

Key Findings

Tyre Safety and ***Tread Depth*** Awareness in the UK

October 2024



Executive Summary

TyreSafe, in collaboration with Anyline, commissioned Opinium to conduct a comprehensive study aimed at assessing UK drivers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours surrounding tyre safety, with a particular focus on tyre tread depth. This research, fielded between 6th and 10th September 2024, surveyed a representative sample of 2,000 UK drivers aged 17 and above – weighted to Office of National Statistics (ONS) criteria. The findings shed light on the general understanding of tyre tread regulations, the frequency of tyre checks, and the factors influencing driver behaviours.

This research provides crucial insights into the gaps in tyre safety awareness, particularly among younger and less experienced drivers. As tyre safety plays a critical role in overall road safety, the findings underline the importance of promoting better education and more frequent checks, especially given the legal and financial ramifications of neglecting tyre maintenance. Businesses and policy makers can use these insights to inform future campaigns and develop tools, such as mobile apps, that encourage regular tyre checks.



Knowledge and Understanding of Tyre Tread Depth

96% OF UK DRIVERS ARE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF TYRE TREAD DEPTH

The average UK driver has held their driving license for almost 29 years (28.6 years) and this increases to 43 years for those aged 55+. Interestingly, those in the East of England have held their driving licence for the longest at nearly 34 and a half years (34.4 years) and those in London have had it the least at nearly 19 years (18.6 years).

When it comes to the importance of tyre tread depth, most UK drivers (86%) have at least heard a lot about it and 66% know exactly what it is. This knowledge decreases to 64% for Gen Z drivers - those born from 1997 to 2012 - in comparison to 95% of Boomers - people born from 1945 to 1965. Most UK drivers have at least heard of tyre tread depth (96%) and interestingly this awareness increases with age at 91% for 18-34-year-olds, 96% for 35-54-year-olds and finally 99% for those aged 55+.

However, while many claim to have at least heard of the importance of tyre tread depth, not everyone can accurately identify what it means. Almost three quarters (72%) of UK drivers correctly defined tyre tread depth as the vertical measurement between the top of the rubber tread and the bottom of the tyre's deepest grooves and is used to maintain grip on the road. However, 27% either incorrectly defined it or didn't know how to define it.

A FIFTH OF UK DRIVERS DON'T CHECK THEIR TYRE TREAD AS THEY DON'T DRIVE OFTEN

Nearly 8 in 10 adults (78%) check their tyre tread depth at least once a year, almost a fifth (19%) check it monthly, which is the recommended frequency, and 6% weekly. Those in Newcastle are most likely to check it weekly (11%). Only one in ten (9%) check their tyre tread up to every two weeks.

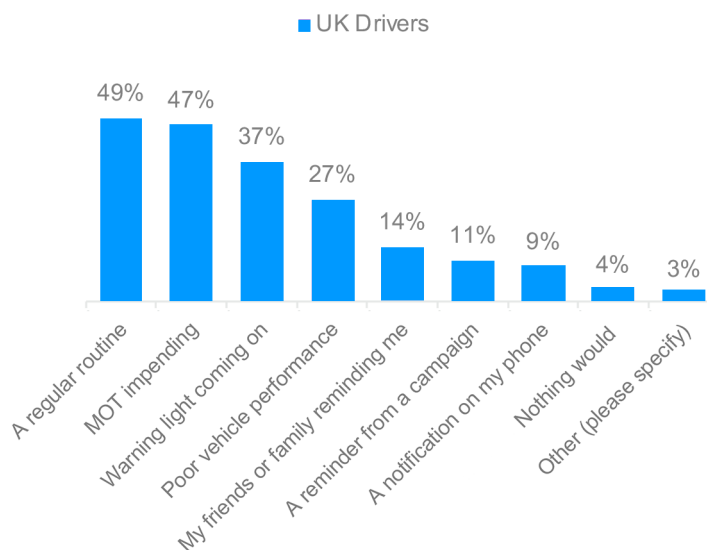
Looking at the reasons UK drivers do not check their tyre tread depth as frequently as every two weeks, a fifth (20%) say it's simply because they don't drive enough, with this increasing to 27% for those aged 55+. Although 16% of UK drivers rely on others to check and therefore don't need to remember, this increases to 30% for those that never check their tyre tread depth. More than a tenth (12%) either forget or are too lazy to check it, while a little less (9%) have never thought about checking it, with this increasing to 15% for those unaware of fines they could receive for their tyre tread below legal level.

OVER A THIRD OF UK DRIVERS RELY ON VISUAL INSPECTION

Over seven in ten (72%) of UK drivers claim to know their current tyre tread, and almost one in five (19%) know this exactly. Interestingly, nearly a third (31%) of those in the North East know their tyre tread exactly. Alternatively, 28% of UK drivers don't know this and this increases to over two in five (42%) for those in Wales.

Among those who have checked it, over a third (36%) check their tyre tread depth with just their eyes, this is followed by those using 20p coin tests and tyre tread depth gauges (both 29%). UK drivers still rely on friends, parents and family members (14%) to check their tyre tread depth, the younger adult population are more reliant on this strategy. Those 18-34-year-olds (26%) rely on others to do it for them and this falls to 14% for 35-54-year-olds and to 8% for those aged 55+. One in ten (11%) do so by running their finger around the tyre tread and 7% use a scanner or some other modern technology. Among

What would prompt a tyre check?



those UK drivers who check their tyre tread depth, the main motivators are that it's part of their regular vehicle maintenance routine (57%) and due to their safety concerns (55%). Positively, nearly a third (31%) check their tyre tread depth as they don't want to cause danger to others, and this increases to 43% for those that check their tyre tread depth Bi-weekly. Others fear the legal consequences (27%) or because they get advice from family or friends to do so (11%).

Half (50%) of UK drivers rely on their mechanic to decide on what replacement tyres to put on their vehicle if they needed to change them, Gen Z has less reliance on this (37%), this increases for 35-54 year-olds (48%) and to 58% for those aged 55+. The Gen Z age group has more of a tendency to research this question themselves (22%) in comparison to 20% of the total population.

Many are prompted to check their tyres as part of their regular routine (49%) and this increases to almost six in ten (61%) for those in the Silent Generation - people born from 1928 to 1945. Nearly a half (47%) of UK drivers check their tyres when they have an upcoming MOT.

HALF WOULD CHECK THEIR TYRE TREAD DEPTH MORE IF THEY HAD AN APP THAT COULD MEASURE IT

The availability of an app that would allow UK drivers to check their tyre tread depth via their smartphone would influence over half (54%) to check their tread depth more frequently with a quarter (25%) believing they would check much more frequently.

Most (89%) UK drivers understand the importance of tyre safety for overall road safety, and this increases with the older population. Where, 92% of the Silent Generation, 91% of Boomers, 90% for



both Gen X and Millennials and falls to 77% for Gen Z. Worryingly, some 6% do not find it important and this increases to 11% for Gen Z.

It is common for UK drivers to not know the minimum tyre tread depth, where 62% believe a different measurement to the legal requirement and this increases to 70% for those in the North West and Wales. Interestingly, two in five (38%) know the 1.6mm minimum legal requirement and this increases to 57% for those in the North East.

MANY DON'T UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL FINES AND POINTS FOR ILLEGAL TYRE TREAD DEPTH

Over seven in ten (71%) claim they have knowledge of the monetary fine associated with tyre tread depth below legal requirements, this increases to 79% for those aged 55+. On a positive note, at least 89% are aware of these fines rising to 93% for those in the South West. However, many believe this fine to be almost £900 at a £872.5 average assumption, yet this fine can rise to £2,500 indicating that many don't understand how costly a fine can be. Gen Z believe an average of £1047.9 in comparison to Boomers who think it is around £600 at an average of £620.4.

Not as many UK adults say they are aware they can lose points on their licence for below legal limit tyre depth. Just over half (56%) have knowledge of this impact but almost a fifth (18%) have never heard of this, rising to 24% of those in the South East have never heard of this. While this is the case, only a third (36%) correctly identified that drivers can get 3 points on their licence for driving on each individual tyre that falls below the legal tread depth level. The remaining could not correctly identify the right number of points (25%) or said they do not know (39%).

Almost a fifth (18%) either have experienced a problem themselves or know someone that has due to worn or damaged tyres. Interestingly, the majority (76%) haven't, at 86% for those in the East of England.

ABOUT TYRESAFE

TyreSafe is a leading UK road safety organisation and the national reference point for all aspects of tyre safety. With a strong foundation in up-to-date research, data, and the support of over 130 governmental, non-profit, road safety, and commercial partners, TyreSafe is dedicated to promoting tyre safety across all road user groups, including private motorists, motorcyclists, young drivers, and commercial operators.

The organisation's mission is to empower road users with the knowledge to reduce incidents caused by poorly maintained or illegal tyres. TyreSafe's efforts are underpinned by a commitment to accuracy and collaboration, ensuring its initiatives are grounded in the latest evidence. By educating key audiences such as policymakers, businesses, and the general public, TyreSafe plays a crucial role in promoting legislation and corporate responsibility in tyre safety.

With a vision of achieving zero harm to road users from tyre-related incidents, TyreSafe focuses on driving real behavioural change. Through a robust programme of communication activities, the organisation advocates for regular tyre maintenance and safety checks, aiming to keep tyre safety at the forefront of national road safety conversations.

For more information, go to www.tyresafe.org.

ABOUT ANYLINE

Founded in Vienna in 2013, Anyline has established itself as a global leader in mobile data capture and data insights. Using the latest, most innovative artificial intelligence and machine learning approaches, Anyline gives businesses the power to read, measure and interpret visual information with any mobile device.

Anyline is used by leading automotive and tyre manufacturers and retailers to quickly and accurately scan tyre sidewall, tread depth and vehicle data, including tyre DOT codes, vehicle identification numbers (VINs), licence plates and barcodes, using any standard mobile device or camera-enabled automotive diagnostic devices.

Anyline helps businesses to move away from costly, tedious manual processes and instead, make them easy, fast and convenient for everyone, from the end user to the front-line worker. Anyline is trusted by household brands such as NAPA, Discount Tire, Continental, Michelin and Shopmonkey.

For more information, visit www.anyline.com.

ABOUT OPINIUM

OPINIUM is an award winning strategic insight agency built on the belief that in a world of uncertainty and complexity, success depends on the ability to stay on pulse of what people think, feel and do.

Creative and inquisitive, we are passionate about empowering our clients to make the decisions that matter. We work with organisations to define and overcome strategic challenges – helping them to get to grips with the world in which their brands operate. We use the right approach and methodology to deliver robust insights, strategic counsel and targeted recommendations that generate change and positive outcomes.