneuver, ask yourself: Is passing really necessary? And: Is it really worth it? Am I stressed, irritable, or overtired? Often, the situation can be defused by taking a moment to step back and reconsider your intention.”



### **About DEKRA**

*For more than 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. In 2025, DEKRA generated revenue of 4.4 billion euros. More than 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.*