

# AAA finds 28 percent of new vehicles missing spare tire

In an effort to reduce weight and improve fuel economy, automakers continue to eliminate spare tires from new vehicles. According to new research from AAA, nearly one third (28 percent) of 2017 model year vehicles do not come with a spare tire as standard equipment, creating an unnecessary hassle and expense for drivers. Last year alone, AAA came to the rescue to more than 450,000 members faced with a flat tire, whose cars did not have a spare tire. To avoid a roadside surprise, AAA urges drivers to check their trunk for a spare tire

before trouble strikes. "Having a flat tire can be a nuisance for drivers, but not having a spare could put them in an even more aggravating situation," said John Paul, AAA Northeast Senior Manager of Traffic Safety. "This can turn the relatively routine process of changing a tire at the roadside into an inconvenient and costly situation that requires a tow to a repair facility."

While new vehicles are equipped with tire pressure monitoring systems that alert drivers to low tire pressure, AAA's roadside assistance

data shows that tire-related problems continue to be one of the top reasons why members call for assistance. Even if drivers do have a spare tire, they are often reaching for their cell phones to call for roadside assistance rather than changing the tire themselves. According to a previous AAA survey, nearly 20 percent (39 million) of U.S. drivers do not know how to change a flat tire.

As a replacement for a spare tire, some automakers are including tire-inflator kits that can temporarily repair small punctures in flat

tires. However, a 2015 AAA study found that tire-inflator kits have limited functionality and cannot provide even a temporary fix for many tire-related problems, including sidewall damage or blowouts. Not only are tire-inflator kits not a good substitute for a spare tire, they can cost up to 10 times more than a tire repair and have a shelf life of only four to eight years.

To prevent drivers from being stranded in the event of a flat tire, AAA offers these precautionary tips:

Do not assume there's a spare. When purchasing a new vehicle,

always ask for a detailed list of equipment and whether a spare tire can be purchased.

Inspect all five tires. Check tire pressures monthly and have all tires inspected as part of routine maintenance. If your vehicle has a spare tire, be sure that it's properly inflated.

Read ahead. If your vehicle is equipped with a tire-inflator kit, read the owner's manual and understand how it works and its limitations.

Check expiration dates. If your vehicle is equipped with a tire-in-

flator kit, check its expiration date. Most need to be replaced every four to eight years.

Consider roadside assistance coverage. Roadside assistance coverage can offer peace of mind when faced with roadside trouble, including a flat tire.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with 62 offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 2 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance and auto-related services.

## Gas prices remain the same

High travel volume in the northeast over the holidays helped keep prices stable, as prices in Massachusetts are unchanged over a week ago, according to AAA Northeast.

AAA's Jan. 2 survey of prices in Massachusetts finds self-serve, regular unleaded averaging \$2.43 per gallon. The Massachusetts price is six cents below the national average for regular unleaded of \$2.49. A year ago at this time, the average price in Massachusetts was 16 cents lower at \$2.27.

"Although prices at the pump nationally went up over the holi-

days, motorists can expect to see prices trend cheaper this month as we are likely to see a significant drop in gasoline demand with the holidays now in the rear view mirror," said Mary Maguire, director of public and legislative affairs.

The range in prices in the latest AAA survey for unleaded regular is 52 cents, from a low of \$2.27 to a high of \$2.79. AAA advises motorists to shop around for the best prices in their area, and to make sure they and their passengers buckle up, every time.

Today's local self serve gas prices and their ranges are as follows: \$2.43 (\$2.27-\$2.79)

regular unleaded, \$2.70 (\$2.47-\$2.99) midgrade unleaded, \$2.88 (\$2.67-\$3.25) premium unleaded and \$2.86 (\$2.69-\$3.04) diesel. People may find the most up-to-date local gas prices with the AAA Fuel Finder by logging onto AAA.com and clicking on Gas Saving Tips and Tools.

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## AAA research finds premium gas not always worth the price

AAA tests show premium fuel benefits some vehicles, but it comes at a high cost.

According to new research from AAA, premium gasoline offers some benefit to select vehicles, but is becoming increasingly expensive for drivers. In recent years, the price gap between premium and regular-grade gasoline has risen from a historically steady 10 percent to 25 percent or more per gallon. While past AAA research has shown no benefit in using premium gasoline in a vehicle designed to operate on regular fuel, new testing indicates that some vehicles – those that recommend, but do not require premium gasoline – may see increased fuel economy and performance under certain driving conditions when using the higher-octane gasoline. Unfortunately, the high cost of premium gasoline may outweigh that advantage for many drivers. As a result, AAA recommends drivers weigh the potential benefits against the cost of using premium gasoline, if their vehicle does not require it.

In partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California's Automotive Research Center, AAA tested a variety of vehicles that recommend, but do not require, the use of premium (91 octane or higher) gasoline. When using premium fuel in these vehicles under these conditions, AAA tests found that:

Fuel economy for test vehicles averaged a 2.7 percent improvement. Individual vehicle test result averages ranged from a decrease of 1 percent (2016 Audi A3) to an improvement of 7.1 percent (2016 Cadillac Escalade). Horsepower for test vehicles averaged an increase of 1.4 percent. Individual vehicle test result averages ranged from a decrease of 0.3 percent (2016 Jeep Renegade) to an improvement of 3.2 percent (2017 Ford Mustang).

According to national averages, the price difference between regular and premium gasoline is approximately 20 to 25 percent, or 50 cents per gallon. The modest fuel economy improvements found in AAA tests do not offset the higher cost of premium gasoline.

"There's no question that higher-octane premium fuel has the potential to boost a vehicle's fuel economy and performance, however, engines have to be calibrated to require that fuel to see the full benefit," said John Paul, AAA Northeast senior manager of traffic safety. "Based on AAA's testing, vehicles that only recommend premium gasoline can't take full advantage of higher octane fuel and, as a result, the benefit that comes from upgrading to premium gasoline may not offset its high cost."

"The gap between premium and regular gas has been steadily rising since 2009, with the most dramatic increase occurring in the last two

years," said Paul. "Fewer than five years ago, only a 10 percent gap existed between premium and regular. Today, that spread has doubled with premium gasoline costing almost 50 cents more per gallon and is still climbing despite the fact that consumer demand for premium isn't necessarily increasing."

For those vehicles that do not recommend or require premium gasoline, AAA suggests drivers opt for the lower priced, regular fuel. In a study released last year, AAA found that consumers wasted nearly \$2.1 billion dollars fueling these vehicles with higher-octane gasoline. However, drivers of vehicles that require premium gasoline should always use it. Additionally, any vehicle that makes a "pinging" or "knocking" sound while using regular gasoline should be evaluated by a repair facility and likely switched to a higher-octane fuel. Drivers seeking a higher quality fuel for their vehicle should consider using one that meets Top Tier standards, as previous AAA research found it to keep engines up to 19 times cleaner.

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## RSVP Worcester launches senior helpline

WORCESTER – RSVP Worcester launched a Senior Fraud Helpline - 1-800-297-9760 - to help protect older adults against scams and frauds. This initiative is sponsored primarily by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. Other community sponsors include TD Bank, Big Y World Class Markets, Friends of RSVP and Family Services of Central Massachusetts. The helpline serves all of Worcester County.

"The goal of the Helpline is to offer a recognized, safe place for seniors to call if they're concerned

or confused by a phone call, email or other solicitation they may have received," said Barbara Drapros, director of RSVP Worcester. "An RSVP Helpline volunteer advisor, who has been trained to respond with knowledge and empathy, can help dissuade the caller from responding to high-risk solicitations."

The helpline advisors can also refer callers who may have been defrauded to an entity that might provide recourse, such as law enforcement, social services and/or

legal advocacy agencies.

RSVP Worcester Area Volunteers is a non-profit organization that is a part of the Senior Corps program operating nationally under by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Located at the Worcester Senior Center, RSVP is sponsored locally by Family Services of Central Massachusetts.

Since 1971, RSVP has been connecting people age 55 and over with opportunities that focus on compelling needs in the Worcester area.

## Community Foundation elects trustees and officers

FITCHBURG – The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts elected trustees and officers at its recent annual meeting.

Reelected as trustees to three-year terms were Thomas Bagley, III of Anderson, Bagley and Mayo Insurance in Leominster; John Barrett of The Law Office of John Barrett in Townsend; James Garrison of Acton; David McKeenan of GB Products, LLC in Westminster and Henri Sans of LeBlanc & Sans in Gardner.

Elected as new trustees to three-year terms were Ben Urquhart of New England Wooden Ware in Gardner

and Tina Griffin of Athol Hospital.

Elected as officers to one-year terms were Henri Sans, as chair; Jan Cochran of Groton, vice chair; Steven Stone of Sterilite Corporation in Townsend, treasurer; Jay Drake of Royal Steam Heater in Gardner, clerk; Philip Grze-winski of Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts in Fitchburg, president and recording secretary; William E. Aubuchon, IV of W.E. Aubuchon Co., Inc. in Westminster, grant making committee chair and Thomas Bagley III, development committee chair.

The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, www.cfncm.org, is a non-profit organization that serves the charitable interest of donors in Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Ayer, Barre, Bolton, Clinton, Devens, Erving, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leominster, Littleton, Lunenburg, New Salem, Orange, Pepperell, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton, Townsend, Warwick, Wendell, Westminster and Winchendon.

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## Public Notices

### BARRE PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING

The Barre Planning Board will hold two public meetings one on Tuesday, January 16th and the other on **Tuesday, January 30th, 2018 both at 7:00 p.m.** in the Barre Town Hall. These will be informal meetings, not a formal public hearing. The Planning Board wants to hear from the citizens of Barre regarding their ideas on how recreational marijuana should be regulated, and whether retail outlets for recreational marijuana should be allowed or prohibited.

All persons who wish to comment on this matter should attend the meetings, or submit comments in writing or by email to

barreboards@townofbarre.com prior to the meetings to the Planning Board.

**Dennis Fleming**  
Chairman  
1/04/, 1/11/18

### BARRE CONSERVATION COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Notice is hereby given in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 131, Section 40, The Wetlands Protection Act, that a public meeting will be held on a **Request for Determination of Applicability** requested by Jason Pimental, DPW, Town of Barre for Route 62, Hubbardston Road,

Over Canesto Brook for bridge repair work at the abutments.

From: Town of Barre  
441 Wheelwright Road  
Barre, MA 01005  
To be held on **Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Conservation Commission Office, Third Floor, of the Henry Woods Building, 40 West Street, Barre, MA 01005.

Sincerely,  
**Ronald Rich**  
Chairman  
1/04/2018

(SEAL)  
**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS LAND COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT 17SM009646**

### ORDER OF NOTICE

To: **Marilyn J. Stevens Irene F. Stevens-Harold Raymond F. Stevens, Jr. Kathryn E. Stevens-Hazard, a/k/a Kathryn Graves Michael P. Stevens** and to all persons entitled to the benefit of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, 50 U.S.C. c. 50 §3901 et seq.

**The Bank Of New York Mellon Fka The Bank Of New York, As Trustee For The Certificateholders Of Cwabs, Inc., Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2007-13** claiming to have an interest in a Mortgage

covering real property in Barre, numbered 72 Washburn Road, given by Marilyn J. Stevens and Raymond F. Stevens to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. acting solely as a nominee for New American Funding, dated July 30, 2007, and recorded in Worcester County (Worcester District) Registry of Deeds in Book 41652, Page 218 (the "Mortgage"), and now held by the Plaintiff by assignment, has/have filed with this court a complaint for determination of Defendant's/Defendants' Servicemembers status.

If you now are, or recently have been, in the active military service of the United States of

America, then you may be entitled to the benefits of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. If you object to a foreclosure of the above mentioned property on that basis, then you or your attorney must file a written appearance and answer in this court at **Three Pemberton Square, Boston, MA 02108** on or before **January 29, 2018** or you will be forever barred from claiming that you are entitled to the benefits of said Act.

Witness, JUDITH C. CUTLER Chief Justice of said Court on December 18, 2017.

Attest:  
**Deborah J. Patterson**  
Recorder  
17-029970

1/04/18



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