

# Majority of Drivers in Germany in Favor of Health Checks



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Representative survey commissioned by Continental shows that almost two-thirds of drivers in Germany think regular health checks are a sensible way to determine whether a person is fit to drive

- Around half of those surveyed are in favor of more frequent checks – at least every two years
- Across all age groups: features like reversing cameras, turn assist systems and emergency brake assist systems make people feel safer
- Gilles Mabire, chief technology officer for Automotive at Continental:

As advanced driver assistance systems become more readily available in vehicles, their acceptance is also growing and will only continue to do so

Hanover, April 19, 2024. Almost two-thirds of drivers in Germany believe regular health checks are a sensible way to determine whether people are fit to drive. This is the result of a representative survey of some 2,000 German citizens conducted by market research and data analytics firm YouGov on behalf of Continental from March 11 to 13, 2024. The findings also show that the older the respondents, the less likely they are to agree with this statement. While 75 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds are in favor of this proposal, only around half of those over 70 are of the same opinion.

The contrast between generations is even more evident when it comes to whether driving licenses for people aged 70 and over should be valid for a limited amount of time and renewed only if the person passes a health check. 73 percent of over 70s oppose this idea, while more than two-thirds of those under 50 are in favor. Around half (49 percent) of those surveyed who think health checks make sense are in favor of more frequent check-ups of at least once every two years.

Across all age groups, it is clear that the increasing use of modern

advanced driver assistance systems is making drivers feel safer behind the wheel.

The results show that advanced driver assistance systems support drivers on the road, thus living up to their name. As advanced driver assistance systems become more readily available in vehicles, their acceptance is also growing and will only continue to do so,

says Gilles Mabire, chief technology officer (CTO) for Automotive at Continental.

Safety and independence while driving a primary focus for most people

According to the survey results, safety and independence while driving are particularly important factors for a large majority of people – particularly those aged 70 and over. With this demographic group set to increase as a share of Germany's total population over the coming years, the risks to which senior drivers are exposed will also rise, as will the risks they pose to other road users as a result of potential age-related impairment. According to the Federal Statistical Office, around 37 percent of road fatalities in Germany in 2022 were over the age of 65, despite this age group accounting for only around 22 percent of the total population. In addition, statistics show that serious accidents in particular are more likely to be caused by older drivers.

Demographic trend prompts discussions at political level

In response to this demographic trend, the EU Commission sees a need for action. In 2023, it proposed that every five years driving license holders over the age of 70 should have to either submit a self-assessment on their fitness to drive or undergo medical checks to confirm they are still fit enough to drive. The proposal initially even specified that all drivers in the EU should have to reapply for their driving license every 15 years and undergo medical tests or submit a self-assessment form. In-depth discussions were held on the matter, and the EU ultimately decided against introducing mandatory EU-wide medical checks in February 2024. The EU member states may decide for themselves, however, whether and which health checks make sense in their own countries.

In Germany, the federal government does not impose mandatory testing. In other European countries, however, health checks are a requirement. In Spain, for example, drivers aged 65 and over must have their driving license renewed every five years and provide medical evidence of their fitness to drive. Legislators in Denmark require a medical certificate in order to renew the driving license of those aged 75 and over. Upon reaching the age of 80, a new application must be submitted on a yearly basis. Driving licenses in Italy are generally only valid for a certain period of time. From the age of 50, they must be renewed every five years, from 70 every three years and from 80 every two years. Holders must also undergo a medical examination in order to have their license extended.

Technological advancements in new cars make people feel safer

Advanced driver assistance systems are widely recognized as helping to make driving safer and are becoming increasingly important. Some will even become mandatory for new cars in the EU from July 2024. According to the majority of survey respondents, advanced driver assistance systems make people feel safer while driving. Across all age groups, the reversing camera is valued most highly on average (at 40 percent), followed by turn assist and emergency brake assist systems (both at 32 percent), adaptive cruise control (31 percent), parking assist (29 percent), as well as lane keeping assist and intelligent headlamp control (both at 28 percent). What is striking here is that drivers of newer cars (built in 2021 or later) in Germany are more likely to see advanced driver assistance systems as a helpful aid for driving safety than drivers of older cars (built in 2020 or before). Approval rates range from 65 to 44 percent for the reversing camera, for example, from 46 to 33 percent for the turn assist system and from 53 to 31 percent for the emergency brake assist system (in each case for cars built in 2021 or later and for cars built between 2011 and 2020, respectively). This suggests that use of advanced driver assistance systems has a positive effect on appreciation for them, since they are more widely available and therefore more likely to be used in newer car models. In short: the newer the vehicle, the more likely its driver is to agree with advanced driver assistance systems' impact on safety.

We see these findings as affirmation of our work and as a mandate to further develop and, where necessary, build trust in the latest safety technologies. Continental is committed to

technological advancements in order to develop solutions for increasingly safe, smart and sustainable mobility,

Accident statistics show that the advanced driver assistance systems preferred by older drivers offer an appropriate means of reducing the risk of accidents among this group, since they counteract causes which, according to the Federal Statistical Office, often lead to accidents among seniors at the wheel – such as driver error when turning, reversing, starting, stopping or maintaining distance. The features these systems should have in order to increase their acceptance and the feeling of safety among drivers is an important question for developers. In Continental's survey, a clear majority across all age groups – and especially respondents with newer cars built in 2021 or later – said they personally feel safer in modern cars thanks to advanced driver assistance systems' ease of use as well as the range of features they offer. Both younger age groups and those over the age of 70 said that ease of use was important to them for advanced driver assistance systems, but also for air conditioning and infotainment systems.

#### Key factors that cause uncertainty among drivers

The survey results also reveal that across all age groups, the factors that cause the most uncertainty among drivers are bad weather conditions (50 percent), other road users (49 percent) and poor visibility (48 percent). The 70+ age group is also more worried than average (42 percent) about driving at night – a possible indication of seniors' often deteriorating vision.

#### Continental is one of the leading providers of advanced driver assistance systems

The safety of all road users is Continental's top priority in the development and industrialization of new technologies.

Against the backdrop of demographic changes, we recognize a need to combine personal mobility with a high standard of safety into old age,

explains CTO Gilles Mabire. Advanced driver assistance systems play an increasingly important role here. Continental has decades of experience in this area and is actively contributing its technological expertise for when certain advanced driver assistance systems

become mandatory for new cars in the EU from July 7. Sensors, software and intelligent connectivity serve as the basis for advanced driver assistance systems. Continental began developing these systems more than 20 years ago and has since put millions of these technologies on the road. Today, the company is one of the leading automotive suppliers in the field. In 2023 alone, Continental produced more than 39 million cameras and radar and lidar sensors for assisted and automated driving functions.

Market research and data analytics firm YouGov conducted the representative online survey on behalf of Continental in March 2024. As part of this, 2,055 German citizens between the ages of 18 and over 70 were asked about safety on the road.

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