

IF YOU HAVE A BLOWOUT

Fortunately, the term "blowout" has become almost as outdated as "running board." With improvements in tire design and materials, an actual blowout is a rare occurrence today. But it can still happen in a faulty or badly worn tire, particularly in an overloaded vehicle. Here's what to do if it happens to you.

How To Handle A Blowout

Suppose you're humming down the freeway when you hear a loud report like a gunshot. Your vehicle starts to buck like a bronco and the steering wheel is jerked out of your hands.

The first thing to remember is to get a firm grip on the wheel. If the road is slippery, you may skid, but

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don't step on the brakes. Remain calm and carefully steer in the direction you want the vehicle to go. This will bring the back end into alignment with the front. Look ahead where you'd like to be and keep steering for it.

The vehicle will slow down and begin to respond to your direction. Once you've stabilized, gently apply the brakes. Slowly brake to a stop far enough off the road to change the tire without interfering with traffic.

Just In Case

Don't wait until you have a blowout to make certain your trunk contains everything you need to change a tire:

- Spare tire. Be sure it's inflated.
- A jack that fits the vehicle.
- Jack handle plus the attachments.
- Wheel block.
- Lug-nut wrench.
- Aerosol tire inflator/sealer.

Preventing Blowouts

The best way to prevent a blowout is to keep your tires properly inflated and check them periodically for bruises or abnormal wear. Replace them promptly when they near the end of their rated tread life. If you maintain your tires properly, you should be able to drive for many years without ever experiencing a blown tire. 

