

Spare Tires May Be Eliminated to Meet CAFE Standards - AAA

ORLANDO, Fla. – Buying a car can be a stressful experience. One thing buyers used to be able to depend upon was that the new vehicle they were about to purchase included a spare tire. That may not always be the case. To meet new government fuel efficiency standards, some vehicle manufacturers are omitting heavy spare tires and equipping new vehicles with an emergency sealant and inflator kit or tires that if damaged can run reasonable distances without air. In 2010, the Department of Transportation and Environ-

mental Protection Agency established new corporate average fuel economy standards for vehicle model years 2012 to 2016. The new standards are set at a combined 29.7 mpg for the 2012 model year, increasing to 34.1 mpg by 2016. Achieving these standards will require many changes to the vehicles we drive, says the Automobile Club of America. One area of focus is to reduce the weight of vehicles without compromising occupant safety. A spare tire, related tools and a jack can weigh more than 40 pounds. That

may seem like a small amount but every little bit helps and unlike other weight-saving changes, it doesn't add cost to the vehicle. "Unfortunately, many vehicle owners may be unaware that their vehicle has no spare tire until they experience a flat tire," says John Nielsen, AAA National Director of Auto Buying and Consumer Information. "Consumers should review their owner's manual and emergency maintenance supplies they have in the vehicle and be informed about alternatives to a spare to prevent

panic or a delay when encountering a flat tire." AAA recommends the following to ensure drivers are informed and prepared:
 • Inspect the car and consult your owner's manual. If the vehicle has a spare, be sure it is properly inflated and stowed. If you cannot locate a spare tire, ensure your vehicle has an alternate solution. Options include the run-flat

tires that allow the car to be driven to a safe location or an emergency sealant and inflator kit.
 • If you carry a sealant, AAA recommends that you check the date and replace it every five years or after its use. Sealant can become less effective with age.
 • AAA members needing assistance with a flat tire can request roadside rescue at

(800) AAA-HELP or by downloading the smartphone app, AAA Roadside. AAA members can also eliminate the stress of buying a new car by using the AAA Auto Buying Tools App. Build the car you want, including color and trim level, and the AAA app will give you information on available options, available incentives, crash safety ratings, AAA reviews, images and more.

Regal GS Becomes a Vehicle Test-Bed For GM's Leading-Edge Technologies

DETROIT – Some of the same technologies that make the 2012 Regal GS sport sedan the brand's top performance car contribute to the stability and comfort that defines Buick as a brand.

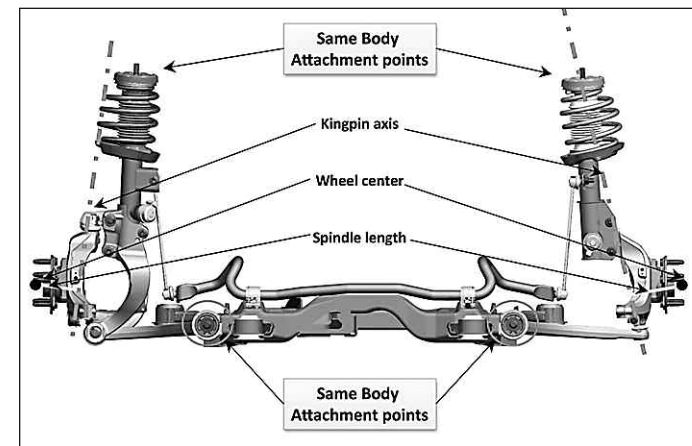
Buick's HiPer Strut system is an example of the best-of-both-worlds approach. Short for High Performance Strut, this piece of hardware creates a better separation between the front suspension's steering and shock-absorbing functions through added components that enable the steering knuckle to rotate independently from the strut tower. Ideal suspension geometry is maintained, reducing torque steer and improving camber control.

What that means to drivers is that torque steer – the sensation of the car pulling the steering wheel to one side – is virtually eliminated, steering response is improved, and overall control is better. It delivers some of the advantages of all-wheel drive, but without the added weight and complexity.

"HiPer Strut raises the limits of how a front-drive car can perform," said lead engineer Bill Rietow.

The stability allowed by HiPer Strut let engineers package an advanced four-cylinder turbocharged engine with the highest horsepower-per-liter ratio General Motors has ever produced.

At 135 horsepower per liter, it is also the most powerful engine ever certified by



"HiPer Strut raises the limits of how a front-drive car can perform," said Regal GS lead engineer Bill Rietow.

the Society of Automotive Engineers. The car's 270-horsepower rating wouldn't be possible without fuel-saving technologies like spark ignition direct injection (SIDI) and variable valve timing.

Computer controls that smooth engine performance and increase efficiency also allow predictable response to the driver's gas pedal inputs.

Buick Interactive Drive Control System, standard on the Regal GS, puts control over the balance of performance and comfort at the driver's fingertips.

Through a set of "Sport" and "GS" buttons, drivers can alter suspension, steering, and gear shifting characteristics. "Sport" suspension is 20 percent stiffer than the base setting, while "GS" is 20 percent stiffer than "Sport." While the car is moving, the

engine computer constantly analyzes road conditions – thousands of calculations each second – to fine-tune suspension characteristics.

Other driver controls in the Regal GS are tuned for a pleasant experience. With a six-speed automatic transmission, shifts are smooth and programmed to save fuel during normal driving. When in "GS" mode, the transmission shifts are firmer and quicker to sharpen performance.

Regal GS caters equally to manual transmission enthusiasts. While these drivers select their own shift points, they are aided by a Hill Start Assist feature that, when the car is stopped on an incline, automatically engages the brakes for a few seconds while the driver releases the clutch, preventing the jolt that comes when a car rolls back.

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