

Proper inflation

Nitrogen comes to consumers

By Justin Welk

The next time you get a set of new tires or get work done at a tire shop, you might drive out of the building with something different in your tires ... nitrogen.

According to many professionals who rely on inflated tires of some kind, nitrogen works better than oxygen (a main component in air) because it won't migrate out of a tire as fast as oxygen, it contains no moisture like oxygen, and it is an inert gas with larger molecules than oxygen that won't expand or contract as much as oxygen during extreme heat or cold.

Early adopters of nitrogen include NASA (in space shuttle tires), NASCAR (in stock car tires), and Tour de France racers (in bicycle tires). Every military, commercial, and government aircraft uses nitrogen in tires.

The benefits of nitrogen include longer tire wear due to proper inflation and less oxidation of metal components that come in contact with the air normally used in tires ... steel belting, valve stems, metal wheels, and side walls.

Of course, one of the most convincing arguments for maintaining proper tire pressure was recently hashed out in a court of law between the Ford Motor Company and Firestone/Bridgestone. Perhaps with nitrogen inflation the accidents involving Ford Explorers would never have happened.

So, look for nitrogen at your favorite tire store soon.