



SOME HANDY TIPS ON TIRE MAINTENANCE

Tillamook County Public Works Office of Solid Waste & Recycling Programs

For More Information About Tire Maintenance Consult Your Local Tire Shop Or Mechanic

For more information about Reducing, Reusing, then Recycling call the Solid Waste Coordinator (503)815-3975
email: recycle@co.tillamook.or.us



CHECK YOUR TIRES EACH TIME YOU PLAN TO DRIVE

By following the below basic procedures you may add life to your tires, thus prolonging the future need to dispose, or recycle your tires as often.

Proper tire maintenance is a relatively simple task, and can save both money and headaches. You don't need to be a mechanic to know what to check. Just spend a few minutes each month inspecting these often overlooked components.

TIRE PRESSURE

The single greatest cause of tire damage is improper inflation. Your tires lose pressure over time, resulting in unnecessary stress on them, early and irregular treadwear and poor gas mileage. Tires can't deliver their best performance without the right air pressure.

So what can you do? Get to know your tires. Look at them regularly when getting into and out of your car. You'll get used to how they should look, and that will make it easier to spot problems. Listen to them: When you turn a corner at normal speeds, do you hear a squealing sound from your tires? If so, one or more tires may be low on air. Also, pay attention to how your car feels when you move the steering wheel. Changes may be due to tire problems that need attention.

When you check air pressure, refer to your owner's manual for the proper inflation. The automaker has taken into account several important factors in order to determine the right inflation level for your car and tire combination. Try never to let your air pressure drop below the recommended level.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Although the sidewall of your tire indicates a maximum pressure figure, this number does not indicate the proper inflation for your car. Rather, it indicates a top pressure that you must not exceed for any reason. Check either the placard on your doorjamb or inside your glove box or refer to your owner's manual for the correct air pressure for your tires. **CHECK YOUR SPARE**

When you maintain your tires or replace them, don't forget about your fifth tire, your spare tire. If you need it in a road emergency, you want to make sure it's there and it's inflated. (Remember, your tires will lose pressure over time) if you don't check your spare for a year, you could be surprised to find a flat tire.

Even with a new and well-maintained tire you could run into a road hazard and need your spare.

Take some time and throw a few items in your trunk:

- 1) small blanket
- 2) garden or work gloves
- 3) flashlight

Also, make sure your owner's manual is in the glove box and that you know where your jack is and how to use it. Your owner's manual will give you step-by-step instructions on how to change your wheel and tire assembly. You may want to have someone show you how to change a flat tire and practice before you have a real need.

TIRE TREAD

As your tire wears, its ability to grip the road in adverse condition decreases. If your tires are neglected, the tread can wear completely away, leaving the surface of the tire smooth and bald. This is not only dangerous, it's also illegal in many states.

When checking your tire inflation pressure, look for obvious signs of wear. Almost all tires have wear bars, small raised points of rubber in the grooves that show up when tires are worn out. If your tread is the same height as the wear bars, it's time for a new tire.

Every once in a while, feel the tread of your tires. If you feel high and low areas, or unusually smooth areas, you may have irregular tread wear. Consult your tire retailer or professional mechanic promptly.

Here's an old reliable trick you can use to check the tread depth of your tires. Be sure to inspect your tire at various points. Irregular tread wear may not be readily visible.

1. Take a penny and pinch Abe's body between your thumb and forefinger.
2. Put his head into one of the grooves of the tread at the point on your tire where tread is lowest.
3. If any part of his head is obscured by the tread, you're driving with the legal amount of tread. If you can see his entire head, you're ready for a new tire.



TIRE ROTATION

When the clothes clump in one spot of your washing machine during the spin cycle, the washer rocks wildly from the uneven weight distribution. This is what happens if each wheel and tire (called a wheel/tire assembly) are not properly balanced. The result is that your tires will behave like your washing machine. You'll get an uncomfortable ride, the steering wheel will vibrate, and you'll damage your tires and your suspension system as your tires bounce against the pavement.

Having your tire retailer balance your wheel/tire assemblies when you buy new tires and when you have them rotated can easily prevent these problems. It's a worthwhile investment.

Each tire on your car probably supports a different amount of weight, causing your tires to wear at different rates. By having your tires rotated, you can extend their life expectancy. Ideally you should have your retailer rotate your tires every 5,000 to 8,000 miles, and even more frequently if you do most of your driving around town or if you own a front-wheel drive vehicle. Check your owner's manual for proper rotation intervals.

There are several patterns you can use in rotating your tires. For instance, crossing tires from one side to another is a rotation pattern many people use. The pattern of rotation may also be dependant upon your sidewall preference (some tires have a black sidewall on one side and a white strip on the other) and tread pattern (directional tread patterns must be rotated directionally). Just be sure to ask the retailer which pattern was used and stick with it as long as you have those tires on your vehicle.



ALIGNMENT is a catchall word describing a combination of several different angles and relative positions of a wheel and tire in order for a vehicle to roll and steer easily. Improper alignment may be felt by the car's pulling to one side, causing wandering or by uneven tread wear on one or more tires. Misalignment could also result in a major repair bill if it's not corrected. In addition to damaged tires, your car's suspension system can be damaged. By checking your alignment every 10,000 miles, or at least once a year, your mechanic should be able to identify small problems before they become big ones.