

# NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Kristen Udowitz** (202) 682-4846

**E-Mail:** kristen@tmn.com

**Home Page:** <http://www.tisc.org>

## **EXTRA TIRE CARE CAN PREVENT POTHOLE DAMAGE, SAYS TIRE SAFETY GROUP**

Washington, D.C., -- The aftermath of snowy weather can leave behind potholes on streets and highways which is sure to play havoc with tires, wheels and front-end alignments, warns the Tire Industry Safety Council.

“To help minimize the chance of tire and wheel damage, keep tires properly inflated and let a tire dealer or other service professional periodically check for damage,” says Council Chairman Donald B. Shea.

Potholes are caused by the repeated freezing and thawing of moisture that seeps through the pavement. “Potholes can throw your car's front-end out of alignment, damage your car's wheels, and cause internal damage to your tires that may not be apparent from the outside,” Shea says. Keeping tires properly inflated not only improves fuel economy and extends tire life, but also helps reduce damage from potholes and other road hazards, he added.

“When you hit a pothole with an underinflated tire, you can damage the metal wheel of your vehicle,” Shea explained. “Conversely, when a tire is overinflated, hitting a pothole can damage the tire itself.” Refer to the vehicle owner's manual or placard (affixed to the vehicle door post or glove compartment door) for the proper tire inflation pressure for your vehicle.

Shea advised motorists to observe the road ahead in order to locate potholes and other road hazards before encountering them. “The impact of potholes on tires increases dramatically with speed and can cause hidden, internal damage which could lead to tire failure weeks, or even months, later.”

Shea said motorists never should brake during pothole impact. “Instead, apply brakes before hitting a pothole and release them just prior to impact.” Braking during impact sets up

the tire/wheel assembly for a “solid hit” against the edge of the hole, he explained. Less severe damage occurs when a tire is rolling than when it is skidding over the hole during braking.

Shea also noted that hitting potholes may cause front-end misalignment. “Tires with uneven wear patterns are evidence of misalignment,” Shea said. “If detected and corrected in time, you can extend the life of that tire.”

He advised that if the “feel” of the car's steering changes, have the alignment checked. “Also ask tire service personnel to check shock absorbers and brakes for any problems.”

The Council offers a free brochure on tire care for cars and light trucks. To order the guide, send a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope to: Tire Industry Safety Council, P.O. Box 3147, Medina, OH 44258. The Council also offers a tire care kit which includes an air pressure gauge, a tread depth gauge, four valve caps and a tire care brochure. To order a kit, send a check or money order for \$4.00 to the above address.

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