

CHECK YOUR TYRES IN TIME 1997 - 2018

The Police, Liikenneturva (the Central Organisation for Traffic Safety in Finland) and Autonrengasliitto (The Tyre Specialists of Finland) have since 1997 gathered for a common cause to promote use of appropriate tyres to avoid aquaplaning. The Tyre Check safety campaign has made the drivers pay more attention to the condition of their tyres in the autumn which over the years has led to an improvement in the tyre condition.

Tyre safety has been brought to the consumers' attention through the informative Tyre Checks and active media campaigns. The campaigns encourage the drivers to keep an eye on the tread depth of their tyres in compliance to theme "**Check your tyres in time**". The theme emphasizes the driver's own responsibility in a positive way.

Many motorists are in the habit of driving their summer tyres till they are worn out in the autumn, when good road grip would be essential. Wet driving conditions and worn tyres makes a dangerous combination. Driving on worn-out summer tyres the tendency to aquaplaning increases and the braking distances become remarkably longer in wet conditions long before the tyres are worn to 1.6 mm, which is the minimum prescribed by law. According to the Wet Conditions Test carried out by Tekniikan Maailma in 2016, a new summer tyre prevented aquaplaning up to a speed of about 80 km/h. Driving with poor summer tyres, worn down to about two millimetres, aquaplaning incurred already at a speed of 70 km/h. With new winter tyres aquaplaning started at a speed of 69 km/h.

The poster "Are your tyres appropriate for the road conditions?" which is found on the front page of the ARL homepage, illustrates the performance of summer and winter tyres in different driving conditions. The braking performance is clearly better with summer tyres than with winter tyres when braking on wet asphalt. With new summer tyres the braking distance is 25 meters when braking at a speed of 80 km/h while with new winter tyres it is 39 meters. At a point where a car with new summer tyres stopped totally, the speed still was 45 km/h (Tekniikan Maailma's Wet Conditions Test 2016). The campaign emphasizes the importance of using tyres suitable for the weather conditions with the slogan "Summer tyres for summer use and winter tyres for winter use".

In wet conditions the road grip suddenly can get lost. On the homepages, the poster "Can you trust your paws?" shows how the area of contact between tyre and road dramatically diminishes when driving with worn tyres at an increasing speed. At a normal speed the area of contact between road and tyre is about the size of your palm but if you drive on worn-out tyres on a wet surface with 3 mm of water, the contact area shrinks to the size of your little finger.

The tyres are the most significant risk factor affecting driving properties in fatal car and van accidents. A tyre related risk of some kind has been involved in every seventh of the fatalities investigated in the 2000s. Tyres have been risked factors in 30 fatalities on an average per annum. Tyre related risks observed in accident investigations are associated in over 90 per cent of incidents with poor tyres, unsuitable tyres or incorrect tyre pressure.

In the campaign drivers are made aware of the fact that it is important to check the tyre pressure regularly. Too low pressure in the tyres increases the risk of accidents, fuel and tyre costs as well as environmental strain.

The main objective of the "Tyre Check" campaign is to remind motorists of the importance of safety in wet autumn conditions, activate drivers to pay attention to the condition of their tyres and to the tyre pressure and to encourage them to use safer tyres appropriate for the prevailing road conditions.

The safety recommendation for the tread depth of summer tyres is minimum **4 mm** in wet conditions, which is the core of the campaign message. The other messages being: furnish your car with tyres suitable for the driving conditions, check the tyre pressure at least once a month - not even the best tyres are of any help if the driver takes risks - and hand over your discarded tyres for recycling at no cost.

In connection with the tyre condition inspection the driver is asked to give an approximation of the condition of his tyres using the scale bad (0–2 mm), satisfactory (3–4 mm) and good (at least 5 mm).