

Content

Well prepared for your roadworthiness inspection: Pre-check saves time and money

Each year, more than 31 million vehicles in Germany have to undergo a roadworthiness inspection. Expert organization DEKRA recommends a few preparations to ensure that there are no problems. It is often little things that result in a failed inspection or the need for a reinspection.

Driving safely in the fall: Slow down and keep your distance

Particular care is required when using the roads in the fall. During the months ahead, drivers must be prepared for rain, fog, slick roads, wind, and poor visibility. DEKRA's accident experts provide tips for safe driving in the fall.

Beware of gas poisoning: Carbon monoxide – the silent killer

DEKRA's fire protection experts warn of the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Time and again, serious accidents happen because of defective heating systems, generators, or the indoor use of charcoal grills. Even the smallest concentration of the gas in the air can cause death. In addition to taking basic safety precautions, CO alarms provide additional protection.

Further topics:

- Preparing cars for fall and winter: Battery is the primary weak spot
- Before installing Christmas decorations: Check cable and suspension systems
- The golden rule when driving: Adapt speed to visibility



*Roadworthiness inspection:
Little things often prevent
the issue of a new tag*

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

Well prepared for roadworthiness inspection

Pre-check saves time and money

Each year, more than 31 million vehicles in Germany have to undergo a roadworthiness inspection. Expert organization DEKRA recommends a few preparations to ensure that there are no problems. It is often little things that result in a failed inspection or the need for reinspection. In the opinion of the inspection technicians, this can be avoided, thus saving time and the cost of a reinspection.

Certain documents are needed for a roadworthiness inspection. One of these is the vehicle registration certificate, Part I. If reinspection is necessary, the original inspection report must also be presented to avoid repeating the full inspection procedure. Moreover, the inspection scope is reduced for vehicles that have already undergone an emissions test – during servicing, for example. However, this applies only if the test certificate is presented. This certificate must be dated no earlier than the month before inspection.

It is also important to present any test certificates (for example, type-approval certificates and other documentation for vehicle modifications) for modifications that have been made to a vehicle, such as non-standard wheels, lowered suspension, trailer coupling, or similar. Ideally, the documents are kept readily available on the vehicle dashboard to avoid the need for unnecessary questions during the inspection.

The most frequent defects identified during an inspection concern the lighting and electrical systems. Before the inspection, drivers can quickly check the function of their headlamps on both low and high beam, turn indicators, rear lights, and brake lights, as well as the horn, windshield wipers, and washer system. A minimum tread depth of 1.6 millimeters is specified for the tires. However, it should be more to ensure safe driving and braking – especially on wet roads. In winter, the tread depth should not be less than 4 millimeters.

And, of course, the warning triangle, hi-vis vest, and first aid kit must be available in the vehicle. Ideally, they should be easily visible. It should be remembered that emergency equipment must be replaced if it has passed its expiration date. Drivers can also go the extra mile: Inspection technicians will appreciate a clean and tidy vehicle, not least because they may have to access the OBD interface behind the dashboard. A practical roadworthiness inspection checklist (in German) can be downloaded at <https://www.dekra.de/de/checkliste-hauptuntersuchung/>. (DEKRA Info)



*Protection from CO poisoning:
Ensure good ventilation
and install CO alarms*

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

Experts warn of gas poisoning in the home

Carbon monoxide – the silent killer

DEKRA's fire protection experts warn of the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Time and again, serious accidents happen because of defective heating systems, generators, or the indoor use of charcoal grills. Even the smallest concentration of the gas in the air can cause death. In addition to taking basic safety precautions, CO alarms provide additional protection.

Protection from CO poisoning

Ensure good ventilation: Wherever coal, wood, gas, oil, petroleum, or alcohol is being burned, it is very important to ensure good ventilation. A constant supply of fresh air is essential, and the exhaust air must be removed. This applies as much to private barbecue parties, the use of gas heating systems and coal stoves, and underground garages as to commercial shisha bars, indoor karting centers, and pellet stores.

Take care in indoor spaces: Gas and charcoal grills, gas patio heaters such as gas-fired mushroom and bar heaters, and similar equipment should never be used in indoor spaces. One lethal error that is made time and again is to place a still glowing charcoal grill inside the house to cool.

Service heating systems: Carbon monoxide can be formed by gas boilers and gas or oil heating systems if, for example, the flue is blocked and there is a build-up of exhaust gas. Such systems must be serviced regularly by specialist technicians.

Install CO alarms: CO alarms – not to be confused with smoke alarms – emit a warning signal if the CO threshold is exceeded. That means there is a risk to life. It is important to install a CO alarm wherever a substance is being burned. Equally important is testing the alarm's function every four weeks.

Tips for alarms: If a CO alarm goes off, there is no time to lose. You should immediately open several doors and windows to ventilate the room fully. If it is unclear why the alarm has been triggered, you should leave the house without delay and call the fire department (112 in Germany, for example).

(DEKRA Info)



*Driving in the fall:
Eyes open and adapt
to road conditions*

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 the fall

Slow down and keep your distance

Particular care is required when using the roads in the fall. During the months ahead, drivers must be prepared for rain, fog, slick roads, wind, and poor visibility. DEKRA's accident experts provide tips for safe driving in the fall.

A heavy rain shower is enough to reduce tire grip on the road and increase the braking distance. "A car traveling at 80 km/h (50 mph) on a dry road has an emergency braking distance of around 53 meters (58 yards). This increases by about one third to some 72 meters (79 yards) in wet conditions. Wet leaves or dirt from adjacent fields can turn roads into a dangerous skating rink," says Jessica Künzler, a DEKRA accident expert. She recommends that drivers keep their eyes open, slow down, and brake with care.

This is also important if there is a risk of hydroplaning. If rainwater collects in grooves, tires can lose contact with the road surface and ride on a layer of water. As a result, the driver may lose control of the vehicle. If this happens, drivers should avoid steering and ease off the accelerator. They should only steer again once the tires have regained their grip on the road.

Drivers should also take care when rain, fog, or snow severely reduce visibility. They should turn their lights on low beam and increase their distance to the vehicle ahead. It is important for drivers to adapt their speed to the visibility so that they are able to stop within the distance they can actually see. As a rule of thumb, the speed in km/h is the visibility in meters. Thus, if visibility is 60 meters (66 yards), the appropriate speed is 60 km/h (37 mph). Drivers should not overtake if visibility is poor. Other factors in safe driving are a clean windshield and windows (inside and outside), undamaged windshield wipers, windshield washer fluid with antifreeze, and correctly adjusted headlamps.

The fall also often brings weather with crosswinds and squalls that can easily push vehicles out of their lane or off the road altogether. The risk is particularly high on bridges or elevated terrain. When a vehicle is caught by a strong gust of wind, the driver should firmly grip the wheel with both hands and continue to drive slowly and carefully. If a storm is approaching, it is often better to break your journey. However, you should never shelter under a tree because there is a risk of falling branches. In the worst case, trees can be uprooted entirely and fall. (DEKRA Info)



*Fall check:
Getting through the
cold season without breakdown*

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

Preparing cars for fall and winter

Battery is the primary weak spot

As soon as the temperature starts to drop, many cars are at risk of breakdown. The battery is a car's primary weak spot. Battery performance decreases by about one third at 0 degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit). At the same time, the starter motor has to cope with more viscous motor oil. In thousands of cases, the engine fails to start. Coolant and windshield washer fluid freeze because the necessary antifreeze has not been added.

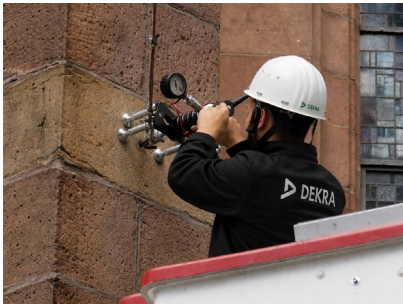
Annoying breakdowns like these and expensive repairs can be avoided by carefully checking a vehicle before the start of the cold season. Car workshops, automobile clubs, and testing organizations provide professional support. However, drivers can perform some simple service tasks themselves.

Seeing and being seen are crucial during the darker months of the year. "Defective lights and incorrectly adjusted headlamps reduce visibility and may dazzle and irritate other drivers. Ensuring the intact condition of a vehicle's lighting system is a question of safety," says DEKRA expert Thomas Gut and refers to Germany's nationwide "Lichttest" light testing campaign that is held every October.

Good visibility is also ensured by cleaning the windshield on the inside and outside because dirt increases fogging and reduces visibility, especially when driving into the light. Clean headlamps also improve the driver's visual range. If the windshield wipers leave streaks, they will need to be replaced.

Antifreeze must be added to the windshield washing system to ensure that it continues to function at low temperatures. It should also be ensured that sufficient antifreeze has been added to the coolant system. A rubber care product can be used to stop the door seals from freezing and is much less expensive than replacing a torn door seal.

Moreover, the vehicle's tires should be suitable for driving in winter and providing a secure grip on slippery roads. Both winter and all-season tires should have a tread depth of at least 4 millimeters in order to cope with snow, ice, slush, and wet roads. Last but not least, now is the time to add winter equipment such as ice scrapers, brushes, antifreeze, and gloves to the items you keep in the car, as well as drinking water, emergency food provisions, and blankets in case of longer delays. (DEKRA Info)



*Suspension systems
for Christmas lights:
Check for defects*

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

Before installing Christmas decorations on streets and squares **Check cable and suspension systems**

DEKRA's testing experts report that the cable systems used to suspend Christmas decorations, lighting, and advertisements above streets, pedestrian areas, and squares often have significant defects. If a cable or anchorage were to break, it could pose a danger to passersby and vehicles. The experts recommend that city and municipal authorities check the cable systems above streets and squares especially before installing Christmas decorations and lights, thus meeting their obligation to ensure road safety. These cable systems are constantly exposed to wind and weather, fluctuating loads, aging, and corrosion. Frequent defects are unsuitable or corroded anchorages, loose masonry, damaged, corroded, or overtensioned steel cables, and loosened connectors. As a rule, these defects are not visible from the ground. (DEKRA Info)



*Adapt speed to visibility:
In an emergency, stop within
the distance that can be seen*

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

The golden rule when driving **Adapt speed to visibility**

Driving schools in Germany teach the golden rule of adapting speed to visibility. This is particularly important in those months of the year characterized by fog, rain, snow, and darkness. Germany's road traffic regulations stipulate that drivers should move at a speed that enables them to stop within the distance they can see. This means they must adapt their speed and distance to the road and traffic conditions, visibility, and weather. One classic and frequently cited example is a maximum speed of 50 km/h (30 mph) or less at a visibility of 50 meters (55 yards). In extreme cases, the rule is that speed should be half the visibility. When driving on narrow roads on which oncoming vehicles might be endangered, Germany's road traffic regulations stipulate that drivers should move at a speed that enables them to stop within half the distance they can see. (DEKRA Info)