

Contents

DEKRA Road Safety Report 2024: “Moving up a gear”

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Safely through the tunnel: “Go with the flow”

Entering a road tunnel causes many a driver trepidation; some even feel constricted and vulnerable. All the greater, therefore, is the relief when the driver literally sees light at the end of the tunnel. Nevertheless, a lot of investment is made these days in the safety of these “tubes”, for example in emergency exits, lighting, ventilation and emergency contact points. However, drivers can also do their bit by driving carefully and ensuring that the passage through the tunnel is a smooth and uneventful one.

Hailstones! Document the damage

Hailstones are most common during the summer months. According to the Hail Atlas for 2024, the frequency and intensity of hailstones has increased in recent years. In June 2023 alone, hail and wind from the storms "Lambert" and "Kay" caused around 350 million euros in damage to vehicles. DEKRA experts provide advice on what to do in the event of hail damage.

Other topics

- Stop or park: The clock is ticking
- Caution on hot days: Sun cream damage car paint
- DEKRA builds battery center: A plus for safety



Cycling in town: Keep cycle and footpaths clear of obstacles.

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DEKRA Road Safety Report 2024

“Moving up a gear”

The road infrastructure and its effect on the accident statistics is the focus of the DEKRA Road Safety Report 2024. Jann Fehlauer, Managing Director of DEKRA Automobil GmbH, explains: “Although accidents have a multitude of causes, the design and the condition of the road infrastructure can, nevertheless, negatively impact how accidents come about and their severity.” And there is a great need for action here.

To attain the objective set out by the World Health Organization and the EU, the number of victims on the road needs to be halved by 2030, and it is about time to “move up a gear”, stressed the European Court of Auditors in March 2024. More needed to be invested in the design and maintenance of the road network, especially in the sections displaying the greatest incidence of accident and the greatest accident prevention potential.

As well-maintained roads reduce the risk of accident and error-friendly roads lessen the consequences of accidents, DEKRA experts are calling for the addition of a third lane marking between the two traffic flows on accident-prone stretches so as to ensure safe overtaking. No overtaking signs should be increasingly deployed on dangerous road sections.

The side of the road also has potential for improvement. Traffic lights and lamp posts, road signs and indicator posts may well be essential for traffic flow, but at the same time they constitute dangerous obstacles: A motorcyclist falling from his bike can suffer life-threatening injuries when colliding with the fixed posts of curve delineators.

Rigid bollards also represent risks for cyclists. A recent DEKRA crash test demonstrated that flexible elements of a soft structure can minimize injury. Cycle lanes and footpaths must be kept as obstacle free as possible.

In the report, Antonio Avenoso, Managing Director of the European Road Safety Council also calls for urban authorities and municipalities to be granted more freedom in the wider application of 30 km/h speed limits.

The DEKRA Road Safety Report 2024 “Traffic Environment for People” is available for download on www.dekra-roadsafety.com. The site also contains more information on, for example the use of moving images and interactive graphics. (DEKRA Info)



Clearway sign: parking for up to three minutes is allowed

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When is stopping, parking?

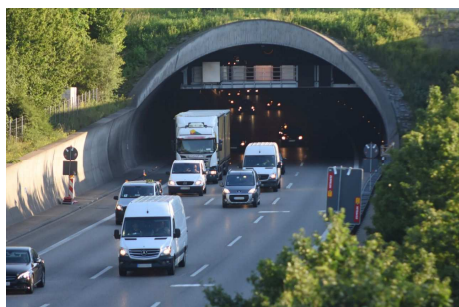
The clock keeps running

Stopping briefly in a no-parking area, for example at the bus stop, in front of the baker's or at the kiosk – surely that is still allowed? Whether the driver is risking being issued a parking fine solely depends on the circumstances. Or, as DEKRA experts point out, it's more about the small difference between stopping and parking. The road traffic regulations are crystal clear on the matter and state "Anybody leaving the vehicle or stopping for longer than three minutes is parking."

This means then that you are already in the process of parking when you stop longer than three minutes at a bus stop to say farewell to a passenger; the time includes being issued a ticket. But also someone who stops their vehicle and disappears into the bakery for a moment is considered to be parking, if they no longer have their eyes on their vehicle. This even applies if the three minutes have not yet expired. The reason given is that in this case you have left the vehicle and cannot leave at any time. The three-minute rule also applies if you stop at a parking meter. If you stay longer than that without getting a ticket, you could get in trouble

The law is different again if there is a "keep clear" sign in front of the bakery (a circle with a single red crossbar on a blue background). In this case, you are allowed to stop for up to three minutes to allow passengers to get in or out of the vehicle, or to load or unload. If, for example, a person in need of assistance needs to be escorted to the front door, a slightly longer stop is allowed. In contrast, a "No Parking" sign does not allow any stopping. Exceptions are made when traffic conditions dictate, or by order of the police.

For safety reasons, stopping is also strictly forbidden at certain points where there is an acute risk of accident, such as, for example, on rises or on sharp bends as well as at lane mergers. Stopping is also not permitted at level crossings, in front of and in fire service entrances as well as on interstate and highways. For some time now there has been a ban on parking for cycle paths that are separated from the road by an unbroken line. (DEKRA Info)



*Passage through a road tunnel:
concentration a must*

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Safely through the tunnel

Go with the flow

Entering a road tunnel causes many a driver trepidation; some even feel constricted and vulnerable. All the greater, therefore, is the relief when the driver literally sees light at the end of the tunnel. Nevertheless, a lot of investment is made these days in the safety of these “tubes”, for example in emergency exits, lighting, ventilation and emergency contact points. However, drivers can also do their bit by driving carefully and ensuring that the passage through the tunnel is a smooth and uneventful one. DEKRA experts remind readers of the most important things to look out for.

And this begins right at the entrance into the “tube”. DEKRA accident expert Peter Rucker recommends that “fuel tank or battery should be sufficiently full and it is also important to tune the radio into the traffic news, dip headlights (not daytime lights) and remove sunglasses.” Furthermore, maintain sufficient distance to the vehicle in front and look out for any traffic light systems at the entrance.

The trip through the tunnel requires more concentration from the driver than normal. For safety’s sake the speed restrictions should be observed throughout the passage. “The trip runs the smoothest if all vehicles just go with the flow. Rucker says that “this avoids any unnecessary stress.”

If traffic begins to slow, switch on the warning lights, and pay attention to any announcements or information boards, and keep an emergency service lane clear. Turning around or reversing is strictly forbidden as this can cause accidents. If traffic comes to a standstill, turn off the engine to ensure better air quality.

Should a breakdown occur or even an accident, park the vehicle as far as this is feasible in a parking bay or on the far right of the road if it is no longer possible to reach the end of the tunnel. The emergency call is best made not via the smartphone, but at one of the designated emergency telephone stations. This means that the control center will be informed of your exact location. In the event of fire or smoke in the tunnel use an emergency exit to get to safety and trigger the fire alarm. The key to the vehicle should, in this eventuality, be left in the vehicle for the rescue services. (DEKRA Info)



*Hailstone expertise:
The course of the line on the paint
shows size and depth of the
hailstone dent*

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Hailstones! What now?

Document damage

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Who pays? Anyone unlucky enough to be unable to get their vehicle to safety in the face of an oncoming hailstorm front will be wondering if they are covered for hail damage. Hail damage is fully covered if the vehicle has partial or comprehensive insurance. If the vehicle has only liability insurance, the owner will be responsible for all damages.

Photograph everything? It is advisable to photograph the damage sustained by the vehicle from several angles immediately after the hailstorm. Close-ups of the damaged areas as well as of the hailstones are also recommended. Moreover, the insurance company would need to know the date, time of day and location of the hailstorm, so note this down, too.

Damage reduced? If the hailstorm breaks a window and water penetrates, owners are obliged as part of their duty to minimize damage (paragraph 254 Civil Code) to keep the damage as minimal as possible, e.g. by covering the damaged window.

Damage reported? The damage should then be directly reported to the insurer. In many cases, this can be done online form provided by the company. As a rule, the insurer will contact an assessor to determine the extent of the damage and to stipulate the repair method.

Repair or cash? As soon as the assessment has been made and the insurer gives the go-ahead, the vehicle can be repaired. Alternatively, the owner can have the damages paid out. Anybody who does not wait for the insurer to give its assent and has the vehicle repaired beforehand risks paying for the repair costs out of their own pocket. (DEKRA Info)



Caution on hot days: Keep sun cream away from the car

Caution on hot days

Sun cream damages car paint

DEKRA paint experts remind readers that car paint and sun cream are not exactly the best of friends. If sun cream accidentally comes into contact with the paint on hot days, say when loading the roof box, it should be wiped away immediately with a cloth. This is because high temperatures make car paint sensitive to biological and chemical substances. A car parked in the blistering sun coming into contact with sun protection cream can cause dull, light stains on the paint. In some circumstances the paint can even swell and blister says the expert. This type of damage is frequently no longer removable by polishing, but needs to be ground and newly coated. The combination of heat and car paint also makes it prone to hair gel, bird droppings, and biodiesel or wax crayons. Especially affected are dark metallic paint finishes as they reflect the sun less and heat up quicker than light paint. The experts also recommend following the instructions of the sun cream manufacturers. (DEKRA Info)



*Foundation stone laid in Lausitz:
DEKRA builds ultramodern battery
test center*

DEKRA builds battery test center

A plus for safety

DEKRA, the technical services organization, is erecting an ultramodern test center for battery systems of electric vehicles and high voltage storage units in Klettwitz in Brandenburg. The company is investing millions in the new laboratory and is creating at the site of its Automobile Test Center at the Lausitzring 40 new, quality jobs. The new laboratory is to start work mid-2025 and will offer testing of all types of batteries under one roof. It is also configured to handle mechanical investigations, performance and environmental tests as well as misuse testing. The tests accompany development or form part of homologation, certification or quality assurance processes. High safety standards apply to all the test procedures. (DEKRA Info)

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