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Caution: roadwork! Diversions through residential areas

There's a lot happening on our roads. No matter which way you go, it's not long before you encounter more roadwork. The diversions often take drivers through or past residential areas and involve changes to the rights of way, roads that are closed off to thru traffic, and temporary one-way streets. Buses sometimes also have to squeeze their way through tight spots.

Dark winter months: white shoes significantly boost safety

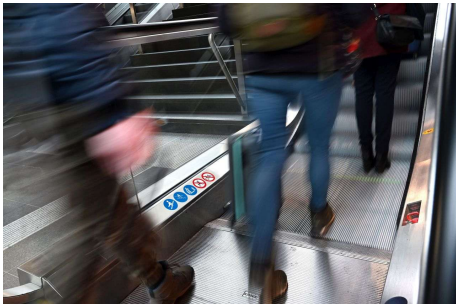
DEKRA's accident experts are reminding us that white shoes and bright clothing with retro-reflective markings significantly boost safety for pedestrians in the winter months. Vehicle headlamps can generally pick up bright, high-contrast clothing from a distance.

DEKRA Battery Test Center opens: all tests available under one roof

The expert organization DEKRA has opened its new Battery Test Center at the Lausitzring in Brandenburg. DEKRA has invested tens of millions of euros in the state-of-the-art facility, which will offer all kinds of battery tests under one roof.

Further topics:

- Take care on escalators: hold on tight
- Trend toward all-season tires: an annual check is recommended
- Support for elementary school children: new video clip on the cycling proficiency test



*Caution: escalators can be
slippery, especially on rainy days*

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Take care on escalators

Hold On Tight and Ensure a Firm Footing

Although taking the stairs is good for us, lots of people still prefer to ride the escalator. Whether it's in a shopping mall, at the airport, or down in the metro, we simply step onto these moving conveyors and before we know it we've been effortlessly carried up or down a floor. While this might sound easy, it still poses certain dangers. For example, people can suffer painful injuries if they don't pay attention when using them. "We mustn't be careless, especially if we're traveling with children," says Eva Adam-Krawitsch, expert in elevators and escalators at DEKRA.

These moving metal staircases can become slippery, especially on rainy days. If a person falls, a baggy sweater, a scarf, a shoestring, or even their hair or fingers could get trapped in a gap in the escalator, and they are then often unable to free themselves without the help of others. For this reason, it is important to step onto the escalator in a calm and orderly manner, hold on firmly to the handrail straight away, and ensure a firm footing.

It is also important to keep a safe distance from the side panel at all times as there is a risk of unpleasant burns if a person's hand or head is dragged along it. Also keep your shoes away from the panel as they could be caught in gaps. In particular, shoes made of soft material (such as rubber boots) can easily deform and become caught in gaps.

When riding the escalator, take small children by the arm and older children by the hand and hold on to them to prevent them falling over. Do not play, run, or climb on escalators. Roller skates are also dangerous as they could get trapped in gaps. "Stay attentive, don't get distracted, don't look at your smartphone, and keep an eye on others," advises Adam-Krawitsch. According to the official standard that governs escalators (EN 115), it is not permitted to use an escalator with a baby stroller or a wheelchair – use the elevators instead.

Important: if you notice an emergency, stop the escalator immediately. Red emergency stop buttons are provided at the top and bottom for this purpose. Throughout Europe, the emergency services can be reached by calling 112. (DEKRA Info)



Diversions through residential areas:

"Full of surprises"

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Caution: roadwork!

Diversions Through Residential Areas

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These rules aren't just unfamiliar to drivers, residents also have to adapt to them during the construction work. What may at first glance look like an unimportant side road, can in fact turn out to have right of way over the main flow of traffic – the rule in Germany is to "give priority to the right." That takes some getting used to and can easily lead to misunderstandings, not least because the right-of-way sign pointing this out can quickly become lost in the jungle of other signs.

"Diversions are full of surprises," warns Luis Ancona, accident researcher at DEKRA. If the road has become a temporary one-way street, it may well be the case that cyclists are allowed to ride through in the opposite direction. Dangerous close calls are to be expected, especially in poor visibility. Anyone who relies on common sat-nav apps will often end up having to fend for themselves as these apps are often not updated quickly enough. "Regardless of what the sat-nav system says, always keep an eye on the actual signs on the road and do not blindly follow the app's instructions," explains the expert.

If the road goes near a residential area or school, drivers can often expect to encounter children on foot or on bike in the mornings and once school is finished. For this reason, among others, it is recommended to drive particularly carefully in such areas and be prepared for surprises. Ancona explains: "It is recommended to adopt a defensive, forgiving driving style. Be considerate and keep to the speed limits; you'll then have more time to react."

However, pedestrians also have to keep their wits about them. If there is construction work on one side of the street, they sometimes have to cross the road in places where visibility is restricted. Pedestrians also need to take care on the sidewalk that remains as larger vehicles could get perilously close to them around the roadwork. Additionally, they should always expect to encounter drivers, who may be paying less attention to pedestrians at the roadside because they themselves are distracted by diversions, the construction work, or the jungle of signs.

(DEKRA Info)



*Annual tire check: a must, even for
all-season tires*

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Trend toward all-season tires

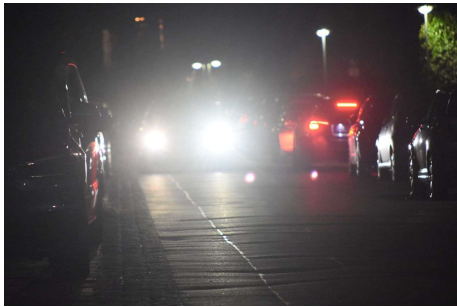
An Annual Check Is Recommended

More and more vehicles are heading out on the road with all-season tires. In 2024, more than one in every three drivers in Germany had all-season tires fitted to their vehicle, negating the need to change tires between seasons. "Given that the tires are no longer changed over every six months, it is recommended to have a specialist check them once a year," says Christian Koch, tire expert at DEKRA. "Car tires cover an average of 12,320 kilometers every year, providing ample opportunity for bumps into curbs, uneven wear, embedded objects, and other damage. Regular checks are a matter of safety."

As Koch explains, the safety aspect must also be considered if people are wondering whether they can do away with their second set of tires, the six-monthly changeover, and the associated storage: "All-season tires are always a compromise." They cover a wider range of scenarios than summer and winter tires, but this also means the performance of these all-rounders suffers. "Only dedicated summer and winter tires offer maximum performance and safety in all conditions." People also need to realistically assess whether all-season tires make sense from a financial perspective. They are not cheap to buy, and their potential mileage is much lower than a combination of summer and winter tires.

So, what does that mean in practice? "Under certain circumstances, all-season tires can certainly be a sensible choice," says Koch. Their main area of application is vehicles that are predominantly driven in urban areas, which is often the case with second cars. However, anyone who is planning to head into the mountains for their winter vacation will definitely be safer on winter tires. When it comes to safety reserves and driving dynamics, summer tires are generally better than all-season tires.

"No matter which type of tires you choose, it is crucial to check key safety-related properties when buying them, such as the braking response on wet roads," adds the tire expert. For help when making your choice, please consult sources such as the EU tire label or tests conducted by trade magazines and automobile clubs. (DEKRA Info)



Bright clothing and reflective markings: greater safety for pedestrians in poor visibility

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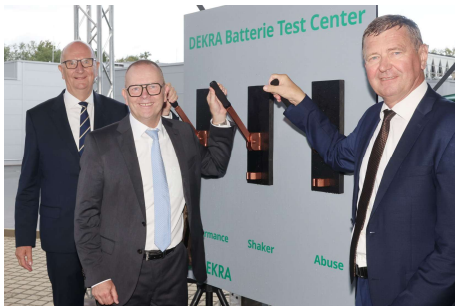
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In the dark winter months

White Shoes Significantly Boost Safety

DEKRA's accident experts are reminding us that white shoes and bright clothing with retro-reflective markings significantly boost safety for pedestrians in the winter months. Vehicle headlamps can generally pick up bright, high-contrast clothing from a distance. On the other hand, if people at the roadside are wearing inconspicuous clothing and visibility is poor, drivers sometimes cannot recognize them until they are around 20 meters away – often too late to prevent an accident. Jessica Künzler, accident expert in lighting technology at DEKRA, explains what to watch out for in poor lighting conditions.

- Gray or beige is a popular color for hiking gear but it is not good if visibility is poor – it acts like camouflage by easily blending into the surroundings. In contrast, retro-reflective materials stand out better against the background.
- If people are at the roadside, the first body part that vehicle headlamps pick up is their legs. For this reason, reflectors on the feet and legs are the most effective. This effect is amplified if the pedestrian is moving as it sends a clear signal to drivers (known as a 'reaction prompt'): "Watch out – something is moving here. There must be someone there!"
- However, the lighting conditions are sometimes so poor that even retro-reflective materials barely stand out against the surroundings. This may be the case if lots of light objects are near to one another, such as headlamps, street lamps, illuminated advertising signs, and mirror effects on wet roads. "In these types of situations, people should take appropriate care and not become too complacent," highlights the expert.
- If there is no sidewalk, Künzler also recommends that pedestrians in Germany walk on the left-hand roadside and face the vehicles: "They can then see the traffic coming and jump out of the way if required." They should also stay at least half a meter from the road, ideally more, and are advised to switch to a different route at the first available opportunity. (DEKRA Info)



*Battery Test Center opens: (from left)
Minister President of Brandenburg
Dietmar
Woidke; Head of DEKRA Germany
Guido Kutschera; and head of the*

DEKRA Battery Test Center opens **All Tests Available Under One Roof**

The expert organization DEKRA has opened its new Battery Test Center at the Lausitzring in Brandenburg. DEKRA has invested tens of millions of euros in the state-of-the-art facility, which will offer all kinds of battery tests under one roof. In addition to mechanical investigations and performance and environmental tests, the site will also conduct misuse tests where batteries are subjected to loads far beyond those occurring in regular use. All of the services will be offered alongside the development process and also as part of homologation, certification, quality monitoring, and market surveillance. The Center ensures the highest standards for the safety, efficiency, and performance of next-generation batteries. DEKRA is also focusing on other future trends such as V2X (Vehicle-to-Everything) communication, charging stations, driver assistance systems (ADAS), and Open Road services. (DEKRA Info)



*Helping children to prepare and
refresh their knowledge: new
video clip on the cycling
proficiency test*

Support for elementary school children **New Video Clip on the Cycling Proficiency Test**

DEKRA has now published a new video clip on the cycling proficiency test, aimed primarily at school children in grades 3 and 4. It provides simple explanations of the most important rules to bear in mind for the test. The video can be used at home or at school and helps children to prepare for the test or refresh their knowledge. The video covers topics such as what to do when turning off to the left and right, when passing cars, and when in the vicinity of trucks (blind spot). It also explains what equipment is required to make a bike roadworthy, and how to put on a helmet to ensure it fits correctly. There is also a competition to win some great prizes. The video and an informative handout are available in German at:
<https://www.dekra.de/de/kinderkappen/> (DEKRA Info)

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