



TIRE TOPICS

Tips On Avoiding Low Tire Pressure Problems

(NAPSM)—You may be able to save time, money and maybe a life with the help of special wheel sensors available in a growing number of vehicles that alert you to low tire pressure—which can be a dangerous driving situation.

Low-tire-pressure-related crashes cause 660 fatalities and 33,000 injuries each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Yet a survey earlier this year by the Rubber Manufacturers Association showed that three out of four drivers wash their car every month, but only one in five correctly checks the tire pressure.

NHTSA says tire-safety studies show maintaining proper tire pressure, observing tire and vehicle load limits and inspecting tires for cuts, slashes and irregularities can help motorists avoid tire failure. It can also:

- Improve vehicle handling
- Help avoid vehicle breakdowns and crashes
- Improve fuel economy (by 3.3 percent, according to the Environmental Protection Agency)
- Save money by increasing tire life.

According to John Maxgay, lead engineer of GM Chassis Electronics, an underinflated tire heats up, affecting vehicle performance and safety and potentially causing a blowout. Overinflated tires can make the vehicle ride stiff and are more susceptible to punctures.

“The tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS) is wonderful technology that has the potential to help make our roads safer,” said Jim Gutting, director, GM Tire-Wheel Center. “But it’s no substitute for being conscientious about tire maintenance. All vehicle owners should



familiarize themselves with TPMS, how it works and what it can tell them about basic tire maintenance.”

The TPMS from GM uses separate sensors in each wheel that use real-time monitoring to determine the pressure in each tire. A warning light on the instrument panel or a message displayed on the driver information center, along with an audible warning, alerts the driver to check the air pressure.

GM recommends that owners check their tire pressure once a month on cold (driven less than three miles) tires with a good-quality digital or stick device, versus the gauge at the service station air pump.

To make it easy to keep tires and the rest of the vehicle well-maintained, nearly 2 million GM vehicle owners who subscribe to OnStar and sign up for Vehicle Diagnostics get free monthly diagnostic reports via e-mail with crucial tire pressure information, recommended maintenance information, remaining engine oil life and information on other systems. Subscribers can enroll at www.onstar.com or press their blue OnStar button and sign up through an advisor.

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