

## Press Release

Motor home and trailer season starts in earnest

### Well prepared for the big road trip

- Vehicle health check before setting off
- Driver training for greater safety on the road
- Important to balance loads evenly

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**Motor homes and travel trailers strike the perfect balance between freedom to roam and feeling at home. However, to ensure that a breakdown or accident does not spoil the experience along the way, it is important to be well prepared. “Very few people would consider it a sensible start to their vacation to pick up a motor home or travel trailer, pack it up, and set straight off on a big road trip,” says Markus Egelhaaf, an accident researcher at DEKRA.**

“After ‘hibernation’ or winter camping, motor homes and trailers need a thorough technical checkup to make them fit for the next trip,” explains Egelhaaf. The braking system, tires, and electrical systems need to be checked carefully, as do the connection between trailer and towing vehicle as well as the LPG system.

#### **Tires: a common weak point**

Tires are an often underestimated weak point on motor homes and trailers. Long periods of disuse and high vehicle weights frequently combine to yield a greater likelihood of defects, especially when coupled with heavy loads and poor maintenance.

As a result, before setting off, it is important to inspect the tires for damage and check the tread depth and age of the tires. If in any doubt or if the vehicle has older tires, it is advisable to have them looked at by a specialist. While the tires are cold, the pressure should be adjusted to the appropriate level for the load in line with the manufacturer’s instructions.

In the case of combinations, ensuring the compatibility of the towing vehicle and travel trailer is essential for safe driving, and this should always be borne in mind when buying or renting. Naturally, the towing vehicle must have a sufficiently powerful engine and be in flawless technical condition, with a permissible trailer load and nose weight that are suitable for the trailer in question.

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### **Safe loading, safe driving**

Loads that are too heavy or wrongly distributed can easily throw motor homes and vehicle-trailer combinations off balance. With that in mind, a vehicle should not exceed its gross weight rating, nor should a vehicle-trailer combination go above the gross combined weight rating. Here, too, the permissible trailer load and nose weight need to be considered. Fines may be issued to violators.

In addition, luggage must be stowed in carefully. Heavy items such as camping furniture, food supplies, and sunshades are best kept as low down as possible, with the upper storage compartments reserved for lightweight items. However, caution is recommended: "Take care to ensure an even weight distribution without overloading individual axles, otherwise the vehicle will steer less accurately and drive less stably," Egelhaaf notes.

"Balancing the load distribution is crucial for trailers, too. Excessively high or low nose weights are a major risk," warns DEKRA's accident researcher. Properly securing the load will make for a stable driving experience and reduce the consequences of an accident. The load must not be allowed to slip or slide around, even in the event of an emergency braking or sudden evasive maneuver. Doors and flaps must also remain securely closed.

### **Driver training for enhanced safety**

Anyone switching from an uncoupled car to a trailer combination or motor home must be prepared for significantly reduced rear visibility. Adjusting the exterior mirrors is an absolute must. Additional trailer mirrors are required for most vehicle-trailer combinations.

The handling of motor homes and other camping vehicles usually also requires a change in thinking on the driver's part, especially when it comes to braking, evasive maneuvers, and cornering. "Ahead of trips with motor homes or travel trailers, drivers who have practiced with large vehicles in a special driving safety training course are clearly better equipped," Egelhaaf stresses. "Less experienced and new drivers in particular are safer on the road if they can react appropriately in critical situations, such as when a crosswind suddenly occurs."

### **Be aware of the rules abroad**

Careful route planning also helps camping vacationers reach their destination safely and quickly. "Be on the lookout for special speed limits, overtaking bans, and road-based limits on weight, height, and width that may apply specifically to motor homes and travel trailers. In Germany, for example, the vehicle width includes the mirrors," the DEKRA expert observes. "If you are traveling abroad, it is important to find out about the rules in force there before you start your journey – even for countries you are just passing through. And remember, self-inflicted stress is one passenger you don't want along for the ride!"

### **About DEKRA**

*DEKRA has been active in the field of safety for almost 100 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 2021, DEKRA generated sales totaling more than EUR 3.5 billion. The company currently employs almost 48,000 people in approximately 60 countries on all 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, secure and sustainable world. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.*