

Get a grip on road safety this holiday

By [Darren Chetty](#), issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

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As another year draws to a close, many will be taking the opportunity over the next few weeks to hit the road and explore with their loved ones. In the bustle of making arrangements, checking that your car's tyres are safe for the road ahead should be right up there with wearing seat belts, avoiding fatigue and cellphone use, and not speeding.



As one of the leading tyre manufacturers in South Africa, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA) takes the safety of our customers extremely seriously. We acknowledge that families trust us with their loved ones, both in our factories and on the road, hence safety is part of our DNA and central to everything we do – from manufacturing of our products to delivery and ensuring their safe use on the road.

Consumers should have tyre safety uppermost in their minds, especially during peak road travel periods like over the festive season, when heavy traffic volumes and an increase in driver error mean that tyres need to work even harder to keep them safe.

Why is tyre safety important?

Your tyres are the only part of your vehicle that directly meets the road surface. In an emergency, the tyres need to have sufficient friction to come to a stop.

If your tyres are worn or damaged, this could reduce their grip, resulting in the vehicle failing to stop timeously or in the case of wet weather, the car could aquaplane. That's not an experience you want to have when you're travelling with your most precious cargo – your loved ones.

At SRSA we strive to develop tyre products with an emphasis on customer safety and comfort, while pursuing high levels of product quality and economy. Through ongoing research, development and proactive testing, we work to ensure that the newest, most ground-breaking innovations are incorporated in our product designs, resulting in enhanced performance, safety, and longevity of our tyres.

Our #SaferthanSafe initiative is a vehicle that SRSA uses to lobby for awareness, training and education about the importance of safe tyres, and we also have partnerships in place to help counter the use of dangerous second-hand tyres on our road.

We believe that staying #SaferthanSafe this holiday is possible if you bear a few important things in mind before you take the road:

- Before jumping into the car for your year-end holiday, take 5 minutes to walk around the vehicle. Do this a few days before you leave so that you have enough time to spare to make any changes to your tyres.
- Inspect tyres (including the spare tyre) for uneven tyre wear, or seek a professional tyre expert's assistance. Make sure the tyres have sufficient tread for the road ahead. Any tyres that are bald, under inflated or over inflated, can be dangerous.



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Quick fact: Dunlop tyres have tread wear indicators built into the tyre's tread grooves at 1.6 mm to indicate when they are worn. Tread is the rubber on the tyre that touches the road surface. The legal limit for a tyre tread groove shouldn't be below 1mm across the tread surface at any point. In most cases, tyres are manufactured with tread wear indicators that are built into the grooves of tyres at 1.6 mm. When the tread wear indicators are flush with the level of the tread, then the tyre must be replaced. Any tyre with a tread depth below 1.6 mm lacks grip, and will increase braking distance and compromise vehicle control. These tyres are not safe for driving and must be replaced.

- Ensure that all your vehicles – including trailers and caravans – are roadworthy and thoroughly checked before embarking on a long journey. Book any services or maintenance well in advance of your trip.
- Check you have all the necessary tools to change a tyre if needed, including a red warning triangle. This includes tools for a tyre change on any vehicle you are towing.
- Check your tyre pressure regularly before, during and after your trip, preferably when your tyres are cold, like in the mornings. You can find your vehicle's optimal tyre pressure in your car manual, or the information label on the side of the driver's door.
- Be cautious and do not speed. Keep your eyes on the road.
- If your tyres hit a road hazard, immediately check your tyre pressure as well as any residual signs of dents and tearing.
- Have your tyres rotated at least every 8,000km or at least once a year.
- Do not overload your tyres – check the carrying capacity on the sidewall of each tyre.
- Do not speed, so that you have enough reaction time to steer clear of people, potholes or other hazards.
- To help ease the cost of replacing irreparably damaged tyres, take out tyre cover such as Dunlop Sure, which includes a complimentary package of services providing peace of mind when purchasing tyres from Dunlop's own network of stores (Dunlop Zone, Dunlop Commercial, Dunlop Express and Dunlop Container).
- Check brakes, windscreen wipers, lights and indicator functionality regularly.

If you are unsure about your tyres' health or have experienced a recent road hazard that could have affected them, pop into a tyre expert retailer such as your local Dunlop store to help you assess your tyres.

Please stay #SaferThanSafe if you're planning any road travel this holiday!

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