

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

# HOW TO DEAL WITH A QUADRUPLE BLOWOUT

### 1 Hold steering wheel firmly.

Though the car will become increasingly difficult to control, concentrate on keeping the car moving in a straight line. Grasp the steering wheel tightly—it will be shaking violently.

### 2 Put your hazard lights on.

Your hazards will signal drivers behind you that you are in distress.

### 3 Apply the brakes.

Put light but steady pressure on the brake pedal to reduce speed. Though the tires are blown, you should still have some tread remaining on each wheel for a few minutes. The “contact patches” (the section of each tire in contact with the road surface) will be greatly reduced, however, and will continue to shrink as pieces of the tire spin off the wheel. The smaller the contact patch, the less friction available to the brakes, less stopping power, and more possibility of spinning out of control. The car will be shaking, along with the steering wheel, and the vehicle will become progressively harder to control.

**4 Steer toward a safe stopping point.**

Scan the road ahead. Look for a relatively open, flat area on the shoulder. If you are in the center or inside lane, signal and move to the outer lane, but make a gradual lane change with no sudden inputs to the steering wheel. If you cannot see or cannot immediately reach a stopping point, see “How to Continue Driving on Four Blown Tires,” below.

**5 Let the car roll to a stop.**

Once you reach a safe area out of the flow of traffic, take your foot off the brake and allow the car to coast to a stop.

## HOW TO CONTINUE DRIVING ON FOUR BLOWN TIRES

**1 Go straight.**

If you are on a bridge or stretch of road where you cannot stop safely, keep the car moving in a straight line for as long as possible. Driving on four blown tires, and, eventually, four rims, will be similar to driving on ice: You will have very little stopping power, and the car will tend to spin as you enter turns.

**2 Accelerate smoothly.**

Less friction with the road surface increases the likelihood of spinning wheels, which will make fast acceleration impossible. Apply the throttle (gas pedal) smoothly and sparingly and only to maintain control while moving in a straight line or through a very



gradual turn. Most front-wheel-drive cars have an open differential, where the wheel with the least resistance gets the power. As the tires disintegrate, the wheel with less friction will spin, and the car will swerve from side to side.

**3 Stay on a paved surface.**

Avoid driving the car off the roadway at all costs. With no rubber remaining, the metal wheels will readily bite into soft ground and cause the car to flip.

**4** Listen for the last pieces of rubber to fly off the wheels.

The car will shake increasingly violently as the tires disintegrate, and you will hear very loud flapping sounds from the corners. The tread will not stay centered on the wheel, and the contact patch will shift wildly, making the car difficult to control. After a mile or two, the last pieces of rubber will come off, and the flapping sound will disappear. Provided the shredded tires have not gotten caught in the wheel wells, driving on the metal rims should provide less shaking and more control. Your contact area with the road, however, will be extremely small (the width of two pencils for each wheel) and traction will be severely limited. The rims will spark as you drive on them.

**5** Pull over as soon as possible.

Eventually, the rims will flatten or crack and the bottom of the car will begin dragging on the road until the friction stops your progress. Steel wheels will last longer and go further than aluminum or magnesium wheels, which are lighter, more brittle, and have a tendency to bend and break under stress.

**Be Aware**

Run-flat tires have reinforced sidewalls that will support the weight of the car and allow driving with a puncture. However, tires that are severely punctured by treadles or road spikes will begin to shred, and the sidewalls will eventually separate from the tread and come off.

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