

Press Release

Sobering crash test shows how important it is to use the right child seat

DEKRA Calls on Parents: Secure Children Correctly in the Car – Even for Short Trips

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- In the EU, children are most frequently involved in accidents as passengers
- Long-term positive trend in accident statistics has faltered
- 2019 DEKRA Road Safety Report: "Children on the Road"

www.dekra.com/en/press

Every day on the world's roads, around 300 children under the age of 15 are killed in traffic accidents. Admittedly, the trend is heading in the right direction – the figure was approximately twice as high in 1990 – but there are no grounds to give the all-clear. In Germany, the number of children killed rose to 79 in 2018 (2017: 61) and is just above the average from the last ten years. In other EU countries, too, the long-standing positive trend is no longer quite so clear to see. Here, children are most frequently involved in accidents as passengers in vehicles. A crash test for the latest DEKRA Road Safety Report underscores just how important it is to secure children in cars with appropriate child seats.

In many countries of the world, using a safety device in line with the sizes and weights of babies and children in vehicles is mandatory. With infant carriers, child seats and booster seats, there are suitable products on the market for children of all ages and sizes. The value of these systems is beyond question. Yet there are still parents who do not secure their children or do so incorrectly, and countries in which using a safety device is not mandatory – unfortunately with tragic consequences.

Take France as an example. According to the official accident statistics, just under 20 percent of the children and young people who died in cars in road accidents in 2017 were unrestrained. The USA recorded similar figures in 2016. There, 17 percent of road accident victims under the age of 15 were not secured.

Parents do not realize the risks of securing children inadequately

Many parents are unaware of just how serious the consequences of securing children inadequately can be. "If the belt is not fitted properly, the child could strike the headliner in an emergency situation," explains DEKRA accident researcher Andreas Schäuble. "This could result in severe injuries, such as compression of

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the spine. If the child is secured too loosely in the seat or if the seat is not the right size, a collision could potentially lead to severe flexion injuries and overextension of the neck vertebrae, resulting in permanent damage to nerve cords. If the child's head strikes the front seat, this could in the worst-case scenario cause a traumatic brain injury," says the DEKRA expert.

A recent DEKRA crash test at the relatively low speed of 50 km/h common in urban areas makes clear what happens in an accident when a child is not secured at all. "Here, one child dummy was secured properly in a child seat, while a second child dummy sat unrestrained in the back seat," says Peter Rucker from the DEKRA Crash Test Center. "With a height of 1.13 meters and a weight of 23 kilograms, both were based on a six-year-old child."

The pictures speak for themselves. While the properly secured child dummy is restrained by the belt and additionally protected by the child seat, the unsecured dummy flies uncontrollably around the vehicle, resulting in multiple impacts. "If this were not a crash test but a real-life accident, this child would have had virtually no chance of survival," explains Rucker. "In addition, any passenger in the front seat would have been put at serious risk."

Safety must take priority over convenience

DEKRA is therefore calling on all parents to make sure that they always secure their children in the vehicle carefully and properly. "That is an absolute must, even if it is only a short trip or you are in a hurry," says Schäuble. "Safety must take priority over convenience." The seat must correspond to the weight and height of the child and should always be tested in your own vehicle before you buy it.

More information (plus video) on the DEKRA crash test described here, as well as the complete DEKRA Road Safety Report can be found at www.dekra-roadsafety.com. The annual DEKRA Road Safety Report was first published in 2008. This year's report focuses on children under 15, and a special supplement especially for children underscores just how seriously DEKRA takes the safety of our youngest road users.

Caption

In this DEKRA crash test, the dummy sitting on the left in the direction of travel is well secured in a suitably sized child seat. In a head-on collision at 50 km/h, this child would have walked away with some injuries. The dummy in the right rear seat that is not wearing a seat belt, on the other hand, is thrown around inside the vehicle on impact. This child would have had virtually no chance of surviving the accident.

About DEKRA

DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for more than 90 years. Founded in 1925 in Berlin as Deutscher Kraftfahrzeug-Überwachungs-Verein e.V., it is today one of the world's leading expert organizations. DEKRA SE is a subsidiary of DEKRA e.V. and manages the Group's operating business. In 2018, DEKRA generated estimated sales totaling more than 3.3 billion euros. The company currently employs more than 45,000 people in approximately 60 countries on all six continents. With qualified and independent expert services, they work for safety on the road, at work and at home. These services range from vehicle inspection and expert appraisals to claims services, industrial and building inspections, safety consultancy, testing and certification of products and systems, as well as training courses and temporary work. The vision for the company's 100th birthday in 2025 is that DEKRA will be the global partner for a safe world.