



MIKES CORVETTE CORNER

Tire Care/Maintenance/Precautions Part 2

In my last column, we talked about tires in general, maintenance, air pressure, and safety. This month we'll talk about performance tires such as the Low Aspect Ratio, Ultra High Performance tires. These tires are designed for optimum performance and handling in warm climates. They are not suitable for cold, snowy, or icy weather conditions. These tires, for the most part, wear more quickly. Noise is also a consideration when selecting High Performance tires.

Maintain Proper Inflation:

The low aspect ratio of these tires indicated by the numeral "55" or less in the tires size designation. The numeral represents the ratio of the tires sidewall height in relation to its tread width expressed in percentage. More conventional low performance tires have a height/width ratio of 60 or more. Tire pressure for High Performance tires should be checked more often. You should be able to find the recommended tire pressure in your owners manual or by contacting the manufacturer of the tire.

Avoiding Tire Damage of High Performance Tires:

Low aspect ratio tires can easily be damaged by impact with potholes (what? In Michigan!) edged obstacles, curbs or ridges on highway surfaces, and more so if the tire is underinflated. After an impact, immediately inspect your tires or have them inspected by the authorized tire dealer. Inspect your tires regardless every 2000 miles.

Tire Specifications:

The knowledge of tire designations makes it easier to choose the correct tires. Radial ply tires use the following designations. (see below) Please note that other tire designations are coming as well, such as a tire for an electric vehicle which may have a rolling resistance spec, which of course will not be addressed in this column. For this tire specification/example we will use the 225/45/R 17 91 Z tire rating.....

225 = Tire width in mm

45 = Height/Width ratio in percentage %

R = Radial tire construction

17 = Rim diameter in inches

91 = Load rating code

Z = Speed rating code letter. (in this case over 150 mph)

Speed Rating:

Q - up to 99 MPH

S - up to 110 MPH

T - up to 118 MPH

U - up to 124 MPH

H - up to 130 MPH

V - up to 150 MPH

W - up to 168 MPH

Y - up to 186 MPH

Z - over 150 MPH.

Please note that “Z” tires carry the speed rating code letter in combination with the tire construction letter “R”

This final tip is more common sense than anything else. Potholes, sudden braking, and unexpected swerving to avoid road debris all put a car out of alignment over time. There is no getting around it, all cars are in a constant process of mis-aligning their suspension, and when it gets bad enough tires will get chewed up faster than nuts by a starving squirrel at the Planters nut factory. So spend the \$100 every couple of years (depending on use and road conditions) and protect that investment, because at the end of the day it is the only thing keeping you from losing control.

During the April 2016 meeting I was asked several questions regarding “Run Flat Tires” so, keeping with that theme, I will address the run flat tire issues in my June column.

**Regards
Mike**