

TIRE SAFETY “EVERY THING RIDES ON IT”

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Why does Civil Air Patrol have so much emphasis on tire safety, especially tire pressure? The National Highway Transportation Safety Agency (NHTSA) studies show that a tire 25% below the **vehicle manufactures recommended tire pressure** is three times as likely to be involved in an accident while a tire 25% above the recommended tire pressure is twice as likely to be involved in an accident (July 4, 2016).



How many accidents are we talking about? The NHTSA data found that there are nearly 11,000 tire related motor vehicle accidents per year. Many of these accidents were the result of low tire pressure. Low tire pressure is one of the leading causes of tire failure in the country and results in thousands of injuries and an

estimated 41 deaths every year (Feb 22, 2022). Weather is the next leading cause of motor vehicle accidents. Combined, these two factors can be deadly.

Having under inflated tires can make your vehicle more difficult to steer, more difficult to stop on wet or icy roads and can make it easier to lose control of the vehicle. Bottom line, **a vehicle without appropriate tire pressure is more accident prone.**

Low tire pressure also contributes to excessive tire wear. The under inflated tire does not ride on the road properly, shortens the life span of the tire, and reduces fuel efficiency.

What is the correct tire pressure for your vehicle? Our fleet contains many different types of vehicles, large vans, small vans, SUV's, and pick-up trucks. CAPR 77-1, 3-1a5 states that the **vehicle manufactures recommended tire pressure** determines the correct tire pressure for each vehicle. This normally can be found on the sticker of the driver side door post. Unit Transportation Officers should stencil this tire pressure on the wheel well above each tire (CAPR77-1 2-1b). Remember tire pressure may be different for front and back tires.

We have told you **WHY** we emphasize vehicle tire pressure. Next, is **HOW** do vehicle drivers ensure they are driving vehicles with the correct tire pressure? First, we must ensure that each vehicle has a tire gage. CAPR 77-1, 2-1 answers this question “Prior to the first use of the day, vehicle operators will perform a safety check using CAPF 73...”. This safety check includes a visual inspection of each tire (tread wear, damage, age of tire) and checking the tire pressure of each tire. If the tire pressure is low or high, it needs to be corrected before using the vehicle for a mission or activity. The first time the vehicle is used during the month, after checking the tire pressure, the vehicle driver needs to “sign and date” the CAPF 73 indicating tire pressure was checked.

Additional information can be found in CAPR 77-1 Attachment 2.