

TYRE FACT

*RUBBER ON LITTLE USED
CARS CAN GO HARD,
REDUCING GRIP LEVELS*

TYRE FACT

*CARS WITH BARELY
LEGAL TREAD TAKE
40 metres LONGER
TO STOP IN THE WET*

As you know, tyres must be roadworthy and meet legal tread depth requirements. But did you know that rubber deteriorates with age and that even if your tread depth is legal, the rubber on your tyres may be old and poor quality?

Here's how you can check the age of your tyres:

Stamped on the sidewall of every tyre is a date of manufacture. The first two digits signify a week number, running from 1 to 52, while the second pair corresponds to a year. So if it says 3207, the rubber was made in the 32nd week of 2007.

Anyone with tyres produced before 2000 will see a three-digit code, with the 3rd number denoting the year - 128 means the 12th week of 1998.

Caution!

Never use a tyre over **Six Years old**, regardless of whether it has been used or not.

At least every week check the tyre pressure (including spare). Incorrect tyre pressure may adversely affect tyre life and vehicle handling. Tyre pressure should be checked when tyres are **Cold** after the vehicle has been parked for three or more hours, or driven less than 1 mile.

COLD tyre pressures are shown on garage forecourt. Different vehicles have different tyre pressures so check the charts.

Insufficient pressure can lead to overheating of the tyre and subsequently internal damage. At high speeds, this could result in tread separation and even bursting of the tyre.

Tyres should also be inspected for wear, cracking, bulging, or objects caught in the tread. If excessive wear, cracks, bulging, or deep cuts are found, the tyre should be replaced.

Most new tyres have a built-in tread wear indicator (See *diagram RIGHT*). When wear indicator is visible, the tyre should be replaced.



In the UK by law, **Cars, light vans and light trailers**

must have a tread depth of at least 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the breadth of the tread and around the entire circumference.

An easy way to check the tread depth of your tyres if they don't have wear indicators is with the use of a 10 pence coin. Place the coin in the tread and make sure the tread covers the edge as shown. (See *diagram below*.)



Motorcycles, large vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles must have a tread depth of at least 1mm.

WARNING

Do not use a deformed wheel even if it has been repaired. Such wheels could have structural damage and could fail without warning.

Unbalanced wheels may affect vehicle handling and tyre life. Even with regular use, wheels can get out of balance. Therefore, they should be balanced as required.

Motorists are failing to check the condition of their tyres, which could have fatal consequences. Although tyres are critical for the safety of all road users, many motorists are in breach of, and, oblivious to, the legal 1.6mm tread depth requirement, and may have tyres classified as severely damaged. With a maximum fine of £2,500 per tyre with discretionary disqualification including three penalty points, motorists could be in for a nasty shock, if caught driving with illegal tyres.

Quick look at the top tips to ensure tyres are legal and in top condition:

- Examine tyres every two weeks for signs of damage, uneven wear, splits or cracks.
- Keep track of tyre tread depth by purchasing an easy-to-use tread depth gauge. The legal requirement is 1.6mm, but many manufacturers recommend changing at 2mm or even 3mm.
- Check tyres are inflated to the correct pressure every week using a reliable gauge. Do this when the tyres are cold.
- Tyres will wear at different speeds especially between front and back. Don't presume all tyres will be in the same condition.
- Ask a garage to check the vehicle's tracking every six months, or after any collision or heavy kerb impact. Incorrect tracking leads to uneven and accelerated tyre wear.
- Aggressive driving styles can take thousands of miles from the life expectancy of tyres. Harsh acceleration and braking will reduce the tread significantly.
- When changing tyres, never risk buying part worn or second-hand tyres, a brand new tyre or retread is always a safer investment.