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DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026: “Working in Road Traffic”

Road workers, police officers, first responders and delivery drivers: For millions of people, public roads are their workplace – one in which they are exposed to particular risks. This is the subject of the DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026. “Working in road traffic must be made safer. Something can and must be done,” says Jann Fehlauer, Managing Director of DEKRA Automobil GmbH.

Hail damage: Duty to mitigate loss

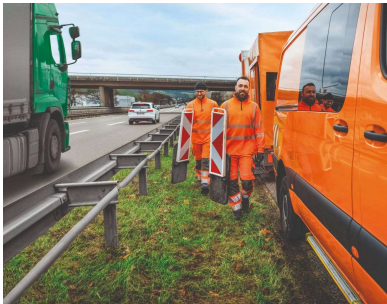
DEKRA reminds drivers that, in the event of hail damage to their vehicle, they have a duty to mitigate their loss. For example, a shattered window must be covered. However, this duty does not give owners *carte blanche* for emergency or partial repairs to their vehicle, which may only be commissioned after consulting their vehicle insurer.

Safely navigating traffic jams: Plan well and remain concentrated

This summer, like every summer, drivers must be prepared for endless traffic jams on the roads. DEKRA’s experts give tips on how to minimize frustration in slow-moving traffic at the busiest travel time of the year.

Further topics:

- Driving in the heat: Cool tips for hot days
- Before a long journey: Check your tire pressure
- Out-of-position: Laid-back but risky



*Working alongside moving traffic:
Unforeseen situations can arise at
any time*

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DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026: "Working in Road Traffic"

Working in a high-risk environment

For millions of people, public roads are their workplace – one in which they are exposed to particular risks. Road construction workers who operate alongside moving traffic face the constant risk of being hit by a vehicle. The greatest everyday danger to police officers, fire fighters, and other first responders is when they are traveling to an emergency. However, they are also at risk when performing traffic checks or securing the scene of an accident. Professional drivers likewise face a large number of challenges in their workplace at the wheel.

This is the subject of the DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026, which was published recently. "Working in road traffic must be made safer. Something can and must be done," said Jann Fehlauer, Managing Director of DEKRA Automobil GmbH, at the event to present the report. However, the problem is complex. "Unfavorable weather conditions, a large volume of traffic, technical faults, or the behavior of other road users may cause unforeseen situations at any time." Time pressures, irregular working hours, monotonous driving environments, a lack of rest time, and high performance standards lead to stress and tiredness. In addition, the distraction caused by technical devices is one of the biggest challenges in road safety today.

The report highlights the various problem areas from the perspective of accident analysis, traffic psychology, vehicle technology, infrastructure, and legislation, and explores optimization measures. DEKRA uses crash and driving tests to analyze how road traffic workplaces can be made safer. Examples include upstream deformation elements on trailers to enhance safety and state-of-the-art automated emergency braking systems that react to mobile warning signs. DEKRA's driving tests also demonstrated the effectiveness of close-range warnings delivered by wireless communication to road users and infrastructure (C-ITS).

A DEKRA survey of professional drivers concerning the parking and security situation at highway service areas revealed that two thirds of the respondents regularly parked in hazardous places in order to observe the prescribed rest periods. Over half of them drove an additional 20 kilometers or more in search of a place to park up. The DEKRA Road Safety Report 2026 is available to download from www.dekra-roadsafety.com. (DEKRA Info)



Hail dents or not? A hail cover helps calculate the size of the claim

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Duty to mitigate loss in the event of hail damage

Affected owners must follow the right procedure

DEKRA reminds drivers that, in the event of hail damage to their vehicle, they have a duty to mitigate their loss. For example, a shattered window must be covered to ensure that the vehicle is not damaged any more than is avoidable by any subsequent precipitation. However, this duty does not give owners *carte blanche* for emergency or partial repairs to their vehicle, which may only be commissioned after consulting their vehicle insurer.

“Affected vehicle owners require a cover note from their insurer to avoid the risk of having to pay the invoice from their own pocket,” says Michael Nöldge, a DEKRA claims expert. “In the event of damage, it is important to follow the right procedure.” Hail damage is fully insured if the vehicle owner holds partial coverage or all-risk insurance. In the event of damage, the insurer must be informed of the date, time, and location of the hailstorm. “It makes sense for vehicle owners to document the extent of the damage by taking several photos on their phone,” says Nöldge.

Once the affected owner has reported the damage, the insurer agrees an inspection date. The expert calculates the size of the claim and, if necessary, the replacement value and residual value. They then make recommendations for repairs. The affected owner can either choose to repair the vehicle or receive payment of the claim amount from the insurer.

If the owner chooses repair, they should check their insurance policy to see if it specifies a particular repair shop. In this case, the owner is required to have the work on their vehicle carried out in a repair shop specified by the insurer. Other policies give owners the freedom to choose a repair shop.

Nevertheless, vehicle owners could save a lot of time and effort by moving their vehicles to safety in good time – for example, in a garage or other safe location – ahead of a summer storm with the risk of hail. When selling their vehicle, an owner must remember to disclose any previous hail damage to the buyer. (DEKRA Info)



When the planet heats up: Good timing reduces stress

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Driving in the heat

Cool tips for hot days

It can get uncomfortable inside a car in summer when temperatures go through the roof. Too much heat can impair a driver's concentration, thus increasing the accident risk. DEKRA's experts advise vehicle drivers on how to make traveling more pleasant during a heatwave.

Without air conditioning, it is torture to drive during the hot weeks of the year. To ensure that the air conditioner works perfectly and does not smell, a climate check is recommended at the start of the summer. Even in burning heat, the air conditioning should not be set too cold. An inside temperature of no more than six to eight degrees below the outdoor temperature has proven to be ideal. This ensures there is no excessive shock to the body when the driver exits the vehicle. It is best not to aim the cooled air directly toward the body as this could easily cause the user to catch a cold.

When it comes to clothing, it is best to wear light, airy, and comfortable garments. Sun protection mats and screens protect against direct sunlight. However, they may not be used on the windshield and the front side windows. "The quickest way to expel heat from an overheated car is to open the doors and tailgate wide for a few minutes," says Thomas Gut, a DEKRA expert. "Keep the windows open for the first few minutes of driving, then close them and switch the air conditioner to recirculation mode, turning up the fan and reducing the temperature. Once the desired temperature has been reached, adjust the settings and switch back to fresh air mode."

"Good timing can also help to reduce the impact of heat. Taking a long break at the hottest time of the day – by stopping at a cool service area, for example – ensures variety. Light physical exercise can restore the body's balance and revitalize the driver," says the expert. Excessive fluid loss causes tiredness so the motto on any journey in the heat is to drink plenty, preferably mineral water, fruit juices, and herb teas. Driver should eat lightly: fruit, salads, vegetables, and light snacks.

The expert warns strongly against leaving children or animals unattended in a vehicle on a hot day – even when stopping quickly at the store. "This could endanger life. Direct sunlight can turn a vehicle into a furnace in a short space of time, and this can be life-threatening for a child," emphasizes Gut. (DEKRA Info)



*In peak travel season: Endless
traffic jams*

Safely navigating traffic jams

Plan well and remain concentrated

For drivers, vacation time is nearly always synonymous with traffic jams. There were around half a million traffic jams on German highways in 2025. This summer, too, drivers will face slow-moving traffic and gridlock, especially at peak vacation time. DEKRA's experts give tips on how to minimize frustration in traffic jams at the busiest travel time of the year.

Good planning is the key. If possible, drivers should not to travel at the start of the school vacation in a region or at the weekend. It is essential to check the current traffic conditions just before leaving and whether there are any alternative routes. Current maps and an updated navigation system can help drivers find their way even in unfamiliar surroundings. Nevertheless, they should allow plenty of time for traffic jams and possible diversions. They should also make sure they have enough fuel and plenty of cold drinks inside the passenger space.

When traffic starts to slow, drivers should maintain a safe distance to the vehicle in front, remain concentrated, and "go with the flow." Adding a safety buffer for braking reduces the risk of rear-end collisions and cuts stress levels. "In a traffic jam, avoid changing lanes constantly. That disrupts the traffic and also increases the risk of accidents," warns DEKRA. One way of staying safe in a traffic jam is predictive driving, keeping an eye not only on the driver immediately in front but also on the brake lights of the vehicles further ahead. This makes it possible to react in good time if traffic comes to a standstill.

Hazardous situations often arise when drivers see the end of a traffic jam at a late stage because it is hidden by a bend in the road or a tunnel. In these cases, drivers should not only keep an eye on the end of the traffic jam in front but also on the following vehicles in order to avoid rear-end collisions. Drivers should switch on their hazard lights as quickly as possible to warn the traffic behind them.

If a traffic jam is forming, drivers should leave a gap for emergency vehicles before they come to a standstill so that the police and first responders can quickly get to the scene of an accident. In Germany, the requirement is to leave a gap between the outside lane and the lane to the right. It should be remembered that the gap for emergency vehicles should not be used by other drivers to get ahead faster. It is also prohibited to leave a vehicle in a traffic jam, as is driving on the hard shoulder, turning on the highway, or reversing. (DEKRA Info)

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Before a long journey: Check the pressure of cold tires

Before setting off on vacation **Check your tire pressure**

Before heading out on vacation, it is essential to check the pressure of your car tires. Long journeys, especially with a heavily laden vehicle in the summer heat, are stress for the tires. If the tire pressure is too low, the tires may be damaged to the point of failure or they may burst, warn DEKRA's tire experts. That is why drivers should check the pressure of their cold tires before any long journey and adjust them to the vehicle load. The information given in the user manual or the vehicle itself – on the B column, for example – must be observed. For safety reasons, tires with a tread depth of less than three millimeters should be replaced as soon as possible. If tires are more than six years old, their condition should be checked by a specialist. (DEKRA Info)



In the event of a collision: Pelvis can slide under the seat belt

Out-of-position in a car **Laid-back but risky**

When it is hot, front-seat car passengers often relax with their feet up on the dashboard. It looks laid-back but in the event of an accident, they could be seriously or even fatally injured, warn DEKRA's accident researchers. If the airbag is triggered, the legs of an out-of-position passenger can be torn backward in a split second. At the same time, the pelvis can slide under the seat belt. This has a very negative impact on the seat belt's effectiveness. Experts draw attention to the fact that car passengers are only fully protected by airbags and seat belts in the event of a collision if they are sitting in a normal upright position. By contrast, other positions – twisted, bent forward, or with feet up – harbor a significant risk of injury. Moreover, the seat belt must always be worn because it is the combination of seat belt and airbag that ensures effective protection. (DEKRA Info)

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