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*Michelin Expert Offers Advice for Safe Driving Year 'Round.*

GREENVILLE, S.C. (April 25, 2003) – Whether they know it or not, good drivers go through a subconscious, mental checklist before hitting the road. Fill the gas tank. Check. Adjust the mirrors and seat. Check. However, most drivers neglect a quick inspection of their tires and that can prove dangerous and costly.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) at the U.S. Department of Transportation, one of every four (27 percent) passenger cars on U.S. roadways has one or more under inflated tires. NHTSA estimates that proper tire inflation could help save about 50 to 80 lives and prevent 6,600 to 10,600 injuries each year. Additionally, the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) estimates that 250,000 crashes a year result from improperly inflated tires.

As the RMA's National Tire Safety Week (April 27 to May 3, 2003) kicks off the summer travel season, the tire experts at Michelin offer advice to anyone planning an adventure in their vehicle.

"It's senseless for even one traffic fatality to happen because of under-inflated tires," says Mac Demere, Michelin test track driver and tire safety expert. "Taking five minutes to look over your tires each month should be as automatic as buckling a seat belt — and it's just about as easy."

Demere offers these basic tips for drivers to add to their pre-trip safety check:

- **Check tire pressure monthly and before any trip** — Before hitting the road, make sure that you have a tire gauge on hand and know how to use it. Low tire pressure makes a new tire perform like an old, worn-out tire. Look for the car-maker's recommended tire pressure setting on the driver's door jamb, on the glove compartment door, or in the owner's manual and inflate tires accordingly.
- **Replace tires properly** — If you only replace two tires at a time, mount them on the rear axle. Otherwise, your car could lose rear traction in the rain and spin out.
- **Check tire tread depth** — In most states, the minimum legal tread depth is 2/32 of an inch. If you place a penny in your tire's shallowest groove and you can see the top of Abraham Lincoln's head, it's time to buy new tires.
- **Proper alignment is important** — Have your car's suspension re-aligned when you buy new tires, if you notice uneven wear or if it has been a while since your last alignment. A suspension that is not aligned properly can wear out new tires after only a few thousand miles and adversely affect gas mileage.

While these tips may seem like common sense to some, a recent Michelin poll revealed that 20 percent of all drivers do not own a tire gauge and a surprising 25 percent have never changed a tire, revealing a huge need for tire safety education.

"A \$2 tire gauge, a quarter for the gas station air pump, and five minutes each month are all you need to make sure your tires are road worthy," says Demere. "These simple steps are well worth the minimal effort and can save you time and money in the long run."

Michelin manufactures and sells tires for every type of vehicle, including airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, earthmovers, farm equipment, heavy-duty trucks and the space shuttle. The company also publishes travel guides, maps and atlases covering Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. Headquartered in Greenville, S.C., Michelin North America employs 24,640 people and operates 22 plants in 18 locations.

For additional tire care tips visit [www.michelinman.com](http://www.michelinman.com).

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