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ON A ROLL WITH INTELLIGENT TIRE MACHINERY



Adam Gosling

Adam Gosling leads the TyreSafe Australia team providing guidance and direction for mining and transport fleets around the globe. The TyreSafe Australia team members work various road and transport agencies and organisations steering tyre safety as a prime topic. *The National*

Road Safety Partnership Program (nrsp.org.au) and Heavy Vehicle Industry Association (HVIA.asn.au) are partners in the push for improved road safety. "Look after your tyres so when you call upon them to look after you they will be able to" is a mantra the TyreSafe Australia team use often.)

*CATCH 2TIRED TYRES2

Why do humans always choose to look with eyes shut when considering tyres, personal safety and the safety of other road users?

The novel *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller details the quandary a military serviceman found himself in where he knew what he was doing was crazy, but in order to be recognised as crazy he had to be deemed sane.

"There was only one catch and that was *Catch-22*, that specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn't, but if he was sane, he had to fly them. Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of the clause of *Catch-22* and let out a respectful whistle. That's some catch, that *Catch-22*," he observed.

The humble tyre is in exactly the same situation. We choose to ignore our tyres even though they are telling us: "We're not right, we're down on pressure, we're worn in an irregular fashion, we're anything but the way we're supposed to be." And, as drivers, we continue to ignore them or, as I choose to say, we ASSuMe our tyres are 'ok'.

So many of us wait until the tyre tells us, usually by failing in a catastrophic manner which could involve physical harm to us, our family or even to total strangers before we take any notice, the ORR effect (if you knew you would be concerned about your personal safety). The ASS in this situation for the tired tyres soon becomes apparent when standing beside a vehicle with a failed tyre, or looking at an empty wallet because we've chosen not to maintain our tyres to extract the highest level of safety as well as the best economics from an appropriately inflated tyre.

Why do humans always choose to look with eyes shut tight when considering their tyres

and their personal safety as well of other road users?

Superb service provider

The humble tyre provides our society with superb service. Tyres support the many forms of transport that bring us everything in our daily lives. Our food and shelter were brought to us on a vehicle supported by our faithful servant, the tireless tyres. Yet, we ignore the basic requirement that a tyre asks for, that is, to have the appropriate volume of air enabling it to work for us without complaint right up to the point of its ultimate demise.

Many governments around the globe have understood the ramifications of inadequately maintained tyres. The TREAD Act (USA) specified Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS) for all light passenger vehicles in 2000 and mandated TPMS for this class of passenger vehicles from 2008. The EU followed these in 2012, many other countries have followed. TPMS is a mature and proven technology that alerts a driver to a potentially dangerous situation at worst, a money losing outcome at best.

As the tyre industry well knows, tyres are simply a container for the inflation medium. Everyone knows that a flat tyre will support no load BUT many still ASSuMe their tyres are 'ok' without really knowing whether the humble tyre is actually 'ok'.

Humans and tyres

Humans and tyres share alike attributes. A human requires the appropriate volume of blood circulating through the body at the pressure our bodies require. We all understand that our blood carries the oxygen we need to live. Without enough blood, or at a pressure that is too low or too high, a human will become very sick and could be in danger of dying. A tyre requires the appropriate volume and pressure of the inflation medium. Without this level

TYRE SAFETY TALK

of inflation, the tyre will suffer the same outcomes, i.e. it will reach end of life before it is time. Even an engine is similar, without the right amount of oil, the engine will over heat and wear out faster, it may well meet its ultimate demise in a catastrophic failure. A tyre is absolutely no different.

So why do we engage in *Catch 22* with our tyres? We ASSuME they are 'ok' when we don't really know? Why do we have to prove our insanity of not checking our tyres to understand that we are actually sane by not doing so? Yes, it makes great sense, doesn't it?

Benefits of technology

Technology has yielded great improvements in tyres over many years. The introduction of radial construction has seen the tyre evolve into a high-performance component of the modern motor vehicle. Material science has added benefits in improved life and higher performance. The modern passenger car tyre would outperform by magnitudes tyres that were standard when I was young. For the technologists amongst us, consider MotoGP tyres which allow riders lean angles of 55° and extreme braking where speeds are reduced by 100's of km/hr in 10's of metres.

Such performance was science fiction when I was racing in the 70's & 80's. Yet the single limiting factor in the performance of tyres on our modern motor vehicles is the inflation pressures, and the lack of maintenance of these pressures endanger us every day we use tyres. Catch TiredTyres!

So, many of us still continue to drive our vehicles with tyres that are not appropriately inflated and wonder why our fuel consumption is higher than it should be, why our tyres wear out faster than they should, why when we stamp on the brakes for an emergency stop the vehicle doesn't respond as we expect it should. Don't ASSuME your tyres are 'ok', check the inflation pressures even if you have OEM TPMS. These systems will only alert you when the tyre is dangerously low in pressure!

Don't let your tyres become tired! Look after your tyres well, so when you call upon them to look after you and your passengers, they will be ready to respond as you expect.

*Headline courtesy: Joseph Heller's novel, *Catch 22* ■

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