

One-in-twenty drivers never check their tyres

Submitted by: Green Flag Group

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Hundreds of drivers are risking their own and other road users' lives by failing to maintain their car's tyres properly.

Research carried out by Green Flag Motoring Assistance in association with road safety charity Brake has revealed one-in-twenty drivers fail to check their vehicle's tyre pressure or tread depth. Some 20 per cent said they relied on others to do the job for them, while a third confirmed they only checked them at three-monthly intervals. Just a fifth of motorists surveyed checked their tyres on a weekly basis as recommended by the Highway Code.

Green Flag spokesperson Melanie Denny said: "These results are worrying, as they suggest many drivers don't realise how dangerous worn out or damaged tyres can be. Tyres are the only contact the vehicle has with the road, and poorly maintained ones can lead to fatal crashes as well as breakdowns and fines."

The results of the research form part of Green Flag's Are you ready to drive? report, which examines driver's attitudes to issues such as maintenance, crash protection and driving tuition.

Last year Green Flag rescued almost 100,000 motorists who had broken down due to flat tyres and punctures. To avoid accidents, breakdowns and penalties for non-roadworthy vehicles, Green Flag offers the following maintenance tips to motorists:

- Check the tyre pressure weekly when the tyres are cold. Your vehicle's handbook will tell you the right pressure. If in doubt, consult a garage or tyre specialist.
- Remember to check the pressure of the spare wheel too.
- Before setting off on a long journey, check tyres for cuts, bulges, bald patches or cracks.
- Check the tyre tread once a month using the tread wear indicator bars, which are small ridges set into the main grooves. These indicate the legal minimum tread. Change your tyres before they reach this point. If you cannot find the bars, look for the letters TWI on your tyre wall, or ask a garage.
- If you are a high mileage driver, check your tyre-tread more frequently.

Melanie concluded: "As well as the risk of accidents and breakdowns, drivers may find themselves out of pocket by neglecting their tyres. For every tyre that is found to be non-roadworthy, motorists can be fined £2,500."

For more information on Green Flag's services visit www.greenflag.com or call 0845 246 1557.

Ends

Notes to editors

-Brake is a national road safety charity funded by Government and individual donations. Brake exists to

stop the 3,400 deaths and 41,000 serious injuries that occur on Britain's roads every year and to ensure that appropriate care is available for people traumatised by road crashes.

- Road Casualty figures published 24 June 2004 show that there were 290,607 road casualties in Great Britain in 2003, four per cent fewer than in 2002. Some 37,215 people were killed or seriously injured in 2003, six per cent below the 2002 figure.
- 3,508 people were killed, an increase of two per cent compared to 2002.
- Road traffic levels were one per cent higher than in 2002 and consequently the overall casualty rate per 100 million vehicle kilometers was five per cent lower than in 2002.
- There were 214,030 road accidents involving personal injury in 2003, three per cent less than in 2002. Of these, 32,160 accidents involved death or serious injury. (Source: DFT).
- Green Flag Motoring Assistance provides roadside rescue and recovery to almost 5m customers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Press Calls

For further information contact Nigel Charlesworth or Melanie Denny at Green Flag on 0113 399 1427/1387 (out of hours 07711 964 615).

Public-relations@greenflag.com www.greenflag.com