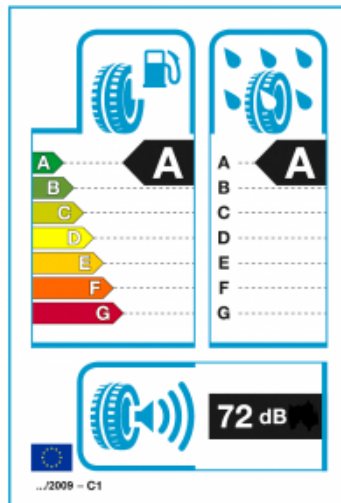


## GET A GRIP!

As of November 1<sup>st</sup> EEC regulation EC/1222/2009 became law in the UK. What this means to you and me is that all tyres sold here now carry a label not unlike those found on white goods and giving some indication as to how the product will perform in three significant areas.



**Fuel Efficiency** is divided into classes A-G, with A being the best grade. In broad terms an advantage of up to 7.5% might be obtained over the bottom ranking due to a lower rolling resistance, although while some benefit will no doubt be present there are a lot of other factors which could influence this figure, such as driving style and even the type of driving being done.

Next comes the **Wet Grip** class, which is again divided into A-G with A as the top rating. The criterion here is braking distance and a possible 30% is the difference between the best and worst, although again there are some variables to also take into account. Still, that percentage could equate to an 18-metre shorter stop from a 50mph, quite a difference.



Finally comes the decibel rating, which is shown as one to three bars indicating **External Rolling Noise**. All three bars indicate the noisiest

tyres and this rating is above the future European maximum limit. Two signify up to 3db below that limit and one bar is more than 3db below that limit. With even quite ordinary cars having tyres of dimensions which would have been reserved for sports models only a few years ago it is noticeable just how much noise four tyres can generate these days, particularly outside the vehicle due to improvements in encapsulating engine bay sounds.

Of course, there are other factors which will always influence tyre choice such as price, comfort or longevity, but this regulation goes some way to setting benchmarks which can assist the purchaser in making a more informed choice. It will be interesting to see how premium and budget brands compare within these parameters and I have a feeling that the makes in the middle ground between the two may well turn out to be the best compromise, as many of them appear to be at present.



There are probably more factors potentially affecting tyre purchasing than there are for any other type of vehicle component and there is also quite a bit of baggage carried by many customers based on their experiences - justified or otherwise- with certain makes. However, having these three rating displayed on a label attached to a new tyre may well help consumers to make better-informed choices when buying the 35 million (really!) tyres sold in the UK each year.

***MJB***