

Ferris Auto Center

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Provided to you by Rich Ferris
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When Is It Time To Buy New Tires?

The first thing to look at is tread depth. A penny is an excellent tool for this. . . . Turn Abraham Lincoln upside down, and stick the penny into the tread groove. If you can see the top of Abe's head, the tire doesn't have enough tread to be safe (or legal, for that matter). Of course, auto supply stores have tread depth gauges that are inexpensive and easy to use.

Tires also have built-in wear indicators: each tread groove will have a four or five spots around the tire that are 2/32 of an inch (the minimum legal tread depth) higher than the rest of the groove. These high spots will create a visible gap in the groove once the tread has worn down to 2/32".

Don't just look at one tread groove, either. Check several, to see if one part of the tire is wearing faster than another. Also, look for "cupping," which is a series of flat spots on the edge of the tread; look at the sidewalls for bulges, which indicate a problem with the tire's internal structure. If you can see wire mesh or threads anywhere, that tire is worse than worn out—it may not be safe to drive on. A tire showing any of these conditions needs to be replaced.

A change in your driving pattern may call for new tires before they wear out, however. A move from the Sun Belt to a northern clime may mean you'll be in the market for snow tires; if you'll be using what was previously an off-road vehicle on pavement, you may find you need tires better-suited to asphalt.

Finally, emotion can even play a part in tire buying: you might just like the way a certain tire makes your vehicle look, or you may be very interested in new tire technologies like run-flats.

Why Kids Should Ride in Back

Federal safety officials advise that children should be in the back seat, away from frontal airbags. Here are the reasons.

It's not the law—at least not yet. But officials at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration have widely publicized their "advisory" that children age 12 and under shouldn't sit in the front seat in front of an airbag.

Several Factors

Is there something magical about age 13 that automatically makes children fit to sit up front? Are they big enough at that age to withstand the airbag forces or grown up enough to behave up front?

It's a little of both, actually. NHTSA officials said the agency basically selected age 12 for the cutoff after reviewing crash statistics that showed problems with frontal airbags seemed to decline as children get older.

Maturity Weighs In

Behavior is part of the problem. "Kids play with the radio," move around and tend not to be in proper position when an airbag deploys in a crash, NHTSA spokeswoman Liz Neblett said.

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Proximity to the airbag is a big issue in airbag-caused injuries and deaths; so is being properly positioned in the seat.

“Theoretically, we didn't know how successful you can be . . . in teaching a child never to lean forward” in the front seat, said a NHTSA researcher who asked not to be named, explaining why the agency felt obligated to list an age.

Don't discount behavior out of hand. Deborah Stewart, publisher of Safe Ride News in the Seattle area, said a camera trained on a child in the back seat during one test showed the youngster “didn't sit properly for more than 30 seconds.” Stewart said the NHTSA recommendation, while somewhat arbitrary in its age selection, helped the agency send a simple, important message to parents.

Size Matters, Too

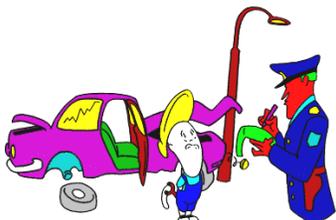
The NHTSA researcher also said that the agency recognizes that “somewhere in that area” of 11 and 12 years of age, “you have bigger children” who are more akin to adults in size.

Nancy Delaney, chairperson of the Metro Detroit Safe Kids Coalition, said physical stature matters because it's difficult for children to keep their distance from that front airbag and keep their back against the seatback if their feet don't touch the floor. “They tend to scrunch down” in the seat so their feet touch the floor and then they're out of position for the airbag, she said.

On the other hand, she noted that there also could be a problem with children who pass age 12 and still are rather small. Parents think they can automatically ride up front, but perhaps they should reconsider. “You get these kids who are two-thirds leg [in body size] and they're willowy,” she said. “I'm really tempted to keep them in a car seat” in the back seat, where they would be safest.

A Simple Truth That Saves Lives

An often-overlooked fact, NHTSA advises that all people, including adults, are safest in the back seat, regardless of size or behavior. Why? The most common crash is frontal, and by sitting in the back seat you have more vehicle mass in front of you to absorb crash forces.



Dumb Laws of Ohio

- In Ohio, if you ignore an orator on Decoration day to such an extent as to publicly play croquet or pitch horseshoes within one mile of the speaker's stand, you can be fined \$25.00.
- Women are prohibited from wearing patent leather shoes in public.
- It is illegal to fish for whales on Sunday.
- It is illegal to get a fish drunk.
- The Ohio driver's education manual states that you must honk the horn whenever you pass another car. Participating or conducting a duel is prohibited.
- Breast feeding is not allowed in public.
- It is illegal for more than five women to live in a house.
- It is illegal to mistreat anything of great importance.

Dumb Thieves

Running Low

Unknown

A bevy of thieves thought it would be a wise idea to steal cars from one of those trucks that transport automobiles across the nation. Everything went smoothly until it was realized that each car only contained one gallon of gasoline.

Bus Fare

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Two young larcenists in Florida--14 and 15 to be exact--appeared before Judge Larry Seidlin after stealing their twenty-fifth car in just two short years. After the boys were released, they walked out of the courthouse and realized they did not have bus fare for a ride home. Promptly, the duo stole number twenty-six; they crashed the vehicle into a fence less than an hour later.

Ring Ring

Unknown

A woman reported her missing car to the police and mentioned that the car had a phone. The police officer taking the report called the phone. He told the man that answered that he had read the ad in the paper and was interested in buying the car. The two arranged to meet and the thief was promptly arrested.

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Nine Ways To Save On Your Auto Insurance Policy

The Insurance Information Institute has nine suggestions to help you save on your auto insurance policies. Auto insurance premiums can vary from company to company and from coverage to coverage, so be sure to shop around.

No. 1

Comparison shop. Use consumer information provided by your state's insurance department. Where they're available, insure.com has published state insurance department auto rate guides. These guides tell you what coverages you need and show you sample rates, usually from the biggest companies. Visit your state's page by choosing your state from the menu at the top of this page.

No. 2

Ask for higher deductibles. When you file a claim, a deductible is the amount of money you pay before your insurance company kicks in. Higher deductibles mean lower premiums. For example, increasing your deductible from \$200 to \$500 on collision coverage could reduce your cost by as much as 30 percent.

No. 3

Drop collision and/or comprehensive coverages on older cars. If you own a car that's worth less than \$1,000, you'll probably pay more for the coverage than you would ever collect on a claim. Your bank can tell you how much your car is worth, or check out the Kelley Blue Book.

No. 4

Buy a "low-profile" car. Cars that are expensive to repair or that have a high theft rate generally have higher insurance costs.

No. 5

Take advantage of low-mileage discounts. Some insurance companies offer discounts to drivers who put fewer than a predetermined number of miles on their vehicles each year.

No. 6

Consider insurance cost when making a move. Costs tend to be lowest in rural communities and highest in cities, where more traffic congestion occurs.

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No. 7

Find out about discounts for automatic seatbelts or air bags. Your insurance agent should let you know about these discounts when you purchase your coverage. Most policies give discounts for air bags and automatic seatbelts.

No. 8

Ask about antilock brakes. Some states, including Florida, New Jersey, and New York, require insurers to give discounts for cars equipped with antilock brakes. Some insurance companies give the discount no matter where you live.

No. 9

Ask about other discounts. Some companies offer discounts for insuring more than one car, also insuring your home with them (known as a multiline discount), having no accidents in three years, being a driver over 50, taking driver training courses, and having antitheft devices. Plus, remember good-student discounts when you are insuring a teen driver.

Your cars cooling system

Although gas engines have improved a lot, they are **not** very efficient. In fact, they waste a **lot of energy**. Most of the energy found in the gasoline (perhaps 70%) is converted into heat. It is the job of the cooling system to take care of this unwanted byproduct. Would you believe that the **cooling system** on a car driving down the freeway dissipates enough energy to heat **two** average sized houses!

North American Car and Truck Production

Week ending	Year to date
12/23/00	1/1/00-12/23/00
Cars 135,073	8,379,014
Trucks 160,859	9,259,233
Total 295,932	17,638,247

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Start Something



We'll Be There



Teen Driving Tips

Driving around school

- ◆ Get to school five to ten minutes early and leave five minutes late to avoid the mad dash into and out from the parking lots. Many accidents happen when kids are rushing around.
- ◆ If your school lot has perpendicular spaces (not angle parking), park in a space you can pull straight out of instead of having to back out. Backing out in crowded lots is tricky. Also, the Key Driving School has written me that pulling straight through a parking space is illegal in some states--so check your local traffic laws before using this tip.
- ◆ Watch for kids getting on and off school buses--and don't run into the school buses, either.
- ◆ Go slow
- ◆ Don't leave valuables like wallets, shoes, leather jackets or sports equipment in your cars where they can be seen because they invite break-ins.
- ◆ Always stop for school buses with flashing lights. The flashing lights mean that students are either getting on or off the bus--and may be crossing the street. Their safety depends on cars obeying this law.



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