

Back in June, our president, Herb, shared his experience having a flat tire in his 997. Because the 997 doesn't have a spare, it turned into quite an ordeal. Recently, I also had a flat in my Boxster, but because the 986 has a spare, I was able to limp the car home and handle things in a much more convenient manner. This month, I'd like to discuss the spare tire possibilities for 2005 and newer 997's and 987's.

For model years '05 and newer, Porsche discontinued putting emergency tires in all of their automobiles, and instead included air compressors and aerosol cans of tire sealant (Fix-A-Flat). Many of us wonder if this was an appropriate choice. The biggest problem with this solution has to do with the low-profile tires on our cars. For a quick fix on punctures, the sealant works great, but you have to catch the leak in time. On bigger tires with greater volume, that's easy. You can see the tire is getting low or you'll feel the car's handling getting sloppy long before it's completely flat. On low profile tires, it's a different story.

Unless you've got tire pressure sensors, most of us driving politely and within the limits of the law won't know a tire is getting low until it catastrophically fails (I didn't). The tires' sidewalls are made to be stiff even at low pressures, and the volume is so low that there just isn't that much to lose between proper inflation and dead flat. And, it's not easy to see the difference in a properly inflated tire

vs. one that's down a bit. The difference may only be half an inch, so unless the car is parked on a flat surface with a clear view of both wheels, it's very tough to tell. All in all, most of us are not going to be lucky enough to catch a tire going flat in time to use that can of Fix-A-Flat. That's going to end up getting thrown into the woods in a moment of temporary insanity.

So, what options does the 997/987 owner have? There are a few answers, but they all have issues. The first issue is finding a spare large enough to clear the brake calipers. For owners of the 911 turbo, GT3, GT2, 911S, or any car optioned with ceramic brakes or the 6 piston front calipers, I'm afraid that Porsche has never manufactured a spare large enough to clear those giant brakes. For cars with 18" wheels as standard and 4 piston brake calipers, such as the 911, Boxster, Cayman, and "S" models of both of those, Porsche's emergency tires from the previous generation cars will fit. Two models are available.

The first, which you should still be able to get from the dealership or other authorized Porsche distributors, is the collapsible spare, part number 996.362.020.04.

The other, the inflated "donut" which was stock in all 986/996 cars, I do not believe is still available from the dealerships. However, they often pop up on eBay or can be sourced from many of the Porsche

dismantlers such as DC Automotive in North Carolina. To store either of these spares, you'll be taking up a considerable chunk of space in your front trunk. The collapsible spare will use more space front to back, but leave you with



room on top of it. The inflated donut is a bit narrower, giving you more space between the tire and the front of the trunk, but it extends all the way to the hood, leaving no space above it. Unfortunately, there is also no easy answer for securing either of the spares in the front trunk. Kerrigan Smith let me have a look at the stripped trunk in one of the Synergy race cars, and we both agreed that mounting a post as Porsche did with the 986/996 wasn't a good idea. The wall at the rear of the trunk is right up against the fuel tank. Drilling a hole through the trunk wall and mounting a long bolt pointed directly at the fuel tank doesn't seem too safe. Unless you're willing to do some creative engineering, the spare will have to sit in the front trunk loose.

The last issue, and hopefully the easiest, will be finding a tool kit with a jack and lug wrench, as these items were deleted along with the tire. Fortunately, the tool kit should tuck into the recess of the spare, saving a bit of space.

Hopefully, in the future Porsche will address this issue and present some better options. Until then, keep an eye on your tire pressures, be sure to have some good roadside coverage and your cell phone, and maybe keep a good (long) book in the car, just in case.

Happy driving and wrenching!



**RennZenn**  
HARMONY FOR YOUR  
PORSCHE

Concours Detailing • Maintenance • Performance  
Pre-purchase Inspections

www.rennzenn.com      e-mail: jfro@rennzenn.com  
Jeffrey Elmore      Phone: 434-409-0023