

Ask the Mechanic Paul Kaganzi



A Q&A page where expert advice, trouble

Why do my car tyres squeal on wet roads?

Hello Paul, whenever it rains, my car tyres produce a loud squealing noise on wet roads, especially when I turn corners. This makes driving stressful, and I worry about grip and safety. I have checked the tyre tread, and it seems to be okay. Could the noise be due to alignment issues, tyre quality, or problems with the suspension? **Catherine Namazzi**

Hello Catherine, the squealing sound coming from your tyres while turning on a wet road during a rainy day can be quite disconcerting and distracting, especially when you are trying to focus on driving. While this noise may be more of an annoyance than an immediate threat to your safety, it is important to investigate and address the causes of the tyre squeal.

Not only will this help eliminate the irritating sound, but it can also prevent costly mechanical issues that might compromise your road safety in the long run.

Although your tyre tread depths appear to be acceptable, worn-out treads

can cause squealing noises. In your case, several other technical factors may be contributing to the noise when you turn on a wet surface.

The design of the tyre and the materials used can lead to squealing when driving. Some low-cost, hard compound tyres, which are designed for durability, struggle to adapt well to the road surface. They often provide less grip on wet roads and can vibrate over thin layers of water, leading to a squealing sound. To avoid this issue, consider purchasing higher-quality tyres instead of budget-friendly options. Also, ensure that your tyres are properly inflated.

Under-inflated tyres increase the contact patch, which can result in squealing during sharp turns.

Old tyres, regardless of their tread depth or materials, can also produce a squealing sound on wet roads. This occurs because the rubber in older tyres becomes glazed (stiff) after prolonged exposure to operational heat.

As a result, old tyres lose their ability to adapt to wet surfaces, which can lead to squealing. The worst part is that old, brittle tyres are prone to bursting when heated from driving at high speeds.

To avoid this hazard, check the age of your tyres, as they are generally considered expired after five years. You will find the manufacturing date on the sidewall in a four-digit DOT code. For example, a code such as DOT 2319 indicates the tyre was manufactured in the 23rd week of 2019. In 2026, those tyres will be seven years old, making them too brittle or glazed to be safe for use.

Wheel alignment, specifically "toe-in," can also cause tyre squealing on wet roads. Toe-in refers to a situation where the front tyres are closer together than the rear ones. This misalignment prevents the wheels from maintaining straight-line stability, causing them to drag sideways instead of rolling smoothly.

On dry surfaces, this misalignment may not produce a squeal, but the wet surface allows the tyres to slide, resulting in the squealing noise. Regular wheel alignment can help prevent this issue and reduce uneven tyre wear.

In rare instances, a worn-out or loosely fitted engine rubber V-belt, which powers the alternator or steering pump, can create a squeal. This happens when you drive over a puddle, and water splashes onto the moving belt.

When the worn belt gets wet, it loses grip and may make a loud squeaking noise, especially when turning sharply. This noise can often seem like it is coming from the tyres due to the proximity and the fact that it is loudest while cornering.

To address the belt squeal and mitigate the risk of breakdown if it snaps, regularly inspect the V-belt to ensure it is properly tensioned. Consider replacing the V-belt if you notice signs of glazing (stiffness) or cracking on the inner ribbed surface.

stationary objects around your car.

Additionally, your vehicle may be equipped with a GPS or map-based alert system, which is commonly found in cars with Android radios that run Google Maps or other navigation systems. When you pass a specific coordinate on the same route, it might trigger a beeping alert. There is no need for concern in such cases.

To determine the cause of the beeping warning, you can disable the ADAS systems or turn off the Bluetooth and Android radio-powered GPS and location warning device. The beeping sound should then stop.

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What is triggering my car's warning beep?

Hello Paul, my car gives a warning beep every time I drive past the same point on the road, but nowhere else. What could trigger such location-specific behaviour? Kato

Hello Kato, if your car is emitting a warning beep at the same location each time you drive by, it is likely triggered by something external or location-based. This is probably not a coincidence. The most common causes could include driver assistance systems, GPS and map-based alerts in your car.

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), are electronic technologies designed to enhance driving convenience and safety. These systems rely on sensors, radar, and cameras to monitor the surroundings. They use warning beeps to alert you to changes in traffic conditions, whether involving vehicles, pedestrians, or road features such as lane markings.

For example, ADAS may provide a frontal collision warning if it detects a stationary object on the road, such as another vehicle, a crossing pedestrian, or a signpost. The system will often issue several warning

beeps before activating Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB). It utilises radar, sonar sensors, and miniature cameras to identify both moving and



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