

Press Release

Dangers for Pedestrians during the Dark Time of Year

Dark Routes, Bright Clothing

- Senior citizens are particularly at risk
- Bright shoes are spotted particularly quickly
- Reflectors on walking aids are a safety factor

The winter months are a dangerous time for pedestrians. In the twilight and in the dark, the risk of not being seen in the traffic increases – the situation is particularly dangerous for senior citizens.

In 2016, half of the 490 fatal pedestrian accidents in total took place in twilight or in the dark, according to official statistics. Accidents occur mostly when the driver has not seen the pedestrian. "Drivers cannot see as well in the dark and experience a constant change between light and dark. As a result, the narrow silhouette of a pedestrian is more difficult to spot," explains Stefanie Ritter from DEKRA accident research.

"Pedestrians must ensure that they are always clearly visible to others in the dark," emphasizes the accident researcher. As well as bright, contrasting clothing, reflecting elements are suitable: Luminescent strips, high-visibility vests, small red flashing lights on bicycles, and stickers on clothes and bags. "Fashionable white strips on shoes can even be considered a life-saver on dark routes," says Ritter. The reason: Car headlights light up the white shoes first. Therefore, the drivers can recognize quickly that there is a pedestrian ahead. "Bright on the lower half of the body is more important than bright on the upper half!"

As pedestrians, senior citizens have a double handicap in the dark. Eyesight gets worse with age. Additionally, it also becomes more difficult for the eye to adapt to the change between the bright headlight and the darkness. This is what can lead to "night blindness." Additionally, it is often the case that older people can cross the road only slowly.

Therefore, it is highly dangerous to cross the road in poorly lit areas or to step out onto the road from behind parked cars or anything else that could hinder visibility. If a crosswalk or traffic lights are not present, it is recommended to cross the road directly in the light of the streetlights.

Rushing is often a trigger for dangerous situations. Before crossing, people should take enough time to observe the traffic closely and to wait for the suitable moment. People using walking aids, rollators, or wheelchairs should make sure that they are equipped with noticeable reflective elements.

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Pedestrians must heed the following:

- Pedestrians must always be clearly visible to drivers.
- Bright, noticeable clothing with reflective elements on clothing, shoes, hats, and bags provide more safety.
- White shoes can be a life-saver: “Bright on the lower half of the body is more important than bright on the upper half.”
- Cross the road only in well-lit areas where you can see the traffic and the traffic can see you; use a crosswalk or pedestrian lights.
- Do not rush before crossing the road. Observe the traffic closely.
- Do not step onto the road from behind anything that obstructs visibility.

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 2016, DEKRA generated sales totalling approximately 2.9 billion Euros. The company currently employs more than 39,000 people in more than 50 countries on all five 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.