

Wheels: Dr. P of Centerville asks, “I have a vehicle that is not used very often but when I do, it shakes as if the tires are square. I know to drive the vehicle about ten miles before it rides normally. What is the most likely cause? I don’t want to spend a lot of money on it just for this problem. Thanks.”

Halderman: The most likely reason for the harsh and bumpy ride is that the tires have “taken a set” from being parked. This is normal for many types of tires, especially high-performance tires that use an overlay ply over the steel belt. When the vehicle is parked, the tires “flat-spot” where they contact the ground and it takes a while until the tire becomes round again.

Wheels: What can Dr. P do to help the situation?

Halderman: The least expensive thing to do is nothing. If it becomes unbearable, try inflating the tires to a pressure 2 psi to 4 psi higher than the specifications show on the decal on the driver’s door. This may help. If replacing the tires, check that the material used includes polyester or rayon and try to avoid tires that contain nylon to help reduce this flat-spotting.

