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Used car experts at DEKRA recommend that people contemplating the purchase of a used car should exercise extra caution. "Although the durability of vehicles has continued to improve over time, every used car is unique and has its own story," says DEKRA used car expert Ronald Hufnagel. It is not uncommon for the polished paint finish to hide severely worn components and previous damage, which will call for some open wallet surgery. This is why it is advisable to play safe when purchasing a used car

Well prepared for the general inspection: All documents ready at hand?

Every car has to undergo mandatory periodical inspection. The technical services organization DEKRA inspects one in three cars in Germany and recommends that motorists also prepare themselves for the appointment. One way of obtaining the coveted inspection approval sticker with the least amount of time and effort is to have the vehicle checked beforehand.

The colorful world of car purchasing: Gray, black and white the most popular colors

When choosing a color for their vehicle, most Germans tend to favor subdued tones. According to a survey carried out by the German Federal Motor Vehicle Authority, about 76 percent of buyers of all newly registered vehicles in 2020 opted for the colors gray, black or white.

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Independent opinion: More peace of mind for your used car purchase

Reducing the risk involved in purchasing a used car

Peace of mind

The used car experts at DEKRA advise anybody contemplating the purchase of a used car to exercise extreme caution. “Although the durability of vehicles has continued to improve over time, every used car is unique and has its own story,” says DEKRA used car expert Ronald Hufnagel. It is not uncommon for the polished paint finish to hide severely worn components and previous damage, which will call for some open wallet surgery. This is why it is advisable to play safe when purchasing a used car.

It is one thing to buy the vehicle from a private individual and another from a car dealership. Purchasing from a private individual normally means that the vehicle purchase excludes any guarantee. “Bought as seen” can in some circumstances turn out to be a very expensive phrase. In contrast, a dealer is legally obligated to provide a guarantee; something that was significantly improved upon at the beginning of 2022.

If only to keep the level of complaints down, the car trade would thoroughly check the vehicle as standard and, if necessary, conduct repairs and have the inspection sticker renewed. Potential purchasers can have even more peace of mind if the inspection is carried out by an independent expert and the results documented by means of a used car seal or certification. Moreover, many dealerships offer an add-on used car guarantee.

Much of this is also possible when purchasing from a private individual. For example, private individuals can also obtain used car guarantees previously the preserve of the car trade. Potential purchasers can also play safe by having the vehicle inspected beforehand by a neutral expert. The DEKRA Seal, for example, even allows the choice between three different focal points – mechanics, appearance/interior and electronic systems. One important benefit of this is that the resulting independently produced documentation offers a sound basis for negotiation for both parties, especially as the strengths and weaknesses of the vehicle have been clearly set out. It means that the purchaser need not run the risk of “buying a pig in a poke” and the seller can obtain a fair price.

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Leaving your driveway: Enter road traffic carefully

Leaving your driveway

Extreme caution at a premium

Poor visibility, passing pedestrians and through traffic – people leaving their driveway to enter the traffic flow must be extra careful not to cause an accident. The road traffic regulations have stipulated clear rules for this tricky situation. Those leaving the driveway to enter traffic are always to behave so as not to endanger other road users. DEKRA Accident expert Andreas Schäuble reminds readers that in low visibility conditions motorists are even obligated to inch their way towards the exit or to have themselves directed. Moreover, if the intention is to enter traffic, this is to be indicated by the “timely and unambiguous” use of indicator lights.

The same rule also applies in low density traffic areas, when leaving a pedestrian precinct to enter a roadway, or when starting from the side of the road. In all these situations drivers are expected to exercise extreme caution because they are entering the traffic flow. They must not only allow pedestrians to pass on the sidewalks but also cyclists on cycle paths and traffic on the road. The vehicles on the opposite side of the road also have priority.

In the event of an accident the motorist entering traffic is at a minimum partially at fault insofar as the contrary cannot be proven. This can even apply when other road users have behaved contrary to road traffic regulations. Depending on the circumstances, courts have apportioned at least some blame to the cyclist, but the extent of this can vary enormously from case to case. Nevertheless, the motorist must always assume that others may act contrary to the road traffic regulations.

The official statistics record accidents involving entering and exiting driveways in the same category as the ones occurred when turning off the road, turning around and reversing. Inappropriate behavior in these situations is one of the most common causes of accidents involving personal injury. The Federal Office for Statistics recorded over 56,000 cases in 2019 – this was more than for the non-observance of rights of way, failure to maintain correct distance or speeding.

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Preparing for the periodical safety inspection

All necessary documents ready at hand?

Every car has to undergo mandatory periodical safety inspection. The next inspection date is indicated on the inspection sticker attached to the rear number plate. The color indicates the year the next mandatory inspection is due. The number at the top indicates the month. In 2022 all vehicles bearing a brown sticker are due for inspection. Car owners discovering a yellow sticker on their number plate will have to get a move on as this means that the inspection is well overdue.

The technical services organization DEKRA inspects one in three of cars in Germany and recommends that motorists should not turn up unprepared for the appointment. One way of obtaining the coveted inspection approval sticker with the least amount of time and effort is to get the vehicle checked beforehand.

Documents required for the general inspection include the original of the license certificate part I (formerly the vehicle registration documentation). A follow-up inspection also requires the previous general inspection report otherwise a completely new general inspection will be undertaken – at greater expense.

Motor vehicle inspection centers, DEKRA centers for example, can also carry out the **exhaust emissions test**. Frequently the inspection of the engine management and exhaust emission purification system, previously the exhaust emission inspection, can be carried out as part of the garage inspection. In this event, the certification is to be brought along. Please note that the inspection must have taken place not later than two months previously.

Some vehicles have **installed parts** that are not entered in the vehicle certification, for example, a towing hitch or special wheels. The corresponding test certificates also need to be provided in this instance.

A **brief pre-check** also increases the chances of being issued a new inspection sticker at the first attempt. Is the wiper blade defective? Do the tires have at least 1.6 millimeter of tread? Are warning triangle and first-aid kit stowed on board? Does the horn work? What about the lights and headlights on the vehicle? These points are among the most common complaints at the mandatory periodical inspection and can be easily remedied beforehand. And finally, every inspector likes to inspect a clean and tidy vehicle.



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Gray, black, white: Out and about safely in a trend color?

The colorful world of car purchasing

Gray, black and white the top colors

When choosing a color for their vehicle, most Germans tend to favor a subdued tone. According to a survey carried out by the German Federal Motor Vehicle Authority, in 2020 about 76 percent of buyers of all newly registered vehicles chose the colors gray, black or white. The color gray has a share of 30.5 percent and is the undisputed favorite followed by black (24.1 percent) and white (21.3 percent).

Whereas gray and white have slightly increased in popularity in the past few years, black has been a preferred color for a good decade. Of the more vibrant colors, blue (10.6 percent) and red (6.7 percent) head the field. Their popularity has remained largely constant for a few years now. Black is the favorite color for premium segment brands like Audi, BMW, Jaguar, Lexus, Land Rover, Mercedes and Volvo, but also for the Smart. Gray is also a favorite on these manufacturers' vehicles. The color white is a firm favorite for the brands Mitsubishi, Tesla; red for Alfa Romeo and blue for Dacia.

The choice of car color is subject to fashion trends and is influenced greatly by aesthetic considerations. There is also nothing to be said against them from a safety aspect. In poor visibility, such as, for example, at night, twilight, fog, rain or snowfall, light conditions play a more dominant role in how well and early a vehicle is perceived by other road users. "The car color in itself is of minor importance," explains DEKRA Accident Researcher Luigi Ancona.

"At most the car color might have influenced the occurrence of a critical situation or an accident in a few isolated situations with low color contrasts, because a vehicle had been difficult to pick out. For example, if a camouflage green vehicle is parked in front of a field of corn." Drivers and their driving behavior are far more important than the color of the car. "The greatest safety advantage is a careful and safety-focused driving style," says Ancona. This also means switching on lights as soon as the light conditions begin to worsen and using daytime running lights.

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DEKRA accident experts remind readers that specific yield rules apply on the roundabout. For example, pedestrians crossing at a roundabout have priority over exiting vehicles. The reason for this is that the road traffic regulations deem a vehicle leaving the roundabout as performing a turning off maneuver. If a cycle path runs around the roundabout, crossing cyclists also have priority – just like the vehicles in the roundabout. However, this does not apply when the cycle path entrance to the roundabout displays a “Yield” sign (German road sign no. 205). Pedestrians should know that they must stay on the pedestrian sidewalk on the roundabout and that it is not permitted to cross the roundabout diagonally. Moreover, the special indicating rules in the roundabout are to be observed. Drivers must employ indicator lights to show that they intend to leave the roundabout but not use them to enter the roundabout. DEKRA Info



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Water damage: Surprisingly high percentage of product faults

Almost every other case of water damage is caused by the faulty fitting of water pipes in buildings. Surprisingly high was the percentage of product faults (27 percent), which was the second most common cause. These are the findings of a DEKRA laboratory examination of 200 cases of water damage involving heating, cooling, drinking water and waste pipes over the last five years. In 44 percent of the cases, installation errors were the cause for the flooding or damage to the building. The operating conditions led to damage in the case of 14 percent of inspected components: pipes were damaged due to operating under excessive pressure or frost. In some cases, the outer contact with a corrosive medium was responsible. DEKRA Info