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Campaign to Change Over EU Driver's Licenses: Paper Licenses Consigned to the History Books

The EU's overhaul of car and motorbike licenses is entering a new phase. By 2033, the plan is to only have standardized, anti-counterfeit, credit-card-sized licenses with up-to-date photos in the EU. This not only does away with Germany's previous gray and pink paper-format driver's licenses, old card-type licenses issued around the turn of the millennium now also need to be renewed.

Elevators: The World's Safest Means of Transportation

Although nail-biting scenes involving elevators are often part of action movies, they bear very little resemblance to what happens in real life. There are around 700,000 elevators in Germany, and the truth is that traveling in them is a mundane experience. "Well over 99 percent of all trips in elevators pass entirely without incident," says Karl-Friedrich Schöps, Head of Elevator Technology at DEKRA. "Elevators are the world's safest means of transportation."

If Your Car Battery Goes on Strike, Don't Use Jumper Cables Unless You Know What You're Doing

If your car battery is playing up after a cold night, many people reach for jumper cables to get their vehicle up and running again. However, DEKRA's experts warn that we shouldn't be over-zealous: "If you're not familiar with how to use them, it's better to call roadside assistance."

Further topics:

- European 112 Day: the emergency number 112 is your lifeline in Europe
- Periodical technical inspections: German vehicles with a blue sticker are due for inspection in 2026



*Safety comes first: safety brake,
holding cables, switches, annual
inspection*

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Around 700,000 elevators in operation

The World's Safest Means of Transportation

Although nail-biting scenes involving elevators are often part of action movies, they bear very little resemblance to what happens in real life. There are around 700,000 elevators in Germany, and the truth is that traveling in them is a mundane experience. "Well over 99 percent of all trips in elevators pass entirely without incident," says Karl-Friedrich Schöps, Head of Elevator Technology at DEKRA. "Elevators are the world's safest means of transportation."

The breakthrough came in the form of the elevator safety brake, presented by an American, E. G. Otis, back in 1853. He stepped into an elevator car at the World's Fair in New York and ordered the cable to be cut, whereupon the brake system engaged and automatically stopped the elevator from falling. This innovation paved the way for the construction of skyscrapers. Today, these types of brake systems are still part of the safety features on elevators. These usually also include three holding cables and brake monitoring switches, and an annual inspection by an authorized inspection agency such as DEKRA.

For this reason, the worst-case scenario is the elevator car coming to an unexpected stop between two floors, such as during a power outage. In such cases, the occupants can press a button to immediately request help from a permanently staffed call center. If an elevator gets stuck, the most important thing is to keep calm, stresses Schöps. "The biggest mistake someone could make is to try to free themselves. Please be patient and wait for external help. Do not under any circumstances pry open the doors and try to climb out of the elevator car – you'll put your life at risk!"

In addition: "Pay careful attention when stepping into and out of the elevator car, and don't allow yourself to be distracted by your smartphone or anything else," explains Schöps. There may be a small step between the hallway floor and car floor when it stops – you could get caught on it or trip over it. Keep clear of the elevator doors and pay attention to ensure your fingers or feet don't get trapped in the moving parts. Last but not least, don't forget that you must never use an elevator in the event of a fire. (DEKRA Info)



*If your vehicle doesn't start, call
roadside assistance when in doubt*

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When your car battery goes on strike after a cold night

Don't Use Jumper Cables Unless You Know What You're Doing

If your car battery is playing up after a cold night, many people reach for jumper cables to get their vehicle up and running again. However, DEKRA's experts warn that we shouldn't be over-zealous: "If you're not familiar with how to use them, it's better to call roadside assistance. A whole series of safety instructions need to be followed to avoid causing more harm than good," explain the experts. Failing to jump-start the vehicle correctly could not only damage the wiring harness and electronics, it could also trigger an explosion.

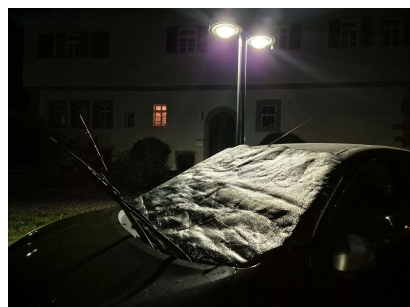
If you want to attempt it yourself anyway, always take the time to read the warnings from the car manufacturer in the owner's manual and the instructions from the cable manufacturer. Pay particular attention to the following points:

Risk of explosion. When jump-starting a vehicle, a high charging current flows through the dead battery. When this happens, gas may escape and form an explosive gas mixture. To ensure it does not ignite, do not smoke in the vicinity and avoid sparks and naked flames. Other critical aspects are to connect the jumper cables correctly, ensure the correct polarity and solid contact, and always follow the correct sequence when connecting the clamps.

Risk of short circuits. The bare parts of the cables and connection clamps must not touch one another, otherwise there is a risk of a short circuit with heavy sparking. Ensure the polarity is correct when connecting the clamps. If you connect them to the wrong battery terminals, this could damage not only the jumper cables, but also the battery and the vehicle electronics. Also keep the cables away from rotating parts in the engine compartment.

Ensure the batteries have the same voltage. The batteries in the two vehicles must always have the same voltage. Commercial vehicles usually have a 24-volt electrical system while passenger cars generally have a 12-volt system.

(Continued on next page)



*Drivers without a garage who
have to park their cars outside in
winter often encounter problems
with the battery*

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(Continued) When your car battery goes on strike after a cold night

Don't Use Jumper Cables Unless You Know What You're Doing

Watch out for frost. If the vehicle battery is frozen it must not be jump-started, otherwise there is a risk of the battery exploding. Frozen or thawed batteries must not be charged again – replace them instead.

Use the correct jump-start point. If the donor vehicle has an automatic start/stop system or energy recovery system, do not connect the black negative cable to the battery's negative terminal. Instead, connect it to a special jump-start point in the engine compartment.

Use the correct jumper cables. Only well-insulated cables with a sufficient cross-section as set out in the owner's manual for the vehicle are suitable for jump-starting vehicles. Also follow the instructions from the cable manufacturer. The requirements may differ for gasoline and diesel vehicles. The cables should comply with DIN 72553 or bear the "GS" safety certification mark.

Follow the correct sequence

According to DEKRA's experts, when connecting the jumper cables it is essential to pay close attention and ensure the correct polarity and solid contact, and to follow the correct sequence. Proceed as follows:

- Connect one clamp of the red cable to the positive terminal of the dead battery
- Connect the second clamp of the red cable to the positive terminal of the donor battery
- Connect one clamp of the black cable to the negative terminal of the donor battery
- Important: connect the second, last clamp of the black cable to an unpainted metal part (grounding point) on the engine block of the dead car, as far away as possible from the dead battery
- First start the engine on the donor vehicle and let it run. Only then start the dead vehicle. If the engine does not start within 10 seconds, wait one minute before trying again.
- Once the dead vehicle has started, remove the clamps of the jumper cables in reverse order. (DEKRA Info)



*EU driver's licenses are gradually
being changed over by 2033*

Process to change over driver's licenses to new format continues

Paper Licenses Consigned to the History Books

The EU's overhaul of car and motorbike licenses is entering a new phase. By 2033, the plan is to only have standardized, anti-counterfeit, credit-card-sized licenses with up-to-date photos in the EU. This not only does away with Germany's previous gray and pink paper-format driver's licenses, old card-type licenses issued around the turn of the millennium now also need to be renewed.

The next deadline is January 19, 2026 – all driver's licenses issued in 1999 to 2001 must have been changed over by this date. On card-type licenses, the date of issue is shown under point 4a. People born in 1953 and later already had to exchange their old documents in previous years.

License holders born before 1953 have the most time for the changeover – they have until January 19, 2033 to present an up-to-date card-type license. Whereas the previous documents were valid indefinitely, the new card-type licenses must be renewed after 15 years, like German ID cards or passports. The changeover to the new license format is compulsory. Violations may result in a fine of ten euros, and people may also encounter problems when hiring a rental car or driving abroad.

For the avoidance of doubt: "The requirement to change over driver's licenses is only about swapping over the document format – the driver's actual permission to drive remains unaffected," explains Thomas Riedel from Driving License Services at DEKRA. "This also means that there's no need for any additional medical examinations such as eye tests or health checks. People also don't need to take their driving test again."

The driving license authority that covers the person's current place of residence is responsible for the changeover of old driver's licenses. Drivers will need a valid ID card or passport, a biometric passport photo, and their current license. According to the German federal government, the fee for the changeover is 25 euros. (DEKRA Info)

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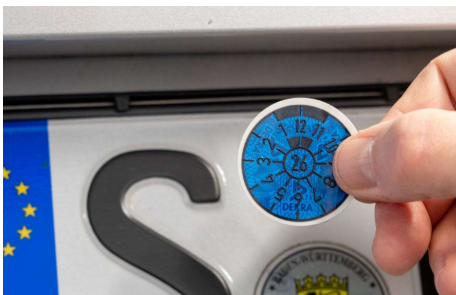


*112: a number even children
should know*

European 112 Day on February 11

The Emergency Number 112 is Your Lifeline in Europe

European 112 Day, held on February 11, is spreading a clear message: in an emergency, dial 112 and save lives. "The faster the rescue services are on site, the better the chances of saving lives and reducing harm," say the DEKRA experts. "Everyone should be clear on what to do in an emergency. Even children in kindergarten should know how an emergency call works and when to make one." The emergency number 112 works throughout Europe and is free of charge on all landline and cellular networks. Important: only call in a genuine emergency, state your name and the location of the emergency, and describe what happened. Please stay on the line until you have answered all questions and the control center ends the call. If in doubt as to whether an emergency call is required, make the call. The control center will ask targeted questions and decide what type of assistance is required. (DEKRA Info)



*New year, new color: German
vehicles with a blue PTI sticker
need to be inspected in 2026*

Periodical technical inspections

German Vehicles With a Blue Sticker are Due For Inspection in 2026

In the new year, the next color in the cycle of periodical technical inspections (PTI) will be due for inspection. In 2025 vehicles with an orange sticker were required to undergo the PTI, but in 2026 it's the turn of vehicles with the blue sticker. As DEKRA's experts explain, the number at the top of the sticker indicates in which month the PTI is due at the latest. In Germany the PTI is due every two years. Drivers must bring with them the original copy of part I of the vehicle registration certificate or, at the very least, the digital registration certificate (DFZ) in the new i-Kfz app. For vehicles with an internal combustion engine, an emissions test is also part of the PTI. If it has already been performed in a workshop, drivers must provide the corresponding certificate. If any technical modifications were made to the vehicle at a later stage, the relevant test certificate is also required. Appointments can be booked online on the DEKRA website (www.dekra.de) or by scanning the QR code on the PTI test report. (DEKRA Info)

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