

What's On Your Tire's Sidewall?

Radial tires have been around since the '40s. And over the years, innovations in tire design and construction have continued to improve (even though, let's be honest, they're still black and round). But there is so much more to know about a tire. Learn more about tire basics below.



Tire Type. The letter “P” at the beginning of the tire size indicates that the tire is a P-Metric tire, referring to tires made to certain standards within the United States, intended for passenger vehicles. The use of P-Metric sizes began in the late 1970s and they are the most frequently used type of tire size today.

The letters “LT,” either at the beginning or at the end of the tire size indicates the tire was designed for light trucks.

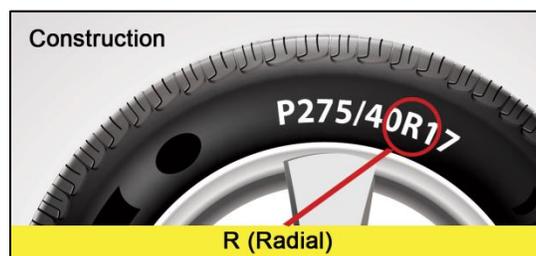


Tire Width is the measurement from the widest point of its outer sidewall to the widest point of its inner sidewall when mounted and measured on a specified width wheel. It is measured in millimeters. In this example, the width of the tire is 275 mm.

This measurement is also referred to as the tire's section width.



Aspect Ratio is the ratio of the height of the tire's cross-section to its width. For example, in a P275/40R17 tire, the 40 means that the height is equal to 40% of the tire's width. The bigger the aspect ratio, the bigger the tire's sidewall will be.



Construction. The letter “R” in a tire size stands for Radial, which means the layers run radially across the tire.

If the R in the size was replaced with a D, it would identify that the internal tire body plies crisscross on a Diagonal and that the tire has a “bias ply” construction. Tires using this construction are for light trucks and spare tire applications.



Wheel Diameter is the size of the wheel measured from one end to the other. It tells the size of the wheel that the tire is intended to fit. A size 275/40R17 tire is made for a wheel with a 17 inch diameter.