

Press Release

Faulty shock absorbers often remain undetected

The secret danger

- Tires lose road grip
- Valuable meters are lost during braking
- DEKRA recommends regular checks, from 80,000 km at the very latest

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Faulty shock absorbers in the car conceal an increased risk of accident, warn the experts from DEKRA. Particularly in critical situations such as emergency braking, evasive maneuvers or rapid cornering, the state of the shock absorbers can determine whether an accident occurs or not.

“The job of the shock absorbers is to limit the vehicle's vibrations when it deflects due to bumps in the ground, potholes or obstacles,” explains DEKRA expert Jörg Sautter. The shock absorbers thus ensure that the wheels remain in close contact with the road at all times, even if the road is uneven.

If the shock absorbers are worn, there is a decline in road grip. This in turn leads to a decrease in stability when cornering and directional stability. This has dangerous consequences: the braking distance is increased, and the meters that make the difference between life and death may be lost. The vehicle skids more quickly during cornering or when carrying out evading maneuvers, and aquaplaning starts earlier. In addition, the antilock brake system (ABS) and the electronic stability program (ESP) no longer work correctly.

Typically, the affected car drivers still harbor the illusion that they are safe. “The wear of shock absorbers takes place subtly and gradually, and in some cases, is not even noticed by the car driver,” states Sautter. “Drivers easily become accustomed to a decline in the absorbers’ performance because they normally have no direct comparison with wear-free shock absorbers.”

Worn shock absorbers occur more frequently in vehicles with a higher mileage. However, even relatively young cars can also be affected if they are frequently subjected to heavy stress due to poor road conditions or cobblestones.

Drivers can detect faulty absorbers by means of different symptoms: if the vehicle feels “spongy”, the steering wheel flutters, the tires are unevenly worn down or show signs of wear. Oil leaks on the absorbers and rebound movements of the chassis when pressing down are among the warning signals.

DEKRA recommends having the shock absorbers checked by a car repair workshop, authorized expert or an automobile club every 20,000 kilometers once

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the vehicle has reached 80,000 kilometers. Faulty absorbers should always be replaced as a complete axle set.

Warning signals for faulty shock absorbers

- The vehicle feels “spongy”
- The steering wheel flutters
- Unevenly worn down tires, e.g. signs of wear
- Oil leaks from the shock absorber
- Chassis rebounds when pressing down

Caption: A DEKRA test engineer in Germany examining a shock absorber for anomalies during the general inspection.

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 will generate sales totalling approximately 2.9 billion Euros. The company currently employs more than 38,000 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.