

Drivers can “go green” by measuring tire inflation monthly

Toronto, May 6, 2008 – Canadian drivers will likely burn an extra 643 million litres of fuel in 2008 because one or more of their tires are under-inflated, according to data from Natural Resources Canada, which is working with the Rubber Association of Canada (RAC), to educate motorists about proper tire care. That is enough squandered fuel to fill 257 Olympic size swimming pools.

Unless drivers take action, this wasted fuel will release an additional one million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and cost drivers an estimated \$772 million in unnecessary fuel bills.

With fuel prices climbing ever higher, it is easy to see why tire maintenance is so important. A tire that is substantially under-inflated does not roll as smoothly or as easily as it was intended. This diminishes fuel efficiency because increased rolling resistance causes the vehicle to burn more fuel, which increases both emissions and fuel costs.

May 12 to 18, 2008, is National *Be Tire Smart Week*, during which the tire industry, including retailers, distributors and manufacturers, will be reminding motorists to use a tire gauge at least once a month to ensure their tires are inflated to the vehicle manufacturer’s recommendation.

According to an RAC survey, on any given day on Canada’s roadways nearly seven in 10 personal vehicles will have at least one tire that is over or under-inflated. Most disturbingly, 23 percent will have at least one tire seriously under-inflated by more than 20 percent.

“For Canadian drivers who care about the environment – not to mention fuel economy and safety – there is no easier way to contribute to cleaner air than measuring tire pressure,” says Glenn Maidment, President of the RAC. “Gaining the best possible tire-related fuel economy and performance is easy for motorists who take action. All it requires is some basic knowledge and five minutes each month to perform a few simple procedures to ensure your tires are properly inflated.”

Canadians can learn more about *Be Tire Smart Week* and the importance of proper tire inflation and maintenance by visiting www.betiresmart.ca.

According to a 2007 consumer tire attitude survey conducted for the RAC by Ipsos Reid, only 49 percent of Canada’s motorists actually take the time to measure their tire pressure monthly or more frequently. The study also found that only 40 percent know how to verify the correct inflation pressure for their tires (vehicle placard, owners manual or vehicle manufacturer’s recommendation). And just 38 percent are aware that tire pressure should only be measured when tires are “cold” (when a vehicle has been stationary for at least three hours, or has not been driven more than two kilometres).

On a more positive note, 81 percent of drivers surveyed reported using a tire gauge to measure pressure with only six percent saying they measured tire pressure visually.

The study also revealed that – among female drivers – awareness of the connection between proper tire pressure and vehicle safety has risen 15 percent since 2005. A similar study by the

RAC that year found that only 47 percent of female drivers equated proper tire inflation to safety.

Male drivers were significantly more likely than females to know that tires should be “cold” when air pressure is tested to ensure accuracy. Forty-eight percent of male drivers surveyed knew the right time to measure tire pressure, compared to 28 percent of female drivers. Age was also a factor among drivers who understood the proper time to test tire pressure. Forty-two percent of drivers over 45 knew the correct time to measure tire inflation, compared with 34 percent of drivers aged 16 to 45. Regionally, more drivers from British Columbia (45%) and Quebec (42%) identified the right time to test inflation pressure.

“We have made great strides in educating Canadians how to get the best performance from their tires, but clearly there is much more to be done,” says Maidment. “During National *Be Tire Smart Week*, drivers are encouraged to drop by their local tire retailers to learn from the tire professionals how to make sure their tires are always properly inflated and maintained.”

Be Tire Smart Week is an advocacy campaign designed to enable tire retailers to play a leadership role in educating the motoring public about the benefits of proper tire inflation and maintenance. The campaign is a joint initiative of the Rubber Association of Canada, which represents the tire industry, and Natural Resources Canada’s Office of Energy Efficiency. ***Be Tire Smart – Play Your P.A.R.T.***

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Ipsos Reid's Canadian Consumer Tire Attitude Survey was conducted via telephone in February 2007 with a national random sample of drivers of passenger vehicles. The margin of error is approximately ±3.1%.