Tires & Wheels: Tires

Description: Tires are simply the wearable and therefore replaceable part of the tire/wheel assembly. Although many different types of tire designs have been used since the dawn of the automobile, the radial tire has virtually replaced all other varieties. Radial tires, by far, deliver better safety and handling, fuel economy, steering, traction and cornering. The typical radial tire consists of a bead, a casing, belts, and tread. Today, nearly all tires have belts made from steel. Radial tires also last much longer than any previous tire design. Although driving habits and tire care play a key role in tire life, radial tires may last as long as 100,000 miles. Virtually all of today's tires used on automobiles, and many used on light trucks, have a tubeless design. This means there is not a separate balloon-like tube inside the tire, as was the case with older tire designs.

Purpose: Tires serve as the wearable part of the overall tire/wheel assembly, but they also play a large role in vehicle safety. Today's tires must provide good traction under a wide range of driving and road conditions while providing long tread wear.

Maintenance Tips/Suggestions: Check tire pressure frequently and also inspect the tires for abnormal tread wear and cuts and bruises along the sidewall. Rotate and balance the tires on a regular basis. If your car has a flat, have the tire professionally repaired. Since most flats are caused by damage to the tire, such as a puncture, anything less than quality repairs can affect the integrity of the tire. The best way to repair a tire is to have it removed from the rim, the inside inspected and corrective measures taken. The quick plug, done from the outside, is no longer recommended by the tire industry. According to experts, the repair could fail, inviting a blowout. When replacing tires, install only tires of the size recommended for your vehicle. Installing the wrong tires can result in contact with body panels or steering and suspension parts. The wrong tires can also affect speedometer readings and engine/transmission control.

Information provided by the Car Care Council (www.carcare.org)