

September 2009/09

www.dekra.de

The internet press service for journalists provides information, illustrations and topics of interest concerning DEKRA and its subsidiaries.

Press Office
Publisher:
DEKRA e.V.
Press and Public Relations Office
Handwerkstraße 15
D-70565 Stuttgart

Contents:

The purchase of used cars: minor details betray accident-damaged cars

A practical test carried out by DEKRA has demonstrated that time and again purchasers of a used car come across a tuned-up dazzler. Although the mystery seller of a badly repaired WW Golf offered only a limited road test or made excuses why such a drive was not possible, almost everyone seriously interested in making a purchase went ahead and paid an excessive price for the vehicle.

Questionnaire: men are in reverse gear

One of the last male bastions has fallen: Germans no longer regard men as the better car-drivers. A nation-wide questionnaire carried out by the testing organisation DEKRA reported only 25% of the men and women questioned are convinced that men are better drivers than women.

Older employees better at adopting innovations: Oldies but Goodies

“German service organisations make too little use of the potential of their older employees to bring about innovative development,” said DEKRA Chief Dr Klaus Schmidt when presenting the DEKRA Innovation Barometer for 2009. Only 38% of organisations appoint employees on the basis of their long years of experience. When this happens such companies with a greater number of old employees than young ones introduce significantly more innovations to the market place.

Other themes

Danger at motorway construction sites / Real Estate: purchase prices are often too high / Cleaning and tune up of oil tanks before the heating season starts / Fines payable if Energy Certificates are incorrect / Drivers of goods vehicles must provide evidence of their skills / A new tyre assessment laboratory in Munich.

Date Stuttgart, September 2009
Contact Tilman Vögele-Ebering
Tel. direct (+49 711) 78 61-21 22
Fax direct (+49 711) 78 61-27 00
Email tilman.voegele-ebering@dekra.com
Internet www.dekra.de

Reproduction free of charge.
Please mention DEKRA and send reference copy.

How to recognise a 'dazzler' when buying a second-hand car.

Giveaway details of cars that have been involved in an accident

The risks associated with buying a used car are well known but time and again car buyers are taken in by a dazzler - this is the outcome of a practical test conducted by DEKRA. It is all about cars which have been involved in an accident and which have been "pimped up" for resale using all the tricks of the trade, including making them as attractive as possible. Although the mystery seller with the badly repaired WW Golf offered only a restricted test drive or made excuses for not even going that far (already deregistered) most seriously interested purchasers went ahead with the purchase and paid an excessive price.

"It borders on driver neglect to buy a used car without an adequate road test and without having it checked by a neutral expert," warns Norbert Todt, a DEKRA expert in Duisburg. He warns that a non-professional repair of accident damage has only a negative effect upon the value of the vehicle and one certainly cannot be sure that such a vehicle is safe to use in traffic – to say nothing of crash hazards in the event of a further accident. The current high average age of the cars on German roads means that there is a greater risk of being palmed off with an accident-damaged car. Indeed, even a relatively new used car can have had quite an exciting past".

For those interested in making a purchase the message therefore is: take a very careful look first. Each accident leaves telltale marks which reveal a pimped-up car. Rolf Dehne, a bodywork expert at the Vehicle Technology Institute in Lohfelden, knows what to look for: uneven gaps between the hood, wings and body parts, kinks in the roof or a remarkably small clearance between a tyre and the wheel-arch. Caution is also necessary if parts of the body have been re-sprayed so experts use a special instrument to check such areas for paint thickness. If a vehicle pulls to one side during a test drive the wheel suspension is probably faulty so leave well alone! Adhesive tape residues, paint runs or obvious paint overlap areas point to an accident repair.

DEKRA advises that a seller is obliged to point out even small area of panel damage – the only exceptions are minor faults such as very small paint defects. If false information is given the buyer is entitled to cancel the purchase contract and return the vehicle. Always, therefore, ask about earlier damage before signing the contract and get the answer in writing. A check by an independent expert, e.g. DEKRA, is always recommended and car buyers thereby often save themselves a good deal of trouble and a lot of money. (DEKRA Info)

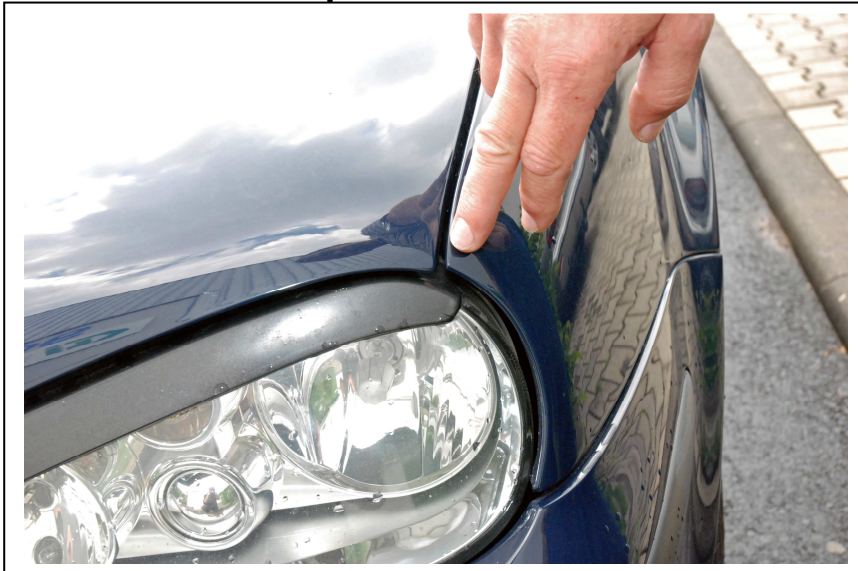


Photo:
DEKRA

Reproduction free of
charge
Please send copy
and mention DEKRA

Editorial offices
please note: The
image can be
requested from the
DEKRA Press
Office.
Tel. 0711/7861-2122

Small things betray cars involved in accidents; if the hood, wings or body parts are not flush with one another this indicates a badly repaired crash car.

DEKRA Questionnaire: who drives best?

Questionnaire: men are in reverse gear

One of the last male bastions has fallen: Germans no longer regard men as the better car drivers. A nation-wide questionnaire carried out by the testing organisation DEKRA reported that only 25% of those questioned (including men and women) are convinced that men are better drivers than women. Five years ago every second person held this view. Today only 31% of men consider themselves superior drivers. So the strong gender finds itself going backwards even in its own domain, i.e. who copes best with difficult situations? Today, 54% of those asked thought men did best at the wheel in a crisis but five years ago the figure was 80%.

One result of the DEKRA Questionnaire may be a comfort to the women at the wheel who have been so little appreciated for a long time. In the opinion of 63 % of the participants women behave more considerately in traffic than men. Even 61% of the men are of this opinion (women – 69%). In addition it seems that with increasing experience of life men become more self-critical – the younger the person asked, the more is that party convinced that men are the better drivers. Up to the age of 29 the proportion is 35% but this drops to only 17% for the 50 - 59 age group. (DEKRA Info)

DEKRA Innovations Report: Personnel Managers underestimate older employees

Oldies but Goodies

“The German service companies make too little use of their older employees where encouraging innovation is concerned”, said DEKRA-Chief Dr Klaus Schmidt when presenting the DEKRA Innovations Barometer for 2009. Only 38% of the concerns approached deliberately appoint long-service employees because of their experience. If more did so they could profit from the practice emphasised Dr Schmidt. Where a company has more employees aged over 50 than younger ones under 35 it successfully brings considerably more innovative products to the market. “Oldies but Goodies – this is certainly true where service innovations are concerned“, confirmed Professor Dr Ronald Gleich of the European Business School. The study identifies age-relevant training sessions and the exchange of knowledge between the young and the old as important prerequisites. If both are provided, the rate of successful innovation is doubled. Readiness to continue life-long learning and to accept new practices is also important whereas in terms of further training, the ability to solve problems is crucial. The competence gaps in Germany will remain unfilled if we do not include the more able old hands in the learning- and innovation process, claimed Dr Schmidt. If not, then the shortage of technical skills will become more acute as competition becomes more intense. . (DEKRA Info)

Danger at construction sites

Passing through the eye of a needle

Every day, hundreds of construction sites slow the flow of traffic on the motorways – and just where the pace slows down special dangers arise. This is a warning given by DEKRA’s accident experts. “The narrowed carriageways at construction sites and the danger of traffic jams make construction sites critical areas with an increased level of accident danger,” warns Markus Egelhaaf of DEKRA’s Accident Research operation. The rule for drivers here should be ‘Slow down well ahead of a construction site, do not exceed the maximal permitted speed and concentrate on driving along the narrowed lanes.’ There were 1,011 accidents in such situations, involving 24 deaths and 1,560 injuries. The cross over point to the opposite lane direction can be particularly dangerous. Wave-like road surfaces increase the risk of skidding, especially at speed and when the surface is wet, warn the experts. So do not drive too quickly, particularly if the lane width is sometimes reduced to 2.5 metres. “If in doubt do not overtake and keep in the inner lane,” advises Egelhaaf.

The purchase of real estate

Often far too high a price is paid

At crisis periods, real estate is one of the more consistent forms of asset investment. However, DEKRA Real Estate (REE) experts warn that this only applies if the purchase price makes sense. Particularly in the current economic crisis no potential purchaser should dispense with the services of a neutral expert valuation.

“Above all others, private individuals frequently pay too much for a property because they do not assess the price realistically,” reports Ulrich Volk a REE expert in Saarbrücken. Often they fall in love with a property and stump up more cash than the market value. In the professional area, investors often overestimate the attainable rent level and thereby get the financing wrong. Beyond that, many interested parties underestimate the cost of repairs and renovation. Above all else, the frequent problems connected with roofs, heating and bathrooms cost money. Yet again purchasers often overlook important features of the surrounding area or worrying cracks in the plot which reduce the value of the property. (DEKRA Info)

Recondition oil tanks before the cold weather arrives

Dangers associated with inadequate servicing

House owners and administrators should have their oil-heating systems serviced and put in good condition before the heating period commences. This is the advice of the DEKRA experts. In particular, the increasing age of oil tanks heightens the risk of an accident that involves environmental dangers and usually proves very expensive. Under current legislation, basically all users, including private ones, are obliged to check oil-fired installation frequently for externally visible damage and have them serviced regularly. Urgent action is necessary if the installation shows signs of moist patches or drops/puddles of oil“, warns Jürgen Zimmer, Manager of Tank Inspection at DEKRA. “Even a strong smell of oil often indicates a leak. A plastic tank which is deformed, not standing straight or exhibiting cracks warns of danger ahead as do rust patches on a steel tank.” The most frequent faults are incorrect level- or defective leak indicators and missing suction check valves which prevent overfilling or undesired emptying. Other common problems are damage to the collection chamber or collecting tray such as cracks, blisters and spalling. As a rule, oil tanks should be examined once a year by a qualified person and given a full check by an expert at regular intervals. (DEKRA Info)

In case of doubt, DEKRA recommends that property owners obtain a need-oriented Energy certificate. This is because in the case of the simpler consumption-oriented certificate there is a degree of risk that inaccurate information about the level of

September 2009/09

consumption could lead to false results. The new Energy Saving Ordinance (EnEV) becomes effective on 1st October 2009 and this provides for the imposition of fines of up to 15,000 euros for an Energy Certificate which is inaccurate or incomplete. Particularly in the case of non-residential buildings, an increased level of risk is associated with a consumption-oriented Energy Certificate. For example, the consumption of electricity over the past 3 years is required in addition to information about energy used for heating. In the case of larger establishments with many tenants this can lead to considerable variations. If it is necessary to check inaccurate values this leads to increased labour costs and the fee for the first acceptable consumption-oriented certificate can quickly rise as a consequence. (DEKRA Info)

September 2009: drivers of goods vehicles must provide evidence of their skills

From September 10th 2009 drivers of goods vehicles are legally obliged to provide authoritative evidence of their specific trade skills and capabilities. For many years it has been sufficient to produce a relevant driving licence to be entitled to drive a bus or a goods vehicle as a trade occupation advises DEKRA. In future, however, drivers are obliged to provide evidence of having passed a Chamber of Commerce examination or having completed a training course, e.g. as a professional driver or skilled transport employee. As far as goods traffic is concerned, after September 2009 new entrants must have evidence of a 'basic qualification'. New entrants older than 21 have the opportunity of acquiring an 'accelerated basic qualification'. Detailed information on this subject is available from www.dekra-berufskraftfahrer.eu (DEKRA Info)

A new tyre laboratory in Munich

By establishing a new Tyre Assessment Laboratory within the Stahlgruber Association in Munich DEKRA has extended its position as the leading institution concerned with the assessment of tyres in Germany. "In our new laboratory we enjoy still better conditions for the analysis of tyres and the issue of tyre assessments," explained Dipl.-Ing. Franz Nowakowski, Tyre Assessor for DEKRA Automobil GmbH. The laboratory is equipped with a modern raster electron microscope and X-ray equipment for the analysis of tyres. Furthermore, we have access to a shearographic unit with which it is possible to examine tyres non-destructively for invisible internal damage or manufacturing faults. The examination of vehicle tyres for deficiencies likely to cause an accident forms one of the most important tasks carried out by the laboratory. (DEKRA Info)