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Loss Control Services Publication

Technical Bulletin

Tire Safety for Passenger Vehicles and Light Trucks

Protection against avoidable breakdowns and crashes, improved vehicle handling, better fuel economy, and increased tire life – these are just a few of the reasons to take five minutes every month to check a vehicle's tires. Simply follow the procedures outlined below.

Tire Safety Action Plan

- Because tires may naturally lose air over time, check tire pressure regularly (at least once a month), including the spare.
- Inspect tires for uneven wear patterns on the tread, cracks, foreign objects, or other signs of wear or trauma. Remove bits of glass and other foreign objects wedged in the tread.
- Make sure the tire valves have valve caps.
- Check tire pressure before going on a long trip.
- Do not overload the vehicle. Check the tire information placard or owner's manual for the maximum recommended load for the vehicle.
- If towing a trailer, remember that some of the weight of the loaded trailer is transferred to the towing vehicle.

Safety Tips

- Slow down if you have to go over a pothole or other object in the road.
- Do not run over curbs and try not to strike the curb when parking.

Checking Tire Pressure

You can find the recommended cold tire inflation pressure and vehicle load limit on the tire information placard (permanent labels attached to the vehicle door edge, doorpost, glove-box door, or inside of the trunk lid) and in the vehicle owner's manual. Keep a tire pressure gauge in your vehicle. To get an accurate tire pressure reading, measure tire pressure when the car has been unused for at least three hours.

Step 1: Locate the correct tire pressure on the tire information placard or in the vehicle owner's manual.

Step 2: Record the tire pressure of all tires.

Step 3: If the tire pressure is too high in any of the tires, slowly release air by gently pressing on the tire valve with the edge of your tire gauge until you get to the correct pressure.

Step 4: If the tire pressure is too low, note the difference between the measured tire pressure and the correct tire pressure. These "missing" pounds of pressure are what you will need to add when you get to an air pump.

Step 5: Add the missing pounds of air pressure to each tire that is underinflated.

Step 6: Check all the tires to make sure they have the same air pressure (except in cases in which the front and rear tires are supposed to have different amounts of pressure).

Checking Tire Tread

Tires have built-in treadwear indicators that let you know when it is time to replace your tires. These indicators are raised sections spaced intermittently in the bottom of the tread grooves. When they appear even with the outside of the tread, it is time to replace your tires. You can also test your tread with a Lincoln penny. Simply turn the penny so Lincoln's head is pointing down and insert it into the tread. If the tread doesn't cover Lincoln's head, it's time to replace your tires.

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