

WHEN TO ROTATE TIRES?



Ralph Seekins

Question: Is rotating tires a good idea? If so, when should it be done?

Answer: Tires are five of the most important components on your car and it's important that you take proper care of them. When you do, you will experience a better ride, longer tire life and a safer ride for you and your family. A lot of people take their vehicle's tires for granted. Proper tire pressure and regular rotation are two measures most owners seem to ignore.

Rotating your tires can lessen wear and extend the tire life if done regularly. I recommend rotating the right front tire to the left rear and the left front tire to the right rear at least every six months. Many experts recommend rotating every 5,000 to 10,000 miles. I recommend that you have the rotation done with a regular lube, oil and filter service to save time. Some folks

do it when they change from summer to winter tires and then again when they change back to summer tires. A simple chalk mark on the inside sidewall will remind you where each tire should go when it's time to put them back on. One thing to remember here is that you SHOULD NOT rotate the tires unless all four are the same size. On my vehicle, I make sure all the tires are the same size and from the same manufacturer. Check the sidewall to see the tire size and manufacturer before starting a rotation.

When talking about tires, I think it's wise to mention that tire pressure should be checked and adjusted more than once a month. There are lots of reasons tires lose pressure. For example, tire pressure changes about one pound for every ten degrees change in ambient temperature. So a tire with 30

pounds of pressure at 80 degrees will have only 20 pounds of pressure at minus 20 degrees – a dangerous situation. And tires that are worn have a tendency to lose pressure regularly. That low pressure combined with less tread depth makes it a lot harder to stop on snow, ice or wet pavement. And overinflated tires cause harsh ride, poor handling and excessive wear.

Finally, I spoke about tires being five of the most important components on your vehicle. The fifth tire is the spare. I can't tell you how many times in 40 years I've had people tell me about experiencing a flat tire only to find that the spare tire is either missing or is also flat. Pickup trucks with no lock on the spare tire have a regular incidence of "losing" their spare. And air can leak out of a spare tire over time leaving it unserviceable when you need it the most. Check the air pressure on your spare at least every couple months.

If you have any questions about your tires, please feel free to stop by our Quick Lane. Our team will be glad to answer your questions with absolutely no obligation. Properly maintaining your car or truck will help make sure your vehicle is in safe condition for driving.

Ralph Seekins has more than 42 years' experience in the automotive industry. He started as a mechanic, worked in sales, and for the past 35 years, has been the owner of Seekins Ford Lincoln.