

Press Release

DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026 "Working in Road Traffic"

A high-risk environment with significant crash potential

- ▶ Fatigue, stress, and distraction pose dangers
- ▶ DEKRA shows: Intelligent traffic systems and safety features are effective
- ▶ Key factors: Technology, regulations, infrastructure, individual responsibility

Public roadways are not only spaces for traffic, recreation, and daily life, but also the workplace for millions of people. A workplace that claims many accident victims every year. "It is absolutely essential to take a closer look, analyze the causes, and determine what measures can be taken to prevent accidents or at least mitigate their consequences," says Jann Fehlauer, Executive Vice President of DEKRA Group, regarding the publication of the DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026 "Working in Road Traffic". Now in its 19th edition, the DEKRA Road Safety Report examines the various issues surrounding this topic from the perspectives of accident analysis, traffic psychology, automotive engineering, infrastructure design, and legislation, also identifying measures for long-term improvement.

Professional drivers transport essential goods for daily life and industry, often covering tens of thousands of miles per year in their vehicles. At countless work zones, people repair or expand road infrastructure. Police, fire department, and emergency medical service personnel navigate an environment fraught with unpredictable situations at any moment during their emergency responses. These three examples are enough to illustrate the wide range challenges associated with the road as a workplace, where, every year, many people suffer serious or fatal injuries in crashes.

A multitude of factors that are difficult to predict contribute to this. "Adverse weather conditions, heavy traffic, technical malfunctions, or the behavior of other road users can lead to unpredictable critical situations at any time", says Fehlauer. In addition, time pressure, irregular work schedules, monotonous driving conditions, a lack of rest periods, and demanding performance expectations can lead to stress and fatigue. Fatigue is considered one of the most significant risk factors in road traffic, as it significantly impairs reaction time and attention. According to studies, the risk of an accident increases eightfold due to lack of sleep. "Compliance with driving and rest

Date Stuttgart, 16.07.2026 / Nr. 056-A
Contact Wolfgang Sigloch
Phone +49.711.7861-2386
Fax +49.711.7861-742386
E-Mail wolfgang.sigloch@dekra.com

DEKRA e.V.
Corporate Communications
Handwerkstraße 15
70565 Stuttgart, Germany
www.dekra.com/en/press-overview

periods, as well as targeted health promotion, can reduce fatigue, stress, and physical strain, thereby lowering the crash risk”, the DEKRA expert adds.

Limited “visibility” of the actual risk

Another risk factor when working in road traffic is the high complexity of modern traffic systems. Digitalization and connectivity are fundamentally changing work processes. While navigation systems, digital order management, and automated driving functions simplify many tasks, they also create new demands. Employees must simultaneously process multiple sources of information and make decisions while still paying attention to traffic. Distraction caused by technical devices is one of the major challenges facing modern road safety.

A fundamental problem in addressing safety on the road as a workplace is the limited “visibility” of the actual risk. This is because many statistical systems do not sufficiently distinguish whether a trip is made for personal or professional reasons. “As a result, a portion of crash data remains inadequately documented, which significantly hinders the development of targeted prevention measures”, Jann Fehlauer points out. Only when the actual extent of the risks becomes apparent, effective long-term measures can be developed.

Drive tests and driver survey with interesting results

For this Road Safety Report, DEKRA once again conducted extensive drive tests and crash tests to find out how vehicles, driver assistance systems, and safety features actually respond when it matters most. A crash comparison of roadwork safety equipment with and without energy-absorbing systems, as well as tests of the detection and response capabilities of modern emergency braking assistance systems when encountering mobile warning signs, provide insights into technical requirements and safety standards.

Further tests demonstrated the high effectiveness of C-ITS-based short-range warnings. The abbreviation C-ITS stands for “Cooperative Intelligent Transport System” and refers to cooperative technologies for wireless, multimodal communication between vehicles, with infrastructure, and with non-motorized road users.

A DEKRA survey of professional drivers regarding the parking situation and safety conditions at rest stops in Germany and other European countries also yielded interesting results. According to the survey, nearly two-thirds of respondents regularly have to park in dangerous locations in order to comply with rest periods. More than half regularly drive more than an additional 20 kilometers (~12.4 miles) in search of a

parking spot. “Both dangerous parking and extended driving times due to the search for a parking spot can significantly increase crash risks”, says Fehlauser.

Keeping spaces safe for everyone

For the DEKRA EVP, road traffic as a workplace as a high-risk environment cannot be viewed in isolation. Rather, it involves an interplay of infrastructure, technology, organization, and personal behavior in road traffic. “Focusing solely on technical solutions is not enough if the broader context or human factors are ignored”, Fehlauser cautions. In his view, a comprehensive approach to road traffic as a workplace is important not only for occupational safety but also, in particular, for the sustainable development of the economy, infrastructure, and society as a whole.

According to Kristian Schmidt, EU Coordinator for Road Safety, investments in safe and secure parking spaces, clearer road signs and markings, and better-designed work areas systematically reduce the hazards that drivers and workers face on a daily basis. “As roads are increasingly shared with vulnerable users, proven quality standards are being developed to keep these spaces safe for everyone”, Schmidt writes in his statement in the DEKRA Road Safety Report.

For Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), work-related road safety in the workplace is not a niche concern. Rather, it is of central importance to the European Union’s “Vision Zero” goal of reducing the number of road traffic fatalities and serious injuries to near zero by 2050. “Recognizing driving for work as a shared responsibility among public authorities, employers and individuals is essential to building a culture of prevention both on and off the road”, explains Avenoso in his statement.

The DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026, “Working in Road Traffic”, is available for download online at www.dekra-roadsafety.com.

Ten DEKRA recommendations for greater road safety

- Record work-related traffic accidents separately and in full
- Systematically protect work sites on the road
- Bring about lasting improvements to working conditions in the transportation industry
- Systematically reduce the risks when driving under blue lights
- Consistently monitor load-securing regulations
- Comply with and further develop regulations for transporting dangerous goods
- Ensure compliance with legally mandated driving times and rest periods
- Build more safe, well-lit, and monitored truck parking areas
- Mandate the introduction of health promotion programs for professional drivers
- Only allow highly automated driving under clearly defined safety conditions

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.