

Complacent attitude on **tyre** **safety** spells danger for bikers

KUALA LUMPUR: The complacent attitude of motorcyclists towards tyre safety, whether in terms of tread condition, air pressure or wear level, could significantly increase the risk of road accidents.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua said public awareness on tyre safety remains low, with many unaware of how to assess tyre conditions, such as reading the tread wear indicator (TWI) or checking expiry dates.

"Many only change their tyres when they are completely worn out or when there is a puncture. A common myth is that if the tyre still looks thick, there's no need to change it, without checking the actual age or rubber condition.

"There are also those who believe second-hand tyres or bald tyres provide better speed, which is a very dangerous misconception," he told Bernama.

Law said the typical lifespan of a motorcycle tyre is between three and five years from the date of manufacture.

However, for high-usage scenarios such as food delivery riders, tyres may need to be replaced every 1.5 to 2 years.

"Tyres that are safe for daily use should have treads with good grip, especially in wet conditions, compatible with the road surface, have durable construction and possess the appropriate speed and load index for the motorcycle used."

Law said a tread depth of less than 1.6mm indicates that the tyre needs to be replaced, while a tread level that is flush with the TWI mark signifies the tyre is already worn out.

"Small cracks, bulges or hardening of the tyre are signs of ageing or damage. Air pressure should also be checked weekly, based on the manufacturer's specifications," he said.

He also suggested that the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research and the Road Transport Department take a more proactive approach to tyre safety education campaigns, including periodic inspections and mandating the use of tyres that comply with safety standards.

Meanwhile, civil servant Mohd Fairuz Shah Rezza Mustafha, 39, believes

➤ Many unaware of need to assess wheel conditions, carry out inspections to avoid risk of crashes: Academic



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motorcyclists should take the initiative to understand tyre safety features rather than relying solely on mechanics.

"As a rider, we are closest to our ride. Therefore, tyre safety monitoring should start with us. I prefer to inspect my tyres myself, as it gives me more confidence when riding," he said.

Mohd Fairuz, who rides a Honda RS150R

as his primary vehicle for both commuting and convoy activities, said he does not mind spending more for high-quality tyres that he feels confident using every day.

"I believe branded tyres offer a high level of safety assurance as a result of extensive research and development, as well as rigorous testing to ensure every detail of the design is truly safe," he added.