



National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
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CONSUMER ADVISORY: Motorists Urged to Check Tires Before Summer Trips

The risk of a serious crash during hot weather can be heightened by tires that are worn out, under-inflated or too old, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said today.

To reduce the risk of a crash, NHTSA Administrator Nicole Nason urged motorists to have tires, including the spare, checked before embarking on a vacation journey.

"Protecting you and your family should be your top priority," said Administrator Nason. "Getting your tires checked will significantly reduce the likelihood of a tire-related crash."

NHTSA research shows that hot weather – and overloaded vehicles – can add significant stress to a tire, especially if it is not properly inflated. Old tires also are subject to greater stress, which increases the likelihood of catastrophic failure.

While tire condition is important for all vehicles, it is especially critical for those more prone to rollover when tires fail. That would include sport utility vehicles (SUVs), pickups or other vehicles with a higher center of gravity.

Consumers can check tire inflation with an inexpensive gauge, using the vehicle manufacturers' recommended pressures, which are found on the driver's side door pillar or in the owner's manual.

The age of the tire can be determined by checking the identification number on the sidewall that begins with the letters "DOT". The last four digits represent the week and year the tire was manufactured.

Some tire and vehicle manufacturers have issued recommendations for replacing tires that range from six to ten years of age. Consumers are advised to check with their tire or vehicle manufacturer for specific guidance.

"Remember that it is vitally important to check your spare tire too," said Administrator Nason. "Your spare can be a real safety hazard if it is old or under-inflated."

For more information on proper tire care, along with NHTSA's tire rating guide, visit www.safercar.gov.