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Internal Revenue Service

Tax Deductions

Tax Questions

Income Tax

Tax Forms

Filing Taxes

Federal Income Tax

State Taxes

Tax Rate

Types of Taxes

Payroll Taxes

Tax Preparation Services

Property Taxes


H&R Block

History of Taxes


SAFETY CENTERS

 [Safety Articles](#)


 [Terrorism](#)

 [Women](#)


 [Travel](#)


 [Child and Teen](#)

 [Seniors](#)

 [Product Safety](#)

 [Health and Food](#)


 [Home and Fire](#)

 [Weather and Disaster](#)

 [Internet and Privacy](#)

 [Automotive](#)

BUSINESS CENTERS

 [Industrial and Insurance](#)

 [Workplace](#)

Taxes, Death, and Flat Tires

Flat tires are inconvenient and often dangerous. Getting a flat tire can cause you to be late to where you want to go, at the very least. It can also cause potentially fatal accidents if it flattens while you are driving. A flat tire can cause your car to spin out of control into another car, a barrier, or off the road entirely. Whether you are lucky or not, a flat tire is not something anyone wants to endure.

There are many measures you can take to prevent your car from getting a flat. Tire care is extremely important, yet it is often ignored. Take the time to ensure the reliability of your tires and you could save a life!

Check Your Tires

Check your tires regularly. It is important that the tread, or the ridges in the rubber, wear evenly. You can visually inspect your treads, or you can invest in a tread-depth gauge for \$20. Make sure that the treads on the outer edges and in the center of the tires are even and at least half an inch deep. A simple way to measure this is to stick a penny in the grooves. If you can see Lincoln's head, it is time to replace your tires. If the wear is uneven, you can try adjusting the pressure. If there is more wear down the middle of the tire, let some air out. If the inside and outside edges are more worn, add air to the tires. While you are inspecting the treads, look out for any cuts, holes, or objects lodged in the tire.

At least once a month, you should check the pressure in all of your tires. Don't forget to check the spare, which can lose air over time even if it's not in use. You can buy a gauge at any auto supply store and at many hardware stores. The recommended tire pressure is listed in your vehicle's manual, stamped on the side of the tire, and often printed on a sticker on the inside of the driver's side door. Usually it is 32 pounds per square inch.

Be Prepared for a Flat!

You can get a flat tire even if you routinely check them. Pack a tire emergency kit and keep it in your car at all times.

You should also always carry a fully inflated spare tire, a car jack, and a lug wrench in case of a flat. If you have not changed a tire many times before, bring along easy-to-follow instructions to jog your memory. While changing a tire is relatively easy, it also has the potential to be quite dangerous.

Before you begin changing the tire, pull your car off the road as far as you can. Activate your hazard lights, and light flares to alert other drivers to the fact that you may be near the road. If you can't get far enough away from moving traffic, call for help. A tire change is not worth your life.

-- Bailey Stoler

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