



What to Do If You Have a Blowout on the Highway

Having a flat tire when driving is always a problem. But experiencing a flat or blowout while traveling on an interstate highway or other high-speed roadway can present special dangers. The National Safety Council offers these tips for coping with tire trouble:

- At the first sign of tire trouble, grip the steering wheel firmly.
- Don't slam on the brakes.
- Let the car slow down gradually by taking your foot off the gas pedal.
- Work your vehicle toward the breakdown lane or, if possible, toward an exit.
- If it is necessary to change lanes, signal your intentions to drivers behind and do so smoothly and carefully, watching your mirrors and the traffic around you very closely.
- Steer as your vehicle slows down. It is better to roll the car off the roadway (when you have slowed to 30 miles per hour) and into a safe place than it is to stop in traffic and risk a rear-end or side collision from other vehicles.
- When all four wheels are off the pavement—brake lightly and cautiously until you stop.
- Turn your emergency flashers on.
- It's important to have the car well off the pavement and away from traffic before stopping, even if proceeding to a place of safety means rolling along slowly with the bad tire flapping. You can drive on a flat if you take it easy and avoid sudden moves. Don't worry about damaging the tire. It is probably ruined anyway.
- Once off the road, put out reflectorized triangles behind your vehicle to alert other drivers. Keep your emergency flashers on. If you know how to change a tire, have the equipment and can do it safely without being near traffic, change the tire as you normally would.
- Remember that being safe must take precedence over your schedule or whatever other concerns you may have. Changing a tire with traffic whizzing past can be nerve-racking at best and dangerous at worst. Therefore, it may be best to get professional help if you have a tire problem or other breakdown on a multi-lane highway.
- Raise your hood and tie something white to the radio antenna or hang it out a window so police officers or tow truck operators will know that you need help.
- Don't stand behind or next to your vehicle. If possible, stand away from the vehicle and wait for help to arrive.
- All interstate highways and major roads are patrolled regularly. Also, some highways have special "call-for-help" phones. If you have a cell phone you can

call right from the roadside. It is inadvisable to walk on a multi-lane highway. However, if you can see a source of help and are able to reach it on foot, try the direct approach by walking but keeping as far from traffic as possible.

These are the most important things to remember when dealing with a flat tire on the highway:

- Don't stop in traffic.
- Get your vehicle completely away from the roadway before attempting to change a tire.
- Tackle changing a tire only if you can do so without placing yourself in danger.
- Finally, the Council recommends that you have a qualified mechanic check your vehicle after having a flat tire to be sure there is no residual damage from the bad tire or the aftermath of the flat.