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Leasing return: Missing documents result in costs

“When returning a leased vehicle or trading in a car, one aspect is often not taken seriously enough by lessees and sellers,” explains Michael Tziatzios, a DEKRA used vehicle expert. “Important documents or items such as the second key, the radio code card, or the user manual are often missing. This usually results in additional work and costs, which are necessarily reflected in the valuation of the vehicle.”

Start of the season for bikers: Take care during the warm-up

The first warm spring days are drawing scores of motorcycle fans onto the roads. This is when both bikers and car drivers need to pay particular attention and look out for each other. Car drivers need to get used to motorcycles being back on the road again, and bikers need to consider this learning phase in their own riding behavior.

Rescue sheet for cars: Taking precautions

Rapid and focused assistance is essential when someone has to be freed from a vehicle following an accident. Rescuers therefore need reliable information about the vehicle’s structure as soon as possible. The rescue sheet, which is ideally stored behind the driver’s sun visor, gives emergency personnel immediate access to this information.

Further topics:

- Getting your car ready for spring
- Before the vacation season: Have your gas system checked
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Leasing return: Deduction for a missing second key

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Trade-in or leasing return

Missing documents result in costs

Every year, millions of Germans return a vehicle – either as a trade-in for the purchase of a new vehicle or because their leasing contract has expired. Whichever the case, the dealer inspects the vehicle very carefully. In the case of a trade-in, the dealer determines the price it will offer; in the case of a leasing return, it determines whether the vehicle’s mileage or condition means that the lessee will have to pay a surcharge or receive a rebate.

“One aspect is often not taken seriously enough by lessees and sellers,” explains Michael Tziatzios, a DEKRA used vehicle expert. “Important documents or items such as the second key, the radio code card, or the user manual are often missing. This usually results in additional work and costs, which are necessarily reflected in the valuation of the vehicle.”

A typical example: the second key is missing. If it is lost, the vehicle’s locking system will have to be replaced. For a Golf VII, for example, it costs 1,250 euros to replace the entire locking system, including all materials and labor. “To avoid this kind of unnecessary expense, all key documents must be provided when returning a leased vehicle or trading in a car.”

Other than the second key, things like the service history, registration documents, or navigation system SD card are often missing; in the case of leased vehicles, fuel and service cards as well. Sometimes, more mundane things like the warning triangle, luggage compartment cover, or inspection certificate for subsequent technical modifications are reported missing. “In your own interest, we recommend checking in good time that you have all these items ready to go,” says the expert.

Especially when trading in a used car, it has been found time and again that it is an advantage to credibly document the history and condition of the vehicle. “It therefore makes sense to bring along all repair and maintenance invoices as verification if you’ve had the transmission or timing belt replaced, for example,” says Tziatzios. (DEKRA Info)



In spring: Clear out the trunk

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Getting your car ready for spring

A brief check of appearance and safety

A thorough springtime check gets your car ready for the warmer days. It removes the traces of winter, gets rid of any dirt and salt, and makes the paintwork shine again. The service is completed by changing to summer tires and performing any minor maintenance. However, work on safety systems belongs in specialist hands. This check not only serves to maintain your car's appearance; it also preserves value and ensures safety.

Washing a car removes salt residues and winter dirt – without forgetting the underside and wheel arches. Before going through the car wash, a prewash is recommended to prevent any hardened dirt particles from leaving ugly scratches in the paintwork. A touch-up stick can be used on smaller areas of damage to prevent them from growing. After washing, a hard-wax sealer will protect the paintwork from acid rain and insect residues.

If windshield wipers start to rub or smear, the blades need replacing. A standard household window cleaner gets rid of any dirt film on the inside or outside of the car's windows. The reward is clear visibility and reduced glare. The washer system now needs to be filled with a summer windshield cleaner, but this should not be done until all the winter mix has been used up.

The car's fitness check also includes changing to summer tires, which typically stay on the vehicle until October. In Germany, the minimum tire profile required by law is 1.6 millimeters. However, for safety reasons, DEKRA's experts recommend at least three millimeters for summer tires to ensure their grip on wet or dirty roads. The last things to check are the tire pressure, oil level, and function of the lights.

Winter equipment like snow chains, jumper cables, ski racks, and frost protection are not needed for now and can be stored outside the car, which keeps things tidy and saves fuel. In summer, all passengers will be happy about a pleasant climate inside the car. It therefore makes sense to check whether it is time to service the air conditioning system – recommended every two years – and replace the interior filter. If you do not want to get your hands dirty, you can take advantage of one of the many service offerings from workshops. These usually cover a check of the brakes, battery, engine fluids, tires, and lights. (DEKRA Info)



Start of the season for bikers: The most dangerous months of the year

Start of the season for bikers

People also need to warm up

The first warm spring days are drawing scores of motorcycle fans onto the roads. However, this is when both bikers and car drivers need to pay particular attention and look out for each other. Car drivers need to get used to motorcycles being back on the road again, and bikers need to consider this learning phase in their own riding behavior. Car drivers often misjudge the speed, acceleration, and distance of motorcycles and can easily overlook two-wheeled vehicles because of their slim outline. “The spring months are the most dangerous time of the year for bikers, which is why they should be particularly careful at the start of the new season,” says Achim Kuppinger, a motorcycle expert at DEKRA.

The greatest danger lurks at crossroads, junctions with side roads, and exits. Critical situations often arise when a car wants to turn left just as a motorbike starts to overtake. To ensure that nothing happens, it is best for car drivers to check their rear-view mirror twice. Bikers can protect themselves by driving carefully and defensively, making sure they are clearly visible, and avoiding the blind spot behind other vehicles. Moreover, in spring, roads are more likely to be dirty and have patches of grit and frost damage, all of which may heighten the crash risk.

“Following the winter break and months driving a car, many motorcyclists need to warm up – just like their bikes,” says Kuppinger. Little used car parks or roads are suitable for getting back into practice. It has proven useful for riders to perfect their feeling for weight, balance, and handling by doing driving school exercises like figures-of-eight, avoiding an obstacle, emergency stopping, slow driving, and stopping without dismounting.

The safety package is rounded out by a technical check of the motorcycle and the rider’s clothing such as leathers, boots, kidney belt, gloves, and helmet. It can still be quite cold in the spring months so warm clothing is also needed. Prepared like this, the first springtime tour can start. (DEKRA Info)

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*Rapid help after an accident:
Rescue sheets help the helpers*

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Precautions help save lives

Rescue sheet behind the sun visor

Rapid and focused assistance is essential when someone has to be freed from a vehicle following an accident. Rescuers therefore need reliable information about the vehicle's structure as soon as possible. The rescue sheet, which is ideally stored behind the driver's sun visor, gives emergency personnel immediate access to this information. Although many fire services can now call up the right rescue sheet from their control center, this is not always the case. An additional sticker on the windshield makes it easier for emergency personnel to quickly locate the rescue sheet in the vehicle. (www.dekra.de/de/rettungskarte)

Opening modern vehicles presents special challenges for rescuers. "High-strength materials, extensive airbag systems, and new technologies are being used increasingly in today's cars. Highly stable passenger compartments provide reliable protection. However, after a major collision, they may make it difficult to free the injured rapidly and cause delays," explains DEKRA accident researcher Markus Egelhaaf.

It is crucial that rescuers can quickly identify those locations on the car body to safely and effectively position hydraulic rescue equipment. Just as important is information about the location of the batteries (including the 12-volt battery), energy storage systems, and any safety-relevant components. Special precautions must be taken to avoid damaging any parts of restraint systems when working on a vehicle. In the case of electric vehicles, there is the added need to reliably identify and deactivate the high-voltage system.

What can drivers do? Drivers should print a color copy of the rescue sheet for their vehicle. This can be downloaded at www.dekra.de/de/rettungskarte or obtained from the car's manufacturer. Drivers can use the type code and contour to check whether they have printed the right rescue sheet. This should then be placed behind the driver's sun visor. It is also helpful to apply a "Rescue sheet on board" sticker to the windshield, either at top or bottom left on the driver's side. Stickers can be obtained free of charge at DEKRA locations or by clicking the link above. (DEKRA Info)



Mandatory again: Gas system inspection for motor homes and camper trailers

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Gas systems in motor homes and camper trailers **G 607 inspection mandatory again**

DEKRA's experts draw attention to the fact that, since June 2025, liquid gas systems in camper trailers and motor homes must again be inspected in accordance with DVGW Rule G 607. The inspection must be performed when the system is commissioned and thereafter every 24 months. This means that new vehicles must be reinspected after two years. Moreover, gas systems must be inspected whenever any technical modification is made. Gas inspections performed before the entry into force of the new regulation remain valid. If the outcome of the inspection is positive, a special gas inspection sticker is placed next to the vehicle's rear license plate. Any violations will incur fines of 15, 25, or 60 euros, depending on how long the inspection date has been exceeded. (DEKRA Info)



Roadworthiness test failed? One month's grace for reinspection

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Roadworthiness test failed **What now?**

If a vehicle does not pass its roadworthiness test, the owner is required to have the defects identified remedied without delay. They have exactly one month to present the vehicle for reinspection, recall DEKRA's experts. Failure to meet this deadline may incur a fine of 40 euros. It is then necessary to present the vehicle for inspection again. This is also the case if the owner is unable to present the report from the first inspection at the reinspection. That is why it is important to keep the inspection report carefully and bring it along to the appointment. The vehicle registration documents are also required. (DEKRA Info)