

## Content

### Senior driving: Use it or lose it.

There's a lot of truth in the saying "practice makes perfect". Additionally, it also prevents important abilities from atrophying. Traffic psychologist Thomas Wagner of DEKRA points out that older drivers would be well advised to take this into account when driving. "The more seldom you take to the wheel, the quicker you lose your driving skills, meaning that you will then find it increasingly difficult to deal with complex situations on the road."

### Advent: More home fires and carbon monoxide poisoning

During the run-up to Christmas and the cold winter months, the risk of home fires and the incidence of carbon monoxide poisoning cases increases in Germany. DEKRA experts set out a few important points that need to be considered to ensure that readers can end the year on an harmonious note.

### Ultra-dangerous weather conditions: A low-lying sun

It's not just slippery roads that motorists need to be aware of in the winter months. DEKRA accident experts warn readers that the dazzle from a low-lying sun can even prove twice as dangerous as fog, strong lateral wind, heavy rain and storms.

### Other topics

- Green inspection sticker: Off to the periodic inspection before 2024 ends
- Slippery roads: Don't blindly rely on ESP and other electronics
- Pedelec batteries in winter: Charge at room temperature



*At an advanced age: Don't be left  
behind*

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

### Elderly at the wheel of a vehicle

#### **Use it or lose it**

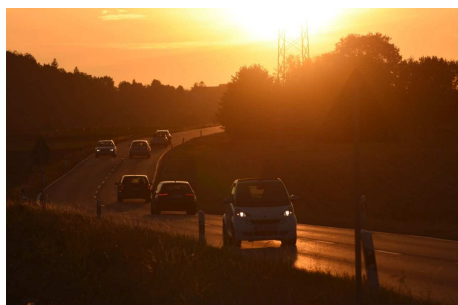
There's a lot of truth in the saying "practice makes perfect". Additionally, it also prevents important abilities from atrophying. Traffic psychologist Thomas Wagner at DEKRA points out that elderly drivers would be well advised to bear this in mind when, entering their twilight years, they continue to enjoy the comfort of being chauffeured by their partner to the shops, doctor's or on holiday. "The more seldom you get behind the wheel of a car, the quicker you will lose your driving skills and thus find it increasingly difficult to deal with complex situations on the road."

Although the opposite can also be encountered, many older generations of elderly couples have fallen into the traditional division of labor or roles – the man drives, the woman is driven. There may well be good reasons for this division of labor, but the passenger runs the risk of becoming too habituated to this state of affairs and increasingly seldom takes to the wheel of a car themselves. This means, however, that they lose important abilities and routines, become less confident and can easily feel overwhelmed - indeed, even lose the desire to take to the wheel of a car at all.

This can become a problem if the driving partner suddenly falls ill or dies. "Any elderly person that hasn't driven a car for a prolonged period frequently finds it difficult to take to the wheel again. This is why it is important not to lose touch with the art of driving," says Wagner. Confidence will return if you drive regularly. It's just like sport: use it, or lose it."

It is evident that only those people who regularly are out and about on the road can maintain the fine tuning necessary, for example, reversing, parking in moving traffic, squeezing into a tight parking space in multistory car parks or moving off on an incline. In addition, anybody who spends any length of time merely as a passenger will be fighting with the controls: What do the symbols on the light switch mean? How does the air conditioning work? Where is the reverse gear?

Wagner recommends anybody who has taken a prolonged break from driving, should begin as gently as possible. "Start by restricting yourself to known routes, stretches with low traffic density and drive during daylight hours. This will make it easier to build up confidence and re-establish a routine at the wheel of the car," says Wagner. One possibility would also be to book a few lessons at a driving school to brush up on rusty skills. (DEKRA Info)



*Sun dazzle: Risk of accident underestimated*

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

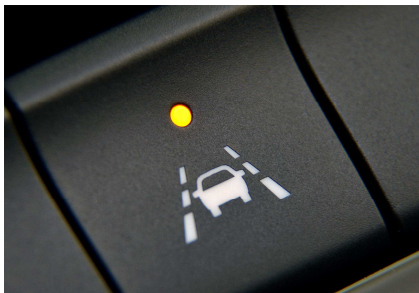
### Ultra-dangerous weather **A low-lying sun**

It's not just slippery roads that motorists must be aware of in the winter months. DEKRA accident experts warn readers that the dazzle from a low-lying sun can even prove twice as dangerous as fog, strong lateral wind, heavy rain and storms. According to the German Federal Statistical Office, in 2023 glare caused 2,529 accidents in which 3,274 people were injured. Of these, 31 were fatal and 529 were seriously injured. That is almost twice as many accidents as for other adverse weather conditions.

"The dangerous thing about dazzle is that it frequently occurs unexpectedly. Irrespective of whether I'm exiting a tunnel or an underground car park, or driving over a hill or around a bend: if I suddenly look into dazzling sunlight, I won't be able to see very much in that instant," explains Danijel Cakeljic, DEKRA light expert. "Eyes must adjust to the new light conditions and that can take one or several seconds. However, during this period the driver is largely driving blind."

At 50 km/h, for example, a vehicle will travel about 28 meters in two seconds. Dazzled drivers find it hard to make out contrasts, meaning that objects in their peripheral vision, such as pedestrians or cyclists, are difficult to recognize. Moreover, the eye finds it difficult to focus when looking to the side under such conditions.

To reduce the risk of accident by sun dazzle, the accident expert recommends driving particularly proactively on sunny days, paying special attention in the morning and afternoon hours when the sun is low in the sky. "Expect a sun dazzle situation, i.e. reduce speed and increase distance. Abrupt braking is to be avoided so as not to endanger vehicles behind. It is also helpful to adjust the sun screen to a suitable position and to keep sunglasses handy. In an extreme dazzle situation, the only thing to do is to move forward carefully. (DEKRA Info)



*Electronic safety systems: They  
can't compensate for every driving  
error*

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

### On slippery roads

## **Don't blindly rely on ESP and other electronics**

DEKRA accident researchers warn readers that they should not blindly rely on the car's safety systems on slippery roads. Although electronic assist systems such as skid protection ESP, ABS or emergency brake assist can prevent the worst in many situations, they can't compensate for every driving error," warns accident analyst Thomas Gut. Drive carefully when slippery roads are expected, change down a gear and be on your guard on sections of road where there is a risk of black ice."

In the cold winter months, it is not only the temperature that drops, but also frequently the friction coefficient of road surfaces. A car travelling a 50 km/h on a dry road requires about 28 meters to come to a halt; on a wet road this figure increases to about 33 meters and on slippery snow the distance extends to 78 meters and on black ice to 110 meters. "The only way to keep a grip is to strictly match driving style to the grip conditions on the road, driver slower and adjust safety distances accordingly," explains Gut. "Only then is the safety buffer sufficient if, for example, a child runs across the road or an obstacle forces the car to brake."

The anti-skid protection system ESP helps to stabilize the vehicle in such situations. ABS, on the other hand, helps to keep the vehicle in lane and to shorten the braking path. However, this does require substantial pressure on the brake pedal. In order for these systems to function effectively, good contact is required between the vehicle and the road. This is why intact shock absorbers are a must. "If the safety distance is too short, the safety systems are unable to compensate, it is the same for negotiating a bend at high speed. They cannot override the limitations of physics," says the accident expert. "These systems are no replacement for sensitive application of the accelerator and proactive driving."

To drive safely on slippery roads, you need the right tires. Germany has a situational winter tire requirement. This stipulates that motor vehicles must be equipped with winter tires in conditions such as black ice, slippery snow, slush, ice or frost. Winter tires are marked with the "mountain and snowflake" symbol. A tread depth of four millimeters is advisable for good grip; a figure that also permits fine-free driving on winter roads in Austria. (DEKRA Info)



*Never leave lit wax candles  
unsupervised.*

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

### During the Christmas season

## More home fires and carbon monoxide poisoning

DEKRA, the technical services organization, reminds readers that anybody wishing to really enjoy the Advent period, must not lose sight of safety within their own four walls. This is because fires in German homes regularly increase towards the end of the year. The number of carbon monoxide poisoning also rises during the winter months. Experts cite a few critical points that need to be observed so as to ensure a harmonious end to the year.

**Risk of fire.** An overly careless attitude to burning wax candles on Advent wreaths, decorations and Christmas trees can easily lead to a home fire. Burning candles are therefore never to be left unsupervised and never left alone with children or pets, even for a short period of time. Keep them at a sufficient distance from flammable objects both to the side and above; these include things like curtains, blankets or branches. Use good quality candles, for example those bearing a RAL quality seal, that do not leak out.

**Electrocution.** The risk of fire with electric light chains is low, but kinks, worn cables and loose connections can be a common source of short circuits, smoldering and electrocution. Defective chains should therefore be decommissioned. DEKRA warns against installing light chains designed for indoor use outside, as again this risks short-circuiting and electrocution.

**Caution when winter barbecuing.** Charcoal or gas barbecues as well as gas-powered heaters or mushroom patio heaters should under no circumstances be operated indoors or in poorly ventilated areas, such as garages. Apart from the risk of fire, it can easily lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Even low concentrations of the odorless gas can lead to life-threatening poisoning and death.

**Be prepared.** If, despite all your precautions, something goes wrong, you need to know what to do. The only way to put out a fire in the first few seconds is with a fire extinguisher or a bucket of water. As soon as the smoke becomes too dense, leave the home as quickly as possible and close the doors as you go. Dial 112. This number should also be contacted for life-threatening medical emergencies. (DEKRA Info)





*E-bike batteries: First correct temperature, then charge.*

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

### Pedelec batteries in winter **Charge at room temperature**

Any cyclist taking to their Pedelec in winter must expect the battery to have a lower range. “The battery stores less energy in the cold,” says DEKRA bicycle expert Jochen Hof. “It is important to charge it at room temperature and only fit it shortly before starting off on your e-bike. That way you get the best out of the battery at low temperatures. The battery releases some of its own heat during the ride. A neoprene sheath provides it with additional protection against the cold airflow. On lengthy journeys on cold days, it might be advisable to pack a recharger. Hof reminds readers that the battery is not to be charged in a cold state, but only after it has been warmed up to about room temperature. He advises against leaving the battery on the bike outside overnight during the cold winter months. Principally, extreme temperatures, both high and low, mean stress for the device, which in the end comes at the cost of service life. (DEKRA Info)



*All change! Vehicles with orange stickers are due for inspection in 2025*

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

### Green inspection sticker means inspection in 2024 **The clock is ticking**

DEKRA experts remind motorists that if your rear number plate sports a green periodic inspection sticker, this means that your vehicle is due for inspection before the end of 2024. The green inspection stickers of 2024 are set to lose their validity at the end of the year. Vehicles with orange inspection stickers come up for inspection in 2025. The mandatory periodic inspection requires the registration certificate Part I (vehicle certificate). The inspection also includes an exhaust emissions test. If this was already carried out at a garage, for example during another inspection, corresponding proof of this is to be submitted. Subsequent changes made to the vehicle also require the respective test certificate. Appointments can be booked online via the DEKRA website or by scanning the QR Code on the periodic inspection test report. If the due date has been exceeded by more than two months, the legislator may require a more thorough periodic inspection to be carried out. (DEKRA Info)