

## Press Release

Advice for driving in the heat

### **Risk of crashes due to high temperatures**

- Concentration can be impaired, reaction times can be longer
- Air conditioning only helps if it works properly
- Caution: not everything that can cool drivers down is sensible or advisable

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**Summer heat not only makes drivers sweat – it also increases the risk of crashes, DEKRA experts caution. Heat stress can result in drivers concentrating less effectively, reacting more slowly, and making more driving errors. But not everything that could cool a driver down is recommended for use at the wheel. Here are some tips from the experts.**

#### **Regular air conditioning checkups**

Air conditioning is the most effective way of preventing high temperatures inside cars, and today, the vast majority of cars are equipped with A/C. However, it can only perform this crucial summertime job if it is working correctly. It is sensible to have a garage carry out an air conditioning checkup before longer road trips.

#### **Avoid cars heating up as much as possible – eliminate heat build-up**

When it is hot outside, it is recommended that wherever possible, cars should be parked in cool underground garages. If this is not an option, parking in a shady spot, or using sunshades and blinds can have a positive effect. Heat build-up is best eliminated by opening the doors and tailgate for a few minutes before setting off. For a quick cooldown after setting off, drivers are best advised to keep their windows closed, then set the air conditioning to recirculate air along with a high fan setting and low temperature, before readjusting these later. However, caution is recommended – motorists should not position the cold air to blow directly onto their bodies, otherwise they risk developing an unpleasant summer cold.

The vehicle's interior should not be cooled down so much that there is excessive heat shock when getting out. A difference of about 6-8°C is recommended. Those who are sensitive to temperature changes are best off sitting with their car door open for a few minutes after stopping to slowly get acclimated to the outside heat.

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### **Under no circumstances should children or animals be left in cars**

Leaving children or animals in a car during the summer heat is an absolute no-go, even if it is only for a quick stop at the store. Strong sunlight can turn a vehicle into a furnace in a short space of time, and this can be life-threatening for a child. Caution: the plastic casing on child seats can get very hot when exposed to direct sunlight and lead to children getting burned when they are being put into the seat.

### **Driving barefoot and eating ice cream are not recommended**

Various popular ways of cooling down are not recommended when driving. Wearing flip-flops or driving barefoot increases the risk of an accident, as the foot is much more likely to slip off the pedal than if a firm sole is being worn. In a dangerous situation, this can have fatal consequences. Not being able to apply full braking power can increase the braking distance decisively. Even where driving with bare feet or flip-flops is not expressly forbidden, in the event of an accident, drivers may well be fined in respect of duty of care and should potentially be prepared to answer difficult questions from their insurer.

Driving bare-chested, which is popular on hot days, can also have its pitfalls. If the driver executes an emergency stop or if it comes to a crash, being thrown against their seat belt can be unpleasant for anyone who is shirtless in the vehicle. The force can cause a high level of friction between seat belt and skin, resulting in painful friction burns. Wearing a T-shirt will prevent, or at the very least reduce, this effect. Incidentally, even in the heat, the seat belt must always lie close to the body to provide optimum protection.

The advice from DEKRA accident experts is that drivers should refrain from eating ice cream while driving, even when the temptation is great. Ice cream melts quickly, especially on hot days, and is prone to dripping and distracting drivers from concentrating fully on the road. In addition, holding an ice cream occupies a hand that may be needed when a driver has to signal, change gears, or take quick evasive action in a critical situation.

### **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.*