

TPMS highlights vehicle malfunction and helps ensure driver safety for European motorist

Because TPMS legislation has not yet been enacted in Europe (it *is* mandated for 2012), I had a TPMS aftermarket kit, consisting of four snap-in TPMS sensors and a third-party display unit, fitted to my Jaguar X-TYPE sedan. It was easy to install, and the display would perform the standard pressure and temperature readouts for each tyre. Both measurements helped identify and correct two different malfunction issues that could have created a potentially very dangerous driving situation.

First, I started to notice an increase in temperature at the passenger-side rear wheel. A couple of degrees to start, but then it was steadily increasing by over 10–15 degrees more than the other wheels. In fact, the wheel was getting so hot that the centre cap popped out of the alloy. It turned out that the brake calliper had seized, and, because the car was an automatic transmission, I rarely, if ever, pulled on the hand brake when parked. The TPMS system was a great way of determining the location of the issue. I used this information to inform the mechanic, who was then able to easily solve the problem.

On a second occasion, my passenger-side front wheel started to lose pressure. To be honest, it was barely noticeable, possibly losing 0.5 PSI per day. This continued for several weeks, and I merely inflated the tyre, thinking I had a very slow leak. Unless the pressure was sub-15 PSI, it was difficult to see the loss on the actual tyre. It also happened to be on the wrong side for me, as I would always get in the car on the driver's side. I then took the car to the wheel shop to see if there was indeed a small puncture in the tyre, and the technicians, at first, weren't able to identify anything either. They eventually found the problem, which was that my alloy wheel had actually cracked, and the wheel was losing pressure through the alloy, not the tyre. Fortunately, the TPMS system was able to show me the slow decrease in pressure and saved me from a potentially very severe accident if I had not gone to the wheel shop to get the problem analyzed when I did.

{Enda from the United Kingdom}

