

CANADIANS OFTEN KNOW THE BASICS OF TIRE CARE, BUT DON'T ALWAYS PUT THIS KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

Almost All Canadian Drivers (96%) Consider Checking Tire Pressure an Important Aspect of Vehicle Maintenance. Yet, Less than Half of Drivers (45%) Check Their Tire Pressure Monthly or More Often



Public Release Date: Wednesday, November 19th - 1:00 p.m. (EDT)

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Almost All Canadian Drivers (96%) Consider Checking Tire Pressure an Important Aspect of Vehicle Maintenance. Yet, Less than Half of Drivers (45%) Check Their Tire Pressure Monthly or More Often

Toronto, ON – Canadian drivers overwhelmingly agree that tire care practices are important to overall vehicle maintenance. When asked how important specific tire care practices are, almost all drivers indicate that checking the tire pressure and wheel alignments are important (96% and 95% respectively), while rotating tires is considered important by slightly fewer (90%). Given the high level of importance that drivers are placing on tire safety practices, it is not surprising that drivers are welcoming the idea of more tire safety education.

Canadian drivers also agree that an information campaign, sponsored by tire manufacturers, is an excellent or good idea. A campaign of this type would inform drivers about good tire maintenance practices and would provide tips on checking tire pressure and understanding the signs that signal the need for tire replacement. A third (38%) of drivers feel such a campaign is an excellent idea, while close to half (46%) feel it is a good idea. When asked whether it would be appropriate for the federal or provincial government to be involved in such a campaign, six in ten (64%) say that it would be.

Consistent with their interest in more knowledge, Canadian drivers fare moderately well when asked about specific tire care practices. On the whole, drivers are most knowledgeable about the correct timing for checking air pressure, and what to look for to signal that their tires need replacing. The knowledge gap is greatest when drivers are asked to specify what the leading cause of tire failure is. Most drivers (63%) do not know that under-inflation is the leading cause of tire failure.

- Just over half (57%) of drivers are aware that the best time to check tire pressure is when tires are cold, while 36% mistakenly believe that tire pressure should be checked when the tires are warm or at either time.



- Most drivers rely on visual evidence of general wear to tell them when their tires need replacing. This 'sign' is mentioned by more than two-thirds of drivers (69%) on an unaided basis. Otherwise, some drivers (28%) are looking for tire damage (like holes, cuts or abrasions) while others wait for performance issues to arise to signal the need for replacement (22%).
- The tire and the owner's manual are the most popular sources of information when looking for a vehicle's tire pressure. A third of drivers (33%) mention that the correct tire pressure can be found on the tire itself, while fewer know that it is in the owner's manual (27%) or specified on the vehicle placard or sticker (15%).
- Most drivers do not know how important tire pressure is to the health of their tires. Only one third (37%) of drivers are able to correctly identify under-inflation as the leading cause of tire failure. In many drivers' eyes, tire failure is caused by poor road conditions (28%) or road hazards like nails or glass (24%).

While many drivers are actively maintaining their tires, room for improvement remains. Most Canadian drivers are acting commendably in terms of checking their tire pressure, with 70% using a tire pressure gauge to check their pressure. Drivers fare less well in performing other related practices, like visually inspecting their tires and ensuring that tire pressure is adjusted if there are changes to a vehicle's load.

- Fully 70% of drivers use a tire pressure gauge to check their tire pressure. Drivers are also checking their tire pressure by asking a mechanic or service technician to do it (27%), doing a visual check (21%), or using an air pump at a service station (19%).
- Visual inspection of tires should be a routine matter, but isn't for many now - only a third (37%) are doing this once a month. Only 45% of drivers check their tire pressure on a monthly basis.
- When going away for a long weekend or taking a car trip that involves the vehicle carrying more weight than usual, most drivers check their tire pressure to ensure it is appropriate for the load. Only a third of drivers are doing this



consistently (35%), however, while a quarter (25%) adjust pressure for the load only sometimes. Fully 40% are not doing this at all.

In terms of tire care knowledge and practices, notable differences are evident between men and women. Women are generally less knowledgeable about tire care and are clearly lacking knowledge in some of the basic points of vehicle safety. Relative to men, women are also considerably less likely to perform tire practices. A third of women (39%) check their tire pressure monthly or more often, in comparison to 51% of men. Similarly, only a quarter of women (26%) visually inspect their tires at least once a month, in comparison to almost half of men (46%).

Summary of Knowledge and Tire Care Practices

	Total	Gender	
		Male	Female
	%	%	%
When to check tire pressure:			
Tires are cold	57	64	49
How tire pressure is checked:			
Tire pressure gauge	70	80	59
Location of tire pressure:			
On the tire itself	33	43	22
Vehicle placard/sticker	15	20	9
Owner's manual	27	27	28
Tire pressure adjustment:			
Check if appropriate for load	60	66	54
When to replace tire:			
Tread is worn	69	75	63
Leading cause of tire failure:			
Under-inflated tires	37	46	27



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These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between May 8th and May 10th, 2001 on behalf of the Rubber Association. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Canadians, 819 of whom have driven a motor vehicle in the past two weeks. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

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