

Wise drivers will heed language of drive belt

By JODY CARR

Among the inner circle of the auto parts world, it is said that the unsung hero of all unsung heroes is the fan belt, or drive belt. It drives a lot more than just the fan.

Ask any generator, water pump, power steering pump or fan. These components will vouch for the drive belt, without which they would be looking for another way to go.

However, this is not why the drive belt has earned its reputation as the good guy. It is esteemed, because the last thing it wants to do is let its buddies down. This means it doesn't want to let you down, either.

Still, the best of drive

belts can't last forever. When one breaks, your car may overheat, your battery may die, your power steering may give out or your air conditioning may quit.

You may experience a couple of these traumatic situations simultaneously. So your drive belt tries to help you anticipate trouble by providing a unique combination of audible and visual warnings of impending problems.

First, look for visual signs of old age. Twist the belt. Notice that it is V-shaped, fitting into a V-shaped pulley. The sides of the V on the belt are what do the driving. Are they cracked, frayed or glazed?

This may be enough to tell you that Old Faithful wants to retire.

Or the belt may signal you audibly, by screeching when you accelerate the engine in neutral. This may be nothing more than looseness, which can be corrected in a jiffy. But if excessive looseness is allowed to persist, slippage results, and that means rapid wear.

Finally, when the belt point, it may emit a *click, click* sound, especially noticeable at idle. It will speed up as you accelerate the engine and sound almost like a noisy valve.

This sound is caused by a large crack, or separation, in the belt, which hits the pulley with each

revolution. It is a symptom of advanced old age, the brink of failure.

If old faithful drive belt does snap all the way, you're in for trouble. So keep an eye and an ear open for signs of failure, and ask your automobile service man to check into it right away.

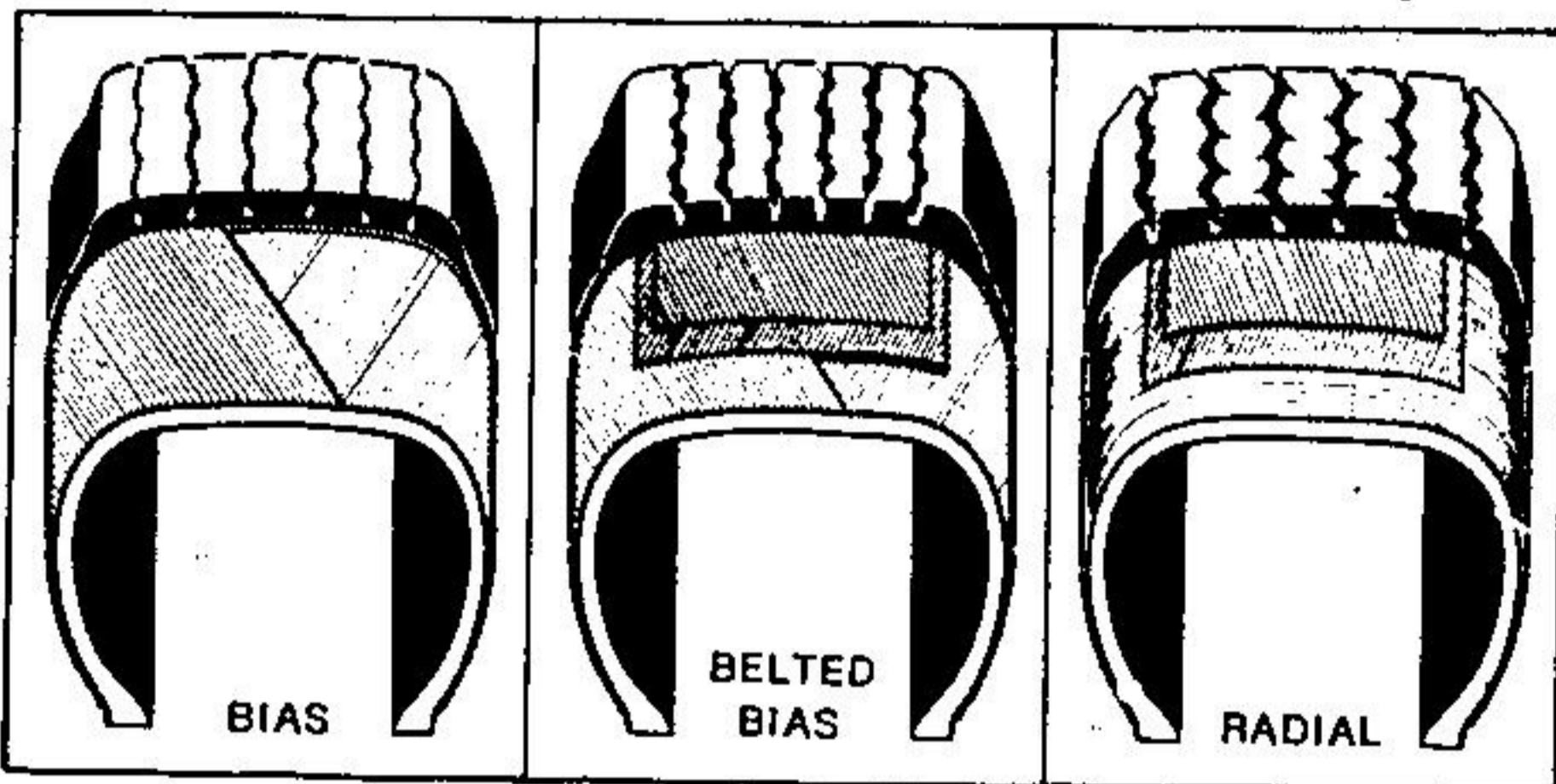
Keep eye on tire inflation

You may want to invest in a pressure gauge to keep frequent tabs on your tires. Proper pressure for tires is generally given in a location inside the driver's compartment of the car — sometimes on a glove box door or inside the door post. Keeping tires properly inflated saves on tire wear, gas consumption and provides safer going.

PLUG THAT 'LEAK'

In economy tests, a spark plug misfiring half the time at 60 miles per hour dropped fuel economy by 7.3 per cent, according to the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association.

The three types of tires prevalent today



Here's help for motorist in choosing right tires for his driving needs

If choosing the right tires for your car gives you as much anguish as the kid with a nickel in a candy store, then here are some basics to help you. With the profusion of design types and materials, confusion is understandable.

According to the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) there are three different tire constructions prevalent today.

BIAS TIRES may have two, four or more body plies of rayon, nylon polyester or other materials. Basic fibers cross at an angle of about 35 degrees with the center line of the tire strengthening both sidewall and tread. Alternate plies extend in oppo-

site directions.

In normal, light duty driving, bias tires should be sufficient.

BELTED BIAS TIRES (Heavy Duty Tires) have a body similar to that of bias tires, plus two more belts under the tread. This construction strengthens the sidewall and gives greater stability to the tread. Tread life is lengthened since the belts reduce tread motion on the road. Glass belting is often used in belted bias tires helping resist flex and running cooler.

RADIAL TIRES have body cords extending from bead to bead. Cords run at an angle of about 90 degrees "radial" to the

tire circumferential center line. Two or more layers of relatively rigid belts are found under the tread.

This construction gives greater strength to the tread area and flexibility of the sidewall. The belts restrict tread motion during contact with the road. Tread life, traction and gasoline mileage are improved with radial tires, particularly the steel belted variety.

If you are putting two new tires on your car, mount them on the rear wheels. This will provide better traction, handling and blowout protection. If you're putting a single new tire on, pair it with the best remaining one on the rear axle.

It's smart to change it at any time

If you feel installing new antifreeze in the spring is like celebrating Christmas in July, then the new facts

of motoring life haven't been made clear to you. When last winter's short supplies of antifreeze hit the car-owning public, a number of car owners either did without a fresh change or paid premium prices.

What these motorists may not have realized is there is no urgency to change antifreeze in late fall or early winter. It makes sense to change it any time a change is needed — in July as well as January.

Actually, car experts say, antifreeze is a misnomer. Coolant antifreeze is a more accurate description of the product. It is designed to both protect against the rigors of sub-zero weather and the plus 250°F operation of a modern, high compression engine in summer.

So installing a fresh cooling system protection may be smarter at times when the car's air conditioning is going full blast and warm air temperatures are making engines run hotter.

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