

# Checking Tire Pressure at Your Quick Oil and Lube Facility

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Why our team checks tire pressure for our customers

How far along has tire pressure monitoring come recently? Well it is making significant strides in the transportation industries for a variety of reasons; reducing fuel costs, safety and insurance savings, regulations stemming from the Firestone Affair in the SUV market and lobbying from consumer groups. The DOT has looked into these issues for passenger cars and the Tire Industry has had mixed emotions for a reason, often stating that the best thing to do is to educate consumers about tire pressure. A recent survey during Car Care Aware Week showed that 54% of all cars had one or more tires, which were low on air, thus causing excessive wear, stability issues and poor fuel efficiencies. This was an interesting case in fact. We see this all the time when we service our customers cars.

<http://www.CarWashGuy.com>

<http://www.OilChangeGuys.com>

During this same study it was found that only 14% of the cars had one or more tires that needed tread and were worn out. It would behoove those in the car care industry to check tires as a courtesy for customers. Jiffy Lube and other companies do this already as part of a multi-point check list. We believe that soon all over the road trucks will have some sort of low-pressure indicator either inside the cab or out side. Some already have sensors, which light up on the dash-board and along with GPS navigation which already indicates truck stops and repair stations which have tire shops or Tire chucks with air hoses. Recently we discussed the issues with Large Passenger van rollovers and the NTSB did a huge study showing these vans to be unsafe, yet many of the problems stemmed from low air pressures and poor loading in rear or on top. Once again issues of tires were the biggest. Under rated tires for the load or under inflated tires during the trip which contained the accident were a factor in the event itself. Some shop owners have asked me why should I get involved with tire pressures because I might be sued if I put air in and someone has an accident and they determine that on a dirt road the car had too much air in the tires for that condition, when I put the additional air in because the dad said he was taking his family on a road trip to Colorado or Kansas for four days?

I understand this comment and fear from lawsuits and admit that there are too many attorneys in the world and most should be eliminated forth with. But as a Car Care Professional you can prevent accidents and help people. This same comment about lawyers is what the tire industry is fearing. The tire pressure issue was over turned by the NHTSA but expect it to come back stronger next time as consumer groups and politicians judging the wind flow see the political advantage of caving into such demands, which indeed will open the tire industry to more class action lawsuits. The RMA Rubber Manufacturers Association wants to fight PSI level definitions, because it is not a one size fits all.

Many things go into deciding proper inflation and PSI levels depending on such things: snow handling, wet & dry braking, braking & traction requirements, stopping distances, rolling resistance, fuel economy, noise, vibration, harmonics, comfort of ride, uniformity of tread wear, balance, cornering capabilities, rotation interval specs, endurance ratings, tread wear tests, high speed performance, residual alignment torque, ease of mounting on production equipment, etc. You can see the issues manufacturers have with this. Many times customers will ask you can you check the tires, some shops are saying "no" while this is the best policy for not getting sued it is not good to keep telling customers "No" when: A.) You can charge them for it and; B.) They are willing to pay you for it and; C.) You can make a good profit doing it.

After all with the increased news articles on tire wear and the significance of the firestone media frenzy, tires are on people's mind more than the ever increasing oil change intervals propaganda from Auto Manufacturers to sell more cars and their particular brand of in house oil. The problem concerning tires has much to do with: ice, snow, rain, mud, highway speed, dirt roads, gravel, canyon driving, off road driving, speed bumps, gas mileage, traction, etc. The manufacturers are at odds with a government regulatory body dictating their specifications on a tire, which may perform many different duties on the same car within its life time.

Manufacturers of tires are concerned with all these things and those listed above and also have to worry customers which modify vehicles, over load tires, drive monster mudders on freeways causing vibrations, harmonics, warped rotors, bent tie rods, bent steering rods, severe wear to braking systems, cracked rims which in turn cause excessive wear including scalloped tires, radial separation, increased tire rotation intervals-some 4 X 4's as little as 3000 miles when usually 6000 is recommended. Not to mention human kidney issues. This offends people and causes stereo's to buzz and tires to roar into the night. When a recent survey came out on a scale of 1-10 tire noise was rated. Aggressive and dedicated Tire Engineers found that Cadillac, Mercedes, Bentley all scored high in the 7.5 range. Where high performance cars such as the Corvette, Mustang 5.0 and even the little Miata scored down into the 5 to 5.5 range.

Stiffer tires gave better over all handling performance, great stopping and good grip, but were noisy. GM has been offering sensor based tire pressure monitors and ABS for a while on some models and Daimler Chrysler on their Jeeps 2002-2004 models has a safety bulletin for installation of a tire pressure monitor dashboard indicator. When customers were asked in a survey by the TIA – Tire Industry Association; 31% said they check their air pressure regularly, 20%

admitted to ignorance when it came to anything to do with tires and 40% said their tires are totally safe. But we know that 54% had under inflated tires when they were checked and 14% had either poor tread left or both. In fact when the survey was checked against actual behavior in tire monitoring by the customer only 1 in 7 actually checks the tire pressure regularly. So it maybe something to think about when servicing your customer's car while doing the oil changes. Lance Winslow - Online Think Tank forum board. If you have innovative thoughts and unique perspectives, come think with Lance; [www.WorldThinkTank.net/wttbbs/](http://www.WorldThinkTank.net/wttbbs/)