



### **Road Conditions Advice**

Since the winter of 2010/11 severely damaging our roads, the subsequent weather which compounded the damage, coupled with the governments reign on spending; has meant we have seen a noticeable increase in damage to vehicles wheels and tyres.

We have compiled this information sheet to help recognise and minimise the problems caused by this current situation.

#### **Cars and Vans**

Lower profile tyres with their shallow sidewalls are especially vulnerable, with bent or cracked wheels being caused by road damage. Tyre damage can be from 'impact fractures' of the tyre, which can sometimes be spotted by a bulge in the sidewall of the tyre.

Whilst it is not always possible because of road width, by driving closer to the centre line of the road the wheels can 'miss' some of the larger holes in our roads. Where bad sections of road are known, slow down to minimise potential damage. If the vehicle seems to have vibration coming through the steering wheel, it is advisable to have the vehicle checked for balance, with wheels being inspected to ensure that damaged wheels are not the cause of the vibration - averting a possible dangerous situation. Additionally, alignments of suspension are increasingly 'knocked' out of calibration, causing handling of vehicles to suffer and also affecting the fuel economy of the vehicles, as well as increasing the rate of tyre wear.

#### **Trucks**

A different feature of truck tyres is their operation at high pressures- When a tyre repeatedly hits holes in the road, there is a possibility of 'impact damage' on truck tyres that can result in a 'blow out', where the tyre has an immediate loss off pressure.

Because of the width of trucks, it is not possible to drive nearer the centre of the road, so our advice would be that where 'bad' pieces of road are known, drive slower to reduce the risk of impact damage. Routine visual routine inspection of tyres can spot initial bulges in sidewall.

#### **Agriculture**

The diverse nature of farm vehicles with different wheels and tyre systems makes generalisation difficult. Where the tyres are of a flotation nature, problems are not as apparent, but where narrower, for example on row crop type work, an increase in rim damage is apparent. Tyre damage can usually be seen by bulges in sidewall.

Again our advice would be, where 'bad' pieces of road are known, drive slower to reduce the risk of tyre or wheel problems. Sometimes vehicles are followed to fields; wheel integrity can be checked by the roundness seen as the wheel rotates, problems if spotted should have remedial action carried out to avert problems. Also, because of operational variation in farm vehicles, by ensuring that the vehicle is operated in accordance with the operating manual, potential problems caused by exceeding of vehicle parameters can be averted.