

Regarding the NHTSA proposal for tire pressure sensor technology in 2003 and later cars:

I think that manufacturers should not only be allowed to use ABS-based tire pressure alerting systems, I think it should be the PREFERRED way to do it.

1) Many people (myself included) run their tires at different/higher pressures than recommended by the manufacturers. Firestone/Bridgestone made a valid point when they reported that the recommended pressures for their tires on Ford Explorers was too low. If drivers are towing or carrying heavy loads, they should increase tire pressures, which widens the window where tire imbalance can cause safety problems yet still not be reported by the individual tire sensor system.

2) An imbalance between tire pressures on the same axle promotes handling instability as much or more than simply running with low pressures.

3) It is far more unlikely that TWO tires on the SAME axle will be running too low on pressure than it is that ONE tire would be underinflated on the same axle. The ABS-based sensors would detect that imbalance and report it to the driver -- even in instances where both tires were within the manufacturers tire pressure specifications.

4) In light of the factors above, and in light of the near-universal implementation of ABS (especially if the system can be tied to FMSS mandates to testing tire pressures), using an ABS-based system for sensing tire pressure imbalance would be safer, more cost-effective and a less onerous regulation to impose on auto manufacturers and the American public.

For these reasons, I would suggest that ABS-based tire pressure sensing systems should be the PREFERRED course of action for implementing your proposed safety regulation.

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