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Tires, Treads and Trust

Enterprise Car Sales

Selecting the right tires for your car is an important decision. Safety, vehicle performance and fuel efficiency over thousands of miles are all affected by this decision. But choosing the right tires for different vehicles and different driving conditions can be more than just a little confusing.

A good place to start is by understanding all the different sidewall markings on a tire. In addition to the tire brand and model names, basic information may include the tire's dimensions, production date, materials used internally to reinforce the rubber, and maximum inflation pressures and loads. More detailed information may indicate a manufacturer's certification that the tire meets various industry standards and/or any government regulations.

One of the most important markings is the tire size designation, which is indicated by a letter or letters that identify the type of vehicle and/or type of service for which the tire is intended.

For example, tire sizes beginning with a P are generally designed for passenger vehicles such as cars, minivans, sport utility vehicles and light duty pickup trucks (typically one-quarter and one-half ton load capacity). If the first letter is a T, that signifies that the tire is a temporary spare, space saver spare or mini spare and should be used only for a short time.

The letters LT have a different meaning depending on whether they appear at the beginning of the tire size designation or at the end. If they appear at the beginning, it signifies that it is a light truck-metric size designed to be used on vehicles that are capable of carrying heavy cargo or towing large trailers, such as medium and heavy-duty pick-up trucks, sport utility vehicles and full-size vans. On the other hand, a tire that ends with LT indicates a wider, oversized tire designed for carrying heavy cargo and towing trailers or to drive over loose dirt or sandy surfaces.

Another important marking is the uniform tire quality grading (UTQG), which provides information regarding tread wear, traction and temperature. Basically, the higher the number, the longer the tread will last. Tire traction, based on the tire's ability to stop on wet concrete and asphalt, is rated AA, A, B or C, with AA at the top of the scale. The traction rating has nothing to do with the tire's cornering ability. Finally, tire temperature ratings of A, B or C measure how well the tire dissipates heat and how well it handles heat buildup.

However, it is not uncommon for there to be differences in UTQG ratings within a given tire design. In addition, each tire manufacturer has its own philosophy about UTQG ratings. Therefore, it is important to be cautious when comparing ratings because they may not be “apples to apples”.

Finally, choosing between all-season tires and touring tires can also be confusing. All-season tires, one of the most cost effective tire types, are designed to provide a smooth ride, long wear and adequate traction in dry and wet weather conditions. Touring tires, designed for late model luxury vehicles and available in all-season and summer treads, feature a combination of enhanced performance and excellent ride and handling characteristics with slightly lower profiles and wider tread. Neither of these may be suitable in snow-belt areas during the winter months.

All tires may be black and round, but that’s where the similarities stop. With most tires being replaced every three to five years, resulting in approximately 200 million replacement tires purchased each year, there is no doubt that it is very important to get a grip on understanding what tires will do the best job for your vehicles.

For more information to help you get more mileage on a great quality used car, go to www.cuautodeals.com.

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About Enterprise Car Sales

Enterprise Car Sales, which has sold more than one million used cars, has approximately 150 U.S. locations. Its tailored used-car buying programs create opportunities for credit unions to increase their used-car loan portfolio and optimize member loyalty. As a result of partnering with credit unions during the past 30 years, Enterprise Car Sales has helped generate \$7 billion in loan volume for more than a thousand credit unions nationwide.

Enterprise Holdings, headquartered in St. Louis, owns and operates Enterprise Car Sales and Enterprise Rent-A-Car through its regional subsidiaries – with more than 5,000 Enterprise rental offices located within 15 miles of 90 percent of the U.S. population. Enterprise Car Sales offers a wide selection of late-model used cars for sale – more than 120 makes and models – on site locally as well as online at www.cuautodeals.com. For more information about how Enterprise Car Sales partners with credit unions, visit www.enterprisecarsales.com/perfectpartnership