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“Immune test” for companies: supply chain disruptions

Companies will have to get used to facing crises on a significantly more frequent basis than in the past – whether this be pandemics, natural catastrophes or stock market crashes. A 2020 study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute forecasts that a company will have to expect its own supply chain to break down or be significantly disrupted an average of four weeks about every 3.7 years. The costs of such fallouts are estimated at between 40 and 100 percent of annual profits.

Watch out, children! – “Would you still be able to stop in an emergency?”

Sidewalks, horse stables or playgrounds – these days the motorist will encounter with increasing frequency private signs and notice boards at the roadside warning of children at play. Even if some of these aren't official road signs, drivers are strongly recommended to heed their advice and drive more carefully and attentively at such points than otherwise. The reason for this is that children, and for understandable reasons, enjoy especial protection on the road.

Other topics:

DEKRA tips: How to get your car fit for winter

Network of laboratories expands plastics expertise

All-season tires – have them checked once a year

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Hydroplaning: danger of sliding in rainy weather

Hydroplaning – the underestimated danger

“Water skiing” begins at 80 km/h

DEKRA accident analysts warn readers that all too frequently a short, sudden shower of rain is all that is needed to turn a road into a dangerous slide. If the water does not run away quickly from the road surface, motorists risk a slippery ride of a unique kind: hydroplaning.

Hydroplaning occurs when the tread of the front wheels is no longer able to displace the water fast enough, resulting in a wedge of water building up between the wheels and the road surface. This means that the vehicle can no longer be steered.

“Naturally, manufacturers also have their development departments constantly focused on optimizing the performance of their tires in the wet, but physics clearly has its limits. This is why we should not underestimate the dangers of hydroplaning at the wheel of a car,” says DEKRA tire expert Christian Koch. “If there is water on the road, the golden rule continues to apply: take your foot off the gas and keep the steering wheel straight.”

“How quickly a tire will start to slide on a wet road surface greatly depends on the condition of the road, the thickness of the water film, but also the tires. The more worn down the tread, the more difficult it is for the tire to push the water away. However, worn shock absorbers can also promote hydroplaning,” explains the expert. In this situation the tires do not lie completely flat on the road surface, which means that wedges of water can build up more quickly under the wheel. For tires with more than three millimeters of tread, the rule of thumb applies that “you are basically water skiing from 80 km/h onwards”. If the tires are close to the statutory minimum of 1.6 millimeters, your “skiing” adventure can already set in at significantly lower speeds.

“Hydroplaning can first and foremost be avoided by driving at a suitable speed. And this means that when the road surface is covered by an unbroken film of water and not only when the driver can feel a lower steering resistance,” stresses Koch. It is also more than advisable to take speed limits and warning signs seriously. Especial caution is necessary on roads with ruts or depressions where puddles can form. Anyone who gets caught in a hydroplaning trap despite these precautions should react prudently. Reduce your speed quickly, disengage the clutch and, whatever you do, keep the steering wheel pointing straight ahead. If you don’t, the vehicle can break away when the wheels begin to grip again.

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Remaining effective in emergency situations

“Immune test” for companies

Supply chain disrupted on average every 3.7 years

Companies will have to get used to facing crises on a significantly more frequent basis than up to now – whether this be pandemics, natural catastrophes or stock market crashes. A study by McKinsey Global Institute conducted in 2020 forecasts that a company will have to expect its own supply chain to break down or be significantly disrupted an average of four weeks about every 3.7 years. The costs of such fallouts are estimated at between 40 and 100 percent of annual profits.

According to the DEKRA Occupational Safety Report 2021, no company is immune to such critical events. This means that it is a fundamental task of a company to strengthen its own ability to face new potential risks. Companies can check how resilient their individual corporate immune system is by taking the three-stage Business Resilience Impact Assessment (BRIA).

Level 1 Assessment offers a free-of-charge, easy-to-implement self-check that estimates the operating risks and thus the survivability of the company. Its aim is to stabilize the company even after it suffers an initial shockwave and to steer it through the choppy waters thereafter. If desired, it can be supplemented by a more thorough evaluation carried out by experts as well as an audit, consultancy and training.

According to the report, practice has shown that many companies readily recognize the necessity to introduce a Business Continuity Management System. And many companies already have IT security or occupational safety initiatives in place. However, rapidly increasing process diversity means that companies are constantly at risk of losing sight of what is important: a truly effective risk management system.

DEKRA's solution is suitable for all manufacturers, suppliers and service providers, irrespective of whether their production and supply networks are regional or global. It is not only the case that branches operating worldwide such as information technology, textiles, light engineering or vehicle technology are vulnerable to such comprehensive risks. Companies with regional supply networks can also suffer disruption because they are not as flexible in their reaction time. (More information on [Business Resilience Impact Assessment \(BRIA\) | DEKRA](#))

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Functioning lights in winter is a must

DEKRA tips:

Getting the car fit for winter

People who want to get safely through the winter need a vehicle capable of facing the season's rigors. DEKRA experts inform readers what motorists should take into consideration when preparing for the winter months, so as to avoid any unpleasant surprises on winter roads.

Weak point Number 1 in the cold months is the car battery, which is responsible for thousands of breakdowns every winter. Even new batteries have only half as much capacity at minus 20 as under normal conditions. And older ones frequently give up the ghost after the first night's frost. As a result, it is best to have batteries checked about every four years to see if they are still winter fit.

"All-round functioning and correctly set lights are a must in the darker months. "Dazzle", "missing lights" and unlit cars are an annoying cause of unnecessary irritation on the road," says DEKRA accident analyst Stephan Schlosser. A thorough clean of the windshield, both inside and out, improves vision and prevents unpleasant reflections from oncoming lights. Safety is vastly improved, especially in poor weather conditions, by having sufficient anti-freeze and streak-free wipers.

For a safe journey on winter roads it is recommended to have winter tires that have at least four millimeters of tread. Only use winter tires marked with the alpine symbol on black ice, packed snow, slush, general ice or frost. Useful winter accessories that will provide sterling service in the winter months are such things as ice scraper, hand brush, antifreeze refill, warm gloves, starter cables, snow chains and a cover for the windshield. Because winter often goes hand in hand with lengthy traffic jams, it would be a good idea to also pack several blankets, drinking water and something to eat for an emergency.

In particular for those vehicles that have not seen the inside of a garage for some time, it is recommended to have a winter check carried out by a specialist. S/he can check the winter-relevant systems like lights, radiator and shield antifreeze, battery, wiper blades, brake and even the winter suitability of the tires and can get the vehicle fit for the cold winter months.

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Foot off the gas: children enjoy especial protection

Watch out, children!

“Could you still stop in an emergency?”

Sidewalks, horse stables or playgrounds – these days the motorist will encounter with increasing frequency private signs and notice boards at the roadside warning of children at play. Even if some of these aren't official road signs, drivers are strongly recommended to heed their advice and drive more carefully and attentively at such points than otherwise. The reason for this is that children, and for understandable reasons, enjoy especial protection on the road. So, if you expect children, reduce your speed and keep an eye on the roadside.

This applies in particular at those spots where there are “children” or “crossing guard” road signs, as well as generally anywhere near schools, playgrounds and sports facilities, and at bus and tram stops and low-speed streets. “Motorists should ask themselves: Am I driving at a speed that allows me to stop in good time in an emergency? For example, should a child either standing or playing at the roadside suddenly run across the road, or enter the road on a bicycle? This is the minimum required by law,” says DEKRA accident researcher Luigi Ancona.

In general, the following rule applies: the younger the children, the more you need to expect surprising reactions and correspondingly drive more slowly. The courts prescribe for such situations a speed of no faster than 20 km/h as appropriate. “All of us at the wheel of a car must not forget that children frequently fail to understand traffic situations, meaning they can't judge the real dangers. Moreover, they are more self-centered and can be easily distracted in groups. Drivers must take that into account,” explains Ancona.

The DEKRA accident expert also reminds readers that school and scheduled busses approaching a stop with engaged warning lights must not be overtaken. If the buses remain stationary at the stop, they can only be passed at a walking pace (5 - 7 km/h) and if sufficient distance is allowed, but, if necessary, the motorist will have to wait. This also applies for oncoming traffic. Ancona says “get ready to brake. You must expect either children or adults to rush cross the road to catch the bus at any time.” DEKRA Info



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Network of laboratories expands plastics expertise

The technical services organization DEKRA is continuing to expand its network of laboratories for chemical analytics and material testing. The acquisition of k-labor GmbH in Bretten near Karlsruhe sees the company expanding its range of testing possibilities, especially for manufacturers of vehicle parts and the medical technology industry. k-labor is an accredited laboratory for material testing and failure analytics whose strengths are to be found in the fields of environmental simulation, mechanical testing and above all in material testing for plastics, elastomers and metals. The laboratory works for well-known manufacturers in the automotive, mechanical engineering and medical technology sector. Guido Kutschera, Executive Vice President of DEKRA Germany: “k-labor augments our network by adding a high-tech laboratory with highly qualified staff, specialist know-how with valuable contacts to research facilities and companies.” DEKRA Info



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Have all-season tires checked once a year

DEKRA tire experts recommend motorists to have their all-season tires checked at least once a year by an expert. “The frequently wet, snowy and icy roads in winter make a lot of demands on a tire’s performance,” says DEKRA tire expert Christian Koch. An inspection by an expert can give peace of mind.” Tire checks carried out by a trade outlet or a garage covers such things as tread depth, anomalies as well as rims; and moreover, the wheels can be balanced if required. In contrast to summer and winter tires, all-season tires are not subject to the annual tire change. Although this is more convenient for the motorist, it does increase the risk that damage or other anomalies – things that a regular check would uncover – go unnoticed and are not picked up on quickly enough. DEKRA Info