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Carnival parties: More than 0.3 parts per thousand is critical

For many people, drinking alcohol is part of celebrating carnival. "It's very tempting to drink at parties during what some Germans refer to as the 'fifth season.' Good intentions often quickly go overboard when you're surrounded by cheerful revelers," says Thomas Wagner, Head of Driver Aptitude Assessment at DEKRA. For this reason, it is better to plan in advance how to get home without driving.

Keep an eye on the oil level: Make sure you use the right product

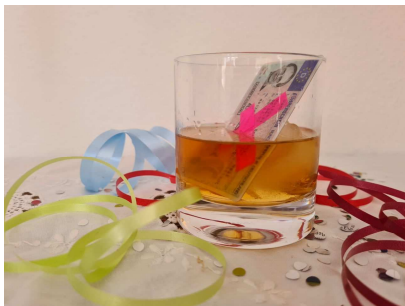
Good lubrication is essential for vehicle performance, especially in the case of modern cars with high-performance engines. Anyone who ignores this long-standing rule will pay a high price. If the lubricant film in a combustion engine breaks down, there is a strong chance of serious engine damage.

Market for used electric cars: Large supply, low prices

Anyone considering the purchase of a used electric car is currently in a strong position. Prices dropped sharply last year and supply has increased substantially. "It's a buyer's market. However, buyers need to look carefully before signing any contract," recommends Michael Tziatzios, a used car expert at DEKRA.

Further topics

- Driving after an outpatient operation: What should you consider?
- Climate strategy: DEKRA Sustainability Magazine now online



*After dry January: Good intentions
during carnival are often short-
lived*

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Alcohol at carnival parties

More than 0.3 parts per thousand can cost your license

For many people, drinking alcohol is part of celebrating carnival. “If you want to party without care, you should leave your car at home and use public transport or take a cab,” says Thomas Wagner, Head of Driver Aptitude Assessment at DEKRA. “It’s very tempting to drink at parties during what some Germans refer to as the ‘fifth season.’ Good intentions often quickly go overboard when you’re surrounded by cheerful revelers.” For this reason, it is better to plan in advance how to get home without driving.

Even the smallest amounts of alcohol in the bloodstream can significantly increase the risk of an accident. Drivers are more willing to take risks, their reaction time increases, and their concentration decreases. In addition, their visual field is reduced and they find it harder to judge distances. That is why the law imposes tough penalties for alcohol-related offenses. In Germany, even a first-time breach of the drink-drive limit of 0.5 parts per thousand can result in a fine of 500 euros, the loss of two points from the driver’s license, and a one-month driving ban.

However, if there is evidence that a person was unfit to drive or they caused an accident, a blood alcohol concentration of just 0.3 parts per thousand may result in a fine or prison sentence and the suspension of their driving license. Even stricter rules apply for novice drivers on probation and those under the age of 21. They are not allowed to drink and drive at all. Even if there is no evidence that they are unfit to drive, one sip from a bottle can result in a fine of 250 euros and the loss of one point from their license. In addition, they will have to attend a refresher course and their probation period will be extended by two years.

If the party goes on late into the night, drivers should also think about the residual alcohol in their bloodstream the next morning. On average, the human body breaks down alcohol at an hourly rate of just 0.15 parts per thousand. This means, for example, that a new driver with a blood alcohol concentration of 1.2 parts per thousand must wait at least eight hours before they are sober and can get behind the wheel again. According to the German Federal Motor Transport Authority, there were more than 116,000 alcohol-related traffic offenses in 2023 that resulted in the drivers losing points from their license. (DEKRA Info)



Large supply, low prices: Good prospects for the buyers of used electric cars

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It's a buyer's market

A battery test is essential

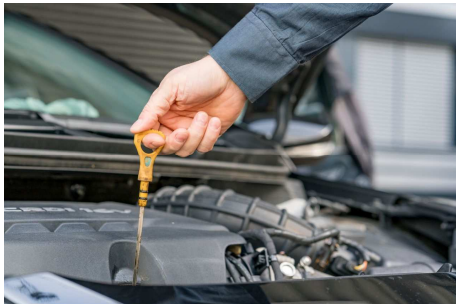
Anyone considering the purchase of a used electric car is currently in a strong position. Prices dropped by almost 20 percent last year and supply has increased substantially. "It's a buyer's market. However, buyers need to look carefully before signing any contract," recommends Michael Tziatzios, a used car expert at DEKRA.

According to him, the rules for buying a used combustion vehicle apply equally to used electric vehicles. An expert inspection is recommended in addition to a valid inspection sticker. Buyers should look at the service booklet, workshop invoices, and the number of previous owners. Also important is a test drive and a written contract detailing the vehicle's mileage and any previous damage.

The drive battery is the major difference compared with a combustion vehicle. It is not only the most expensive component in an electric car; its condition determines the vehicle's remaining service life and range. "In order to avoid any expensive surprises when buying a used electric car, a precise battery test is essential – like the one offered by DEKRA," says the used car expert. Another important aspect is the manufacturer's guarantee remaining on the battery and the conditions for its replacement.

Other aspects also need to be considered when buying a used electric car. The battery electric vehicle (BEV) should match the buyer's use profile and style of driving. Whether the car is to be used more for short or long distances affects the choice of vehicle, especially in respect of battery size and range. On a day-to-day basis, the charging options – at home, at work, and in the immediate vicinity – also play an important role.

In the still relatively new market for used electric cars, the price differences between various models are still large compared with combustion vehicles. "To ensure a fair price, we recommend consulting a neutral used car expert," says Tziatzios. (DEKRA Info)



*Harmful to combustion engines:
Insufficient oil levels*

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Keep an eye on the oil level

Make sure you use the right product

Good lubrication is essential for vehicle performance, especially in the case of modern cars with high-performance engines. Anyone who ignores this long-standing rule will pay a high price. If the lubricant film in a combustion engine breaks down, there is a strong chance of serious engine damage.

The most common mistakes made by drivers can be counted on the fingers of one hand. "Too often, people drive with insufficient oil or the wrong type of oil, or they fail to change the oil at the intervals recommended by the car manufacturer," explains Harald Eder, a DEKRA engine expert.

To avoid the need for expensive repairs to the heart of a combustion engine, the expert recommends checking the oil level every 1,000 kilometers and before a long journey, topping up if necessary. However, drivers should also be aware that too much oil can also cause damage – to the catalytic converter, for example.

Moreover, not every type of oil is suitable for all engines. "It has to be an oil approved for the engine by the vehicle manufacturer," emphasizes Eder. The lubricant specifications are shown in the vehicle manual or can be determined by any manufacturer's workshop on the basis of the car's registration documents.

In addition, the intervals for changing the oil specified by the manufacturer should be adhered to. If the oil is changed too late, it may result in sludge formation and carbonization. As a result, the oil's lubricating properties may deteriorate so much that the engine or components like the turbocharger may be damaged.

Caution is also necessary if the red oil indicator lights up. "In this case, drivers should pull over immediately and turn off the engine. The car should not then be restarted but towed to the workshop," emphasizes the expert. It is also advisable to look under the car every now and then. If larger oil residues can be seen, the engine should be checked for leaks without delay. (DEKRA Info)



Driving after an operation: How soon depends on the type of anesthesia and procedure

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Driving after an outpatient operation

What should you consider?

Following an outpatient operation under anesthesia or a medical procedure with local anesthesia, patients generally want to be mobile again as soon as possible. When they can get behind the wheel again depends very much on the type of anesthesia and procedure.

Irrespective of the type of procedure, it should be borne in mind that, if anesthesia is used, the substance can remain in the patient's body for some time afterward. This may impair their perception and reactions to a greater or lesser extent. During this time, drivers are unable to participate safely in road traffic. Dr. Thomas Wagner, Head of Driver Aptitude Assessment at DEKRA, describes what to be aware of in such cases:

- Before an operation, patients should ask their physician about the effects of the anesthesia on their ability to drive and how long they will have to wait before getting behind the wheel again. It should also be noted that everyone reacts differently to medication so the length of time before someone can drive again is equally different.
- Patients should ask a relative to drive them after an operation or procedure, or they should take a cab. If using public transport, patients should be accompanied. It should be borne in mind that a person's driving ability can also be affected by a colonoscopy, MRT, or advanced eye examination.
- It is important to remember that anyone who gets behind the wheel must ensure that they are fully able to control their vehicle. The law does not consider a breach of this duty to be a trivial offense but classifies it as a criminal offense in the same way as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. According to paragraph 315c of Germany's Criminal Code, offenses are punishable by fines or imprisonment of up to five years.
- In the event of an accident, it is also likely that the insurer will refuse to settle the claim in full or will require the driver to pay some of the costs. (Continued on page 6)



*Fitness to drive after an operation:
Physicians have a duty of
information and documentation*

Continued from page 5: Driving after an outpatient operation

What should you consider?

Physicians also have a comprehensive duty of information and documentation concerning their patients' ability to drive. If a patient who is incapable of driving causes a traffic accident, their physician may also be held liable if they did not adequately assess their patient's psychophysical capabilities, provide adequate information, or document the procedure appropriately. Patients should take any instructions they receive from their physician seriously and follow them carefully. (DEKRA Info)



*DEKRA is increasing its own power
generation and will be procuring
all electricity from renewable
sources in 2025*

DEKRA Sustainability Magazine now online

Climate strategy for future generations

Sustainability, climate management, and decarbonization are strategic core issues for DEKRA. Current key figures, progress, and best practices from DEKRA worldwide are reported in the new DEKRA Sustainability Magazine. The company has committed to the principles of the UN Global Compact and received a platinum award from EcoVadis for the fourth time. It also operates in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement and is driving ahead to expand the use of renewable energy. Moreover, it has integrated a climate impact strategy with an internal CO₂ price, is increasing its own power generation, and will procure all its electricity this year from renewable sources. These measures are supplemented by sustainability training for employees at all levels of the company and by fostering diversity and inclusion across the workforce. The DEKRA Sustainability Magazine 2024 is now available online at <https://dekra-sustainability-magazine.com/> (DEKRA Info)

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