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New Reflective Vest Law in Germany - introduced on 1st July 2014

The lifesaver in the event of a breakdown

It is now law in Germany for drivers to carry a safety vest in their vehicle. The new law came in to force on the 1st July 2014. It states that all cars, trucks and buses must carry a high visibility vest on board.

According to the new law one safety vest must be carried per vehicle. The vest must be worn in the event of a breakdown or accident when the driver leaves the vehicle and is standing on a public road. If the vest is not carried on board, the offence is punishable with a fine.

This new law affects all private car owners. Motorbikes remain an exception to the law.

"In the event of an accident or breakdown, drivers wearing a safety vest are significantly more visible and therefore much safer on the road." said Clemens Klinke, Member of the Board of DEKRA SE and responsible for the Automotive Business Unity.



Not all safety vests are equal

Pay attention to the correct design and specification! All new safety vests must be manufactured to the latest European standard EN ISO 20471:2013 (although existing vests, made to the old EN 471 standard, are also acceptable). Specification must include:

- 360-degree visibility due to wrap-around reflective stripes on the front and back - of at least 50mm in width
- Fluorescent material in yellow, orange or red-orange colour

Storage of the safety vest

Of course, what's important in an emergency is that the safety vest is quickly accessible by the driver. For this reason safety vests should be stored in the glove compartment, under the seat or in the side of the door - not the boot! It is also recommended that the vest is not stored in direct sunlight - as it will fade due to UV radiation.

The passing of this new law in Germany follows the example of many other EU member states, some of which have had the law in place for years. Unlike Germany, in some countries (such as Spain) the law states that every person who exits the vehicle in the case of a breakdown must wear a vest. A list of current laws in different countries is available at: www.dekra-warnweste.de.

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