



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 25, 2005

CONTACTS:
Daniel Zielinski
Rubber Manufacturers Association
202-682-4846/703-582-3387 (cell)
Jen Atkinson
Dittus Communications
202-775-1401

RESEARCH REVEALS THAT 85 PERCENT OF DRIVERS DON'T PROPERLY CHECK TIRE PRESSURE

National Tire Safety Week Seeks Emphasis on Proper Maintenance

Washington, D.C., April 25, 2005 – Tire manufacturers, motorist safety advocates, federal and state highway safety officials today launched a joint effort to educate motorists about the benefits of proper tire care.

The announcement occurred at the kick-off for National Tire Safety Week, an initiative of the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA). As part of its "Be Tire Smart – Play Your PART" program, RMA has designated the last week of April to be dedicated to motorist education of proper tire care. PART stands for **P**ressure, **A**lignment, **R**otation and **T**read.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), AAA, Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) and RMA will work together to promote tire care and maintenance to motorists by making such information widely available through tire retailers, auto dealers, auto repair shops and other outlets.

An RMA nationwide survey conducted in February, found:

- ✓ Only 15 percent of drivers properly check their tire inflation pressure. Properly checking tires means checking at least once a month before tires have been driven even a mile and inflating them to the vehicle manufacturer's recommended pressure, not the pressure listed on the tire sidewall.
- ✓ 29 percent of drivers wrongly believe that the best time to check their tires is when they are warm after being driven at least a few miles.
- ✓ Two out of three drivers don't know how to tell if their tires are bald.
- ✓ 73 percent of drivers do not check their tire pressure in their spare tire.

"Clearly, consumers need to be reminded about basic tire care practices," said Donald B. Shea, RMA president and CEO. "Properly inflated tires maximize safety, improve fuel economy and will help tires last longer."

-more-

In partnership with RMA's "Be Tire Smart" campaign, the NHTSA also announced the launch of its tire safety initiative called "What's Your PSI?" This campaign focuses on maintaining the proper tire pressure, or PSI (pounds per square inch), in every vehicle on America's roadways. NHTSA statistics show that approximately one out of every four vehicles on the road has a significantly under inflated tire and that 660 fatalities and 33,000 injuries occur every year as a result of low tire pressure-related crashes.

According to NHTSA Administrator, Jeffrey W. Runge, "The tragedies associated with under inflated tires can so easily be prevented." By asking every driver, "What's Your PSI?" Dr. Runge hopes people will locate their vehicle's tire information label, find the proper pressure for their tires and ensure their tires are filled to that recommended pressure. "Checking your tire pressure once a month should be as basic as buckling your safety belt," said Dr. Runge.

AAA clubs across the nation often see the consequences of the lack of tire maintenance. Nearly four million of the 29.5 million service calls (13.2 percent) AAA receives annually are tire related. To help consumers with tire care, more than 7,500 AAA-approved repair facilities provide free maintenance and safety inspections of AAA members' vehicles when other work is performed. These inspections include a check for tire wear and inflation.

"Making sure tires are properly inflated is one of the easiest and most important maintenance procedures consumers can do for themselves," said John Nielsen, director of AAA's Approved Auto Repair Network. "By acquiring the habit of checking tire pressure each month, motorists can improve road safety for themselves, their passengers and other motorists."

Members of the Governors Highway Safety Association also have pitched in to help promote tire care. GHSA members oversee a variety of motorist safety programs in their respective states.

"We're going to be working with NHTSA, RMA and AAA to do what we can to maximize communication of these important tire care measures that motorists can take to promote safety," said Vince Burgess, Vice Chairman, Governors Highway Safety Association.

As a kick-off to National Tire Safety Week, RMA is co-hosting tire safety events in Washington, D.C. and Phoenix today. Each event invites motorists for a free tire inflation pressure and tread wear check. This year, more than 12,000 retail stores across the country will be distributing RMA tire safety information. Nearly every tire retail outlet provides free tire pressure inflation services to all motorists.

More information about the "Be Tire Smart – Play Your PART" program and National Tire Safety Week can be found at www.betiresmart.org. Additional tire safety information can be found at NHTSA's web site, www.safercar.gov and on AAA club web sites at www.aaa.com.

#

The Rubber Manufacturers Association is the national trade association for the tire and rubber products industry. RMA members employ over 120,000 workers and account for more than \$21 billion in annual sales.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), under the U.S. Department of Transportation is responsible for reducing deaths, injuries and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes on our nation's highways.

AAA advocates highway and vehicle safety measures on behalf of its 48 million members nationwide. AAA also provides its members with a wide range of services through its 1000-plus retail branches, regional operations centers, and the Internet.

The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is the states' voice on highway safety. GHSA represents the highway safety programs of states and territories on the human behavioral aspects of highway safety.