CHECK YOUR TREAD

Tyre Safety Month – October 2009

Tyres are the only part of the vehicle which are in contact with the road. Safety in acceleration, braking, steering and cornering all depend on a relatively small area of road contact. It is therefore of paramount importance that tyres are well maintained and that their tyre tread depth is above the legal limit to maximise performance and safety. By law, car tyres must have a minimum of 1.6mm of tread in a continuous band throughout the central three-quarters of the tread width and round the entire circumference of the tyre.

The driver of the vehicle is responsible for making sure their tyres are legal and in a roadworthy condition. The penalty for driving with an illegal tyre is a fine of up to **£2,500 and three penalty points per tyre**. This could cost your licence, or worse still a life.

To check your tread, simply insert a **20p coin into your tyre's tread grooves.** If you are able to see the inside rim of the coin, the tyre tread may be worn close to the legal limit. See overleaf for more details on carrying out this simple check.

This campaign is organised by TyreSafe, a non commercial organisation responsible for raising awareness of the dangers of defective and worn tyres.

See overleaf to find out more about tyre safety.

TyreSafetyMonth

A LIFESAVER IN YOUR POCKET

How to Check Your Tyre Tread Depths

Tyres have a tread depth well above the legal limit.

Tread depth may be below the legal limit. If stopped by police, you could face a maximum of three penalty points and a fine of up to £2,500 per tyre.

To check your tread, simply insert a 20p coin into your tyre's tread grooves and check whether the rim of the coin is covered by the tread. Do this check in the main tread grooves across the width of the tyre and repeat at several locations around its circumference. If you can see the rim of the coin the tyre tread may be worn close to the legal limit of 1.6mm and needs to be checked by a tyre specialist.

The Importance of Tyre Tread

When driving in wet weather, the tread pattern of a tyre helps to evacuate water from the contact patch with the road. As the tread wears down, the tyre gradually loses the ability to remove all of the water from the road surface, resulting in longer stopping distances and an increased risk of aquaplaning.

Tyres worn below the legal limit are a contributory factor in many road collisions, particularly in the wet. Therefore, driving on tyres with sufficient tread depth is fundamental to braking safely and it is advisable that tyres are replaced before they reach the legal minimum.

Inspection and Maintenance

Examine your tyres regularly, removing stones and other objects embedded in the tread. If the tyre has lumps or bulges it must be examined by a tyre specialist as these could indicate internal damage. Wipe away oil or grease with a suitable diluted detergent.
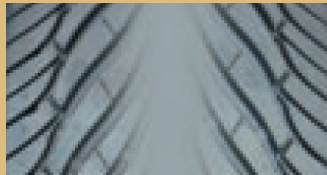
Correct tyre pressures are essential for safety and tyre longevity. Check tyre pressures monthly and before any long trip, not forgetting the spare.

Regularly check your tread depth. Ensure your tyres meet the legal requirements of a minimum 1.6mm of tread in a continuous band throughout the central three-quarters of the tread width and round the entire circumference of the tyre.

To help warn drivers that their tyres have worn to the legal minimum, tread wear indicators are moulded into the base of their main grooves. When the tread wears to be level with these indicators, the tyres only have 1.6mm of remaining tread depth and should be changed immediately.

OTHER THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR WHEN CHECKING YOUR TYRE TREAD

Uneven Wear – If your tyre tread is badly worn in some parts but not in others, it could mean that your tyre pressure is too high or too low, and can be a factor of worn suspension components as well.

Tracking Problems – Excessive wear around the inside or outside edges of your front tyres could mean your front suspension has been knocked out of line through hitting a deep pothole or banging against a kerb. Ask your tyre dealer to check your car's tracking; if it is out of alignment, getting it fixed will reduce the abnormal tyre wear and make your car feel much better to drive.

For further information, visit **www.tyresafe.org**

TyreSafetyMonth