

The Hamilton Spectator

Tips on proper tire inflation in winter; WINTER CAR CARE

Thu Jan 14 2010
Page: W4
Section: Wheels
Source: The Hamilton Spectator

Car Care Canada's free car care inspections, held in conjunction with National Car Care month in 2006, showed that 18 per cent of vehicles had improperly inflated tires.

Proper tire inflation pressure is the specified air pressure given by a carmaker for a certain tire on a specific vehicle. This pressure specification should not be confused with a tire's maximum pressure, which is usually listed on the tire's sidewall.

Some vehicles may specify different pressures for the front tires and the rear tires.

Correct inflation pressure is critical for good fuel economy, safety, maximum tire life, and proper vehicle handling performance.

Maintenance Tips and Suggestions:

€ Check your tires more often during the winter months. Tires will lose about 1 psi of pressure for every 5 degrees Celsius of temperature drop.

€ Keep an accurate tire pressure gauge in your car's glove box (many gauges at "air stations" give false pressure readings) and check the tire pressure when the tires are cold. Never trust the appearance of a tire as a gauge for inflation. A tire could be 10 psi low on pressure and not appear to be low on air.

€ Use the recommended inflation pressure listed in your vehicle's owner's manual or on the inflation sticker found on the driver's doorjamb. While you're at it, don't forget to check the spare. There's nothing more annoying than a flat spare when you have a flat tire.

Regular tread depth checks are important to ensure that your car's tires are safe. Excessive wear can result in a loss of traction, especially on wet and slippery roads.

Tires are regular wear items and staying on top of their condition not only ensures your safety, but also gives you the opportunity to plan ahead and budget for inevitable tire replacement.

The simple way to measure tread depth is with a tread depth gauge.

Tire wear bars are also used on today's tires as a hands-off visual indication that a tire needs replacement.

Maintenance Tips/Suggestions.

€ When using a tread depth gauge, tires need to have

at least one-fifth of a centimetre of tread or more.

€ Generally, it's best to replace tires in sets of four.

€ If your car's tires show signs of abnormal or unequal wear, have this looked into by a professional technician. Excessive wear on both outer edges generally indicates under-inflation. Excessive wear in the center of the tread generally indicates over-inflation. Cupping or dipping of certain tread sections may indicate worn suspension parts or a wheel balance problem. Saw-toothed or feathered tread edges may indicate wheel misalignment.

To learn more, visit the Be Car Care Aware website at (www.carcarecanada.ca.)

© 2010 Torstar Corporation