

AUTOMOTIVE

Don't Let Pressure Leave You Stranded

NewsUSA

(NU) - As the 2008 model year vehicles hit the road, motorists will benefit from a new standard feature – tire pressure monitoring systems (TPMS), which illuminate an on-dash light when the pressure in one or more tires is low.

Federal law mandates that all vehicles manufactured in 2008 and beyond must be equipped with the new system. Drivers should be aware, however, that the systems are calibrated not to trigger the warning light until a tire is at least 25 percent under-inflated – well below the pressure for safe driving.

“It’s extremely important that motorists do not wait until the warning light comes on to check their tire pressure,” said John Nielsen, director of AAA’s Approved Auto Repair Network. “If a tire is losing pressure from a slow leak, a motorist could drive for weeks or months on an under-inflated tire before the warning light comes on.”

As cooler weather comes in, it’s especially important for motorists to check their tire pressures. For every 10-degree drop in outside temperature, tires typically lose one to two pounds per square inch (PSI).

Maintaining proper tire pressure is key to safe and efficient vehicle operation. AAA research shows that one in every three cars has a significantly under-inflated



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tire. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 660 fatalities and 33,000 injuries occur every year as the result of low-tire-pressure-related crashes. Driving on under-inflated tires is harmful for several reasons:

- **Unsafe.** Under-inflation causes tires to build excessive heat that can damage them over time and lead to failure. It can also degrade handling precision and increase stopping distances.
- **Not fuel-efficient.** For every PSI pressure drop in all four tires, gas mileage is reduced approximately 0.4 percent.
- **Increasing tire wear.** Under-inflated tires wear unevenly, reducing their lives.

For more information, visit www.AAA.com or your local AAA Approved Auto Repair facility.