

Tyres for 4 x 4 vehicles: care and maintenance

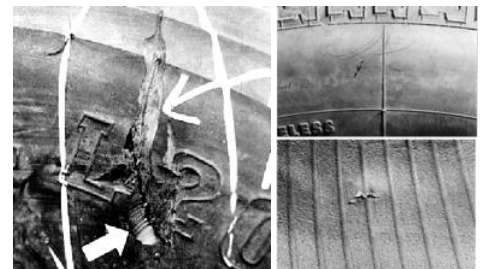
Tyre selection – the tyres fitted to a vehicle by the manufacturer will have been selected to deliver the best overall qualities and performance. It is important when replacing tyres, the tyre size, load index and speed symbol are at least equal to the vehicle manufacturer's original specification. Following this general rule will ensure the vehicle's characteristics and safety are maintained.

Tyre Fitting – tyres should only be fitted by trained professionals. Incorrect fitting procedures can lead to poor tyre performance and can also be detrimental to vehicle safety.

Inflation Pressure – Tyre inflation pressures should be set and maintained at the vehicle manufacturer's recommended levels. Inflation pressure data may be found in the vehicle handbook and/or on a placard on the vehicle, (most commonly on the back of the fuel filler cap or on one of the door posts). When using the vehicle off-road and in soft terrain, if traction difficulties are encountered, lowering tyre pressures may be beneficial. However, only use tyres that are specifically designed to run with reduced inflation and restrict use in this condition to a minimum. Seek out and comply with any advice given by the tyre and vehicle manufacturer. Always re-inflate tyres to normal pressures before continuing use on harder ground and highways. Tyre pressures should nevertheless be checked regularly and where necessary immediately adjusted to the recommended level.



Tyre Damage – Check tyres regularly for damage, such as stones, nails etc. that may have penetrated the tyre, as well as any cuts, tears or bulges in the sidewall. Any tyre that is damaged must be removed from service and examined by a competent professional. Remember that foreign objects can also damage the inside of the tyre. Tyres used off road are more at risk of damage than tyres used exclusively on normal highways. Hence, it is strongly recommended tyres are inspected soon after any off road use. It is also important to wash tyre/wheel assemblies following off road use to remove any potentially hazardous debris. This is particularly important around the wheel rim flanges (inner and outer sidewalls) as any debris in this area may migrate between the tyre and wheel rim causing damage to both tyre and wheel.



Tread Pattern Depth – Tyre performance on adverse road conditions deteriorates as the tread pattern depth diminishes. This applies if the road surface is simply wet and on any soft terrain. Equally, the more the tyre is worn the risk of puncture damage to the tread increases. Whilst 4x4 tyres are governed by the same laws as a standard road tyre, i.e. minimum tread pattern depth of 1.6mm in the central ¾ of the tread width, if the vehicle is frequently used off road it is recommended to consider replacing tyres once the tread depth drops below 4mm. This will help avoid traction difficulties in soft /wet terrain.



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