

Section Four Before You Drive

This Section Covers

- Inspecting Your Vehicle
- Adjusting Seat and Mirrors
- Using Safety Belts
- Air Bags
- Child Passenger Safety Laws
- Secure Your Load

Inspecting Your Vehicle

When it comes to road safety, you can't control other drivers or road conditions, but one thing you can control is proper maintenance of your vehicle and tires.



Crashes due to tire maintenance are preventable, and simple steps can save lives. Driving on underinflated or overinflated tires or tires with low tread can lead to safety issues on the road.

Check Tire Pressure with a Pressure Gauge Monthly

- Buy a tire pressure gauge if you don't have one already.
- Open your car door; on the inside jamb, you should see a sticker. Write down or take a picture of the number that says "PSI" (the measurement for tire pressure).
- Remove the cap from the valve stem and use the pressure gauge to check the tire pressure (make sure you check when they are cold).
- Compare the number on the gauge with the number you wrote down. If the number is too high, let air out of your tires. If the number is too low, inflate your tires until the numbers match.



Check Tread Depth with a Penny

- Hold a penny with Abraham Lincoln's body between your thumb and forefinger.
- Place Lincoln's head first into the deepest-looking groove.
- Can you see all of his head? If yes, your tires are too worn—don't drive on them, and make sure to get them replaced.



Adjusting Seat and Mirrors

You should be seated upright with your back against the seat and feet on the floor. Improper seating positions, such as slouching, can result in reduced effectiveness of the vehicle's restraint system. Adjust your seat and mirrors before you start to drive so you can see clearly and have full control of the vehicle's foot pedals and steering wheel with appropriate space for airbag deployment.



- Your foot should be able to pivot smoothly from brake to accelerator while your heel is kept on the floor.
- The top of the steering wheel should be no higher than the top of your shoulders and below chin level.