

Transport Safety Pack

TYRE SAFETY GUIDE

Proper tyre maintenance is an important safety function that is often neglected by drivers. The good news is that proper tyre care is simple and easy. By taking five minutes every week to check your tyres, including the spare, you can prevent a crash happening.

- ∞ Worn front tyres can cause loss of steering control.
- ∞ Worn trailer tyres can cause a jack-knife action.
- ∞ Worn steering tyres can cause your vehicle to ‘aquaplane’, where the tyre loses contact with the road and ‘water-skis’ on water on top of the road. It is hard for the driver to recover from this.

How?

Tyres are the only contact between your vehicle and the road, so properly maintaining your tyres can’t be overemphasised.

Underinflation

Underinflation is the leading cause of tyre failure – it can make steering harder and cause heat build-up. While underinflation in dual tyres can cause them to rub together at the bottom and start a tyre fire or cause a blow-out.

What’s more underinflation can lead to higher fuel costs.

Check the tyre pressure with a gauge. Thumping and kicking will not help you to find out if a tyre has low pressure. The correct pressure information can usually be found on the edge of the driver’s side door.

Remember, a tyre radial ply can lose up to half of its air pressure and not appear to be flat.

Alignment

Is your vehicle pulling to one side, or shaking? A bad jolt from hitting a pothole can throw your front end out of alignment and damage your tyres. Check the alignment periodically to ensure that your truck is properly aligned.

Measure and Inspect

Advanced or unusual wear can reduce the ability of tread to grip slippery roads. Visually check your tyres for uneven wear, looking for high and low areas or unusually smooth areas.

All tyres have tread wear indicators. These indicators appear in the main grooves when the tread has worn down to 1.6mm, showing the tyre needs to be replaced.

Check the space between dual wheels. Rock or mud caught between the wheels can unbalance a wheel and damage the tyre tread and wheel bearings. These rocks can be thrown out later and damage your vehicle and other vehicles.

Check the space between the brake drum and the wheel, for rocks and mud. Objects caught in there may damage the brakes and the tyre.

Tips

The main signs of tyre failure are:

- ∞ Sound - the loud 'bang' of a blow-out is an easily recognised sign.
- ∞ Vibration - if the vehicle thumps or vibrates heavily, it may be a sign that one of the signs has gone flat.
- ∞ Feel - if the steering feels 'heavy', it is probably a sign that one of the front tyres has failed or the tyre pressure is down.

Further Information

- ∞ The Victorian Bus and Truck Drivers' Handbook available from the VicRoads Bookshop 60 Denmark Street Kew Tel (03) 98542782.

This safety guide has been produced by the Transport Industry Safety Group with the support of VicRoads to improve the safety of transport workers. It is one of 18 Safety Guides and other important information including the TISG's 'A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety Transport Industry' that can be downloaded from www.vta.com.au



Proudly supported by VicRoads