

Content

Hedge Trimmers & Co.: Take Care When Using Power Tools!

If there's work to be done at home or in the garden, keen DIYers usually don't need asking twice and quickly reach for their cordless screwdriver, hedge trimmers, or cut-off grinder. However, although many people are familiar with how to use power tools, we should not underestimate the risks they pose. "If you're doing DIY, carelessness is a big no-no," warn the DEKRA experts.

Safe on Your Bike to School: Enjoy the Ride, No Rush

Cycling is, naturally, a very popular way for many children to get to school. With that in mind, the accident researchers at DEKRA emphasize the need for caution. In 2023, almost every other accident that occurred on the way to school (45 percent) involved a child riding a bicycle, according to figures from the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). The DEKRA experts ask that motor vehicle drivers exercise extra caution at the beginning of the new school year.

Watch Out, Slippery Roads: Driving Safely in Wet Conditions

When the roads are wet, vehicles have a much higher chance of slipping than on dry roads. This is because tires have less grip in wet conditions. A car driving at 80 km/h in wet conditions might need a braking distance of 50 meters or more to come to a stop, rather than 31 meters. Thomas Gut, an accident researcher at DEKRA, explains what drivers can do to navigate dangerous wet road conditions.

Further topics:

- Riding a pedelec requires practice
- Protection against moisture: stressing batteries shortens their lifespan
- Soft skills for the future: AI, an inquisitive mind, and lifelong learning



*Before powering up: read all the
safety instructions, especially for
new or rental devices*

Photo: DEKRA
Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and
send reference copy.

Editorial offices please note:
The image can be obtained from
the DEKRA Press Office.
Tel. +49 711 7861-2122

DEKRA's top safety tips for hedge trimmers & co.

Take Care When Using Power Tools!

If there's work to be done at home or in the garden, keen DIYers usually don't need asking twice and quickly reach for their cordless screwdriver, hedge trimmers, or cut-off grinder. However, although many people are familiar with how to use power tools, we should not underestimate the risks they pose. "If you're doing DIY, carelessness is a big no-no," warn the DEKRA experts.

This is demonstrated by the many accidents that occur every year when handling power tools. The most common causes include failing to use the equipment properly, tampering with the equipment, contact with water, damaged or worn cables, damaged plugs, a failure to service the equipment, as well as makeshift, improper repairs. According to statistics from the German Social Accident Insurance association, most accidents occur when using angle grinders, hand-held drills, screwdrivers, nail guns, circular saws, grinders and jigsaws.

"Familiarize yourself with the key safety instructions in the operating manual, particularly if you're using hired equipment or have purchased a new tool," advises Roland Herrmann, Product Testing Expert for Machines and Power Tools at DEKRA. He especially urges people to avoid misusing power tools for improper purposes, such as using a circular saw to fell a tree. Attempting to manipulate a power tool also presents a significant injury hazard, for example trying to bypass the two-point safety mechanism of a hedge trimmer or removing a mandatory safety guard.

Power tools that become faulty should no longer be used. Damaged insulation, worn cables, or loose sockets can easily cause an electric shock. As a result, it is important to inspect equipment, cables, and plugs at regular intervals and replace them if necessary. Makeshift repairs by laypeople usually entail a high risk of mistakes and accidents. Moreover, performing your own repairs will void the warranty.

A common cause of electrical accidents is contact with water. For mains-powered equipment, there is a risk of an electric shock in such cases. Many power tools are only approved for use in dry conditions. They may only be used in wet conditions if the manufacturer has explicitly approved it. Even battery-powered devices must be protected against moisture ingress, as otherwise the battery might ignite at a later point in time. (DEKRA Info)



*Cycling to school: take extra care
at intersections with other traffic*

Safe on your bike to school **Enjoy the Ride, No Rush**

Cycling is, naturally, a very popular way for many children to get to school. With that in mind, the accident researchers at DEKRA emphasize the need for caution. In 2023, almost every other accident that occurred on the way to school (45 percent) involved a child riding a bicycle, according to figures from the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). The DEKRA experts ask that motor vehicle drivers exercise extra caution at this time of year, as the new school year begins. Parents are advised to remind their children of the key rules for safe cycling.

“To get to school safely by bike, a child must be able to navigate traffic safely and independently and understand all key traffic rules,” says Luis Ancona, accident researcher at DEKRA. They should ideally have completed their cycling license or have the corresponding proficiency and skills, such as knowing who has right of way, indicating, and one-handed steering.

Children are generally safer on the road when they avoid busy car traffic and travel primarily via cycle paths or quiet residential streets. If in doubt, they should take a short detour, as it is often the much safer option. Children up to the age of ten are also allowed to cycle on the sidewalk. “Particular caution should be taken at intersections, T-junctions and crosswalks, when crossing railroads, and when cycling along roads shared with car traffic. These areas are where cyclists most often come into conflict with other road users,” says Ancona. “When you’re out for a practice ride with your child, make sure you draw particular attention to hazard areas, such as hidden junctions and intersections with poor visibility.”

It is important to ensure children on bicycles can be seen at all times. Children wearing bright, reflective clothing or accessories, such as LED reflective bands, can be spotted more easily on the road and can be seen earlier on, even in low visibility conditions, at dusk and dawn, and in darkness. The bicycle itself must also be in sound working order: check that all the lights, the brakes, the gears and the bell all function properly, and ensure all the nuts and bolts are screwed tight.

Of course, children must also always wear a helmet when cycling, which should be frequently checked for damage. Another vital point: children should set off to school and their various other appointments with plenty of time to spare and without having to rush. Just like with adults, stressing in traffic can easily lead to hazardous situations. (DEKRA Info)

Photo: DEKRA
Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and
send reference copy.

Editorial offices please note:
The image can be obtained from
the DEKRA Press Office.
Tel. +49 711 7861-2122



*Driving on wet roads:
lights on, reduce your speed,
hold your distance*

Photo: DEKRA
Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and
send reference copy.

Editorial offices please note:
The image can be obtained from
the DEKRA Press Office.
Tel. +49 711 7861-2122

Driving safely in wet conditions

Watch Out, Slippery Roads

When it rains, vehicles have a much higher chance of slipping than on dry roads. This is because tires have less grip in wet conditions. A car driving at 80 km/h in wet conditions might need a braking distance of 50 meters or more to come to a stop, rather than 31 meters. Thomas Gut, an accident researcher at DEKRA, explains what drivers can do to navigate dangerous road conditions in the rain.

Keep a greater distance: this gives you more time to apply the brakes in critical situations. Vehicles require more time and distance to brake on wet roads, and rain often reduces visibility. On expressways, the water spray often makes it impossible to see the traffic further along the road.

Reduce your speed: driving more slowly also gives you more time to react in an emergency. It minimizes the risk of rear-end collisions, skidding, sliding through bends, or losing control of the vehicle in the event of hydroplaning.

Use your low beams: this makes driving safer in bad weather. Other road users will see your vehicle earlier on, and hazardous situations can be more easily avoided. The German Road Traffic Regulations (StVO) stipulates that drivers must turn on their low beams when visibility is substantially impaired. Even for vehicles with automatic headlights, it is better to turn on the low beams manually.

Don't get distracted: driving in wet conditions requires greater levels of concentration and attention than in dry weather. So don't let your smartphone, smartwatch, navigator or audio system distract you. Just focus on the road and be prepared to brake at any time.

Hydroplaning: if your vehicle starts to "float" and you lose the ability to steer, immediately come off the gas pedal, press the clutch and steer as little as possible until the wheels grip the road again. Vehicles traveling at a higher speed and with a shallow tire tread are at greater risk of hydroplaning.

Heed extra caution at night: driving at night in the rain is particularly tedious. Bright reflections on the wet road and windowpanes can dazzle and irritate drivers. These effects can be even worse when the windows are dirty and steamed up. It is also essential for windshield wipers to be intact. (DEKRA Info)



Still not mastered your pedelec? A rider safety training course could help

Photo: DEKRA
Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and
send reference copy.

Editorial offices please note:
The image can be obtained from
the DEKRA Press Office.
Tel. +49 711 7861-2122

Staying safe on the roads on an e-bike

Riding a Pedelec Requires Practice

Using a pedelec has become a highly popular way to get around. In 2024, the number of e-bikes in Germany increased by a further 2.1 million to 15.7 million vehicles, according to figures from the German Bicycle Industry Association (ZIV). But as the number of pedelec road users grows, so does the number of accidents they're involved in. Older people in particular often get caught up in accidents, and because of their age, they suffer more serious injuries on average than younger riders. The accident researchers at DEKRA explain what e-bike users can do to get to their destination safely.

Good to go on a pedelec? Before anything else, ask yourself: have you mastered riding a pedelec yet? Experienced riders can usually just hop on and ride if the handlebars and saddle height are correctly adjusted. For occasional riders and beginners, it's best to practice handling the fast, heavy pedelec somewhere away from busy roads. Consider whether you've mastered the basics, such as setting off, stopping, cornering and slalom riding, heavy braking, swerving, one-handed steering and indicating, or whether you need more practice. It is also important to practice riding safely in wet conditions and on gravel roads.

How about a safety course? If you don't feel confident riding a pedelec or just want to improve your riding style, you can take a rider safety training course and under qualified supervision practice the key techniques for riding safely. Besides the practical training element, these courses also usually give tips on how to avoid accidents, anticipatory riding, using the battery, and how to adjust the bike.

Choosing the right pedelec. Your choice of pedelec is one factor in how safe you are when riding your e-bike. A smaller, more compact model is easier to handle, low entry bikes are easier to get on and off, and bikes with a low center of gravity are easier to balance while stationary. If there's no urgent reason to choose the e-bike with the strongest motor, consider a slightly smaller model with a correspondingly sized battery. This can save weight and improve handling.

Visibility provides safety. For safe riding, the experts at DEKRA also recommend wearing a helmet at all times, including on short trips, and keeping your two-wheeled vehicle in good condition. In fall, it is especially important that your lights function properly. Other road users are more likely to spot you if you wear high-visibility retro-reflective clothing, such as a neon-colored cape. And using daytime running lights can also make you more visible on the road. (DEKRA Info)



*Caution with moisture: leakage
currents in the battery*

Protect battery-powered tools against moisture

Stressing Batteries Shortens Their Lifespan

Battery-powered tools, like mains-powered devices, must be protected against moisture and wet conditions. Although operating voltages of up to 18 volts can only cause weak discharges, “water ingress can cause leakage currents and spark a severe battery fire even hours later,” warns Roland Herrmann, Expert for Machines and Power Tools at DEKRA. That’s why it’s advisable to always store batteries in a fireproof environment when not in use. Faulty batteries or equipment must always be disposed of in an eco-friendly manner via specialist retailers. To ensure a long service life, avoid discharging batteries below 20 percent or charging them above 80 percent whenever possible. The ranges below and above these thresholds place the battery under stress, which shortens the service life. This approach also means the equipment charges faster. (DEKRA Info)



*Flexibility is key: higher demand
for cross-sector skills*

Soft skills are becoming increasingly important

AI, an Inquisitive Mind, and Lifelong Learning

In today’s job market, soft skills matter more than ever; these are transferable skills that are relevant across different professions. In particular, employers are increasingly valuing candidates with experience in AI and big data, as well as resilience, flexibility, agility, an inquisitive mind, and a passion for lifelong learning. Over the next five years, we can expect a significant shift in the type of skills required: 39 percent of work-related skills are set to change. “One reason they are gaining in importance is because organizations are expanding and becoming more complex and are therefore changing more quickly than before,” says Dr. Michael Stops from the IAB (Institute for Employment Research) in the DEKRA Labor Market Report 2025. “Workers with the right soft skills collaborate more successfully, communicate more effectively on both an interdisciplinary and cross-sector level, and are capable of learning new technical content again and again. Larger organizations are increasingly asking candidates to demonstrate soft skills, and they are often prepared to offer additional remuneration for them.” (Further information: www.dekra-arbeitsmarktreport.de) (DEKRA Info)

Photo: DEKRA
Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and
send reference copy.

Editorial offices please note:
The image can be obtained from
the DEKRA Press Office.
Tel. +49 711 7861-2122

Photo: DEKRA
Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and
send reference copy.

Editorial offices please note:
The image can be obtained from
the DEKRA Press Office.
Tel. +49 711 7861-2122