

Under Vehicle Stowed Spare Wheel Warning

Space saver and full size spares that are stowed on the underside of a vehicle can present a problem. They tend to accumulate a large amount of rust or debris build-up. It appears that the rust or debris build-up interferes with the proper installation of the wheel and although the roadside assistance provider properly tightened it, the debris breaks loose after the installation causing the wheel to become loose or possibly come off the vehicle while driving.

This is especially true if there is a significant build-up of rust and debris on the center hub area of the spare wheel. If this build-up is not removed, the rim will not fit the axle hub properly and will flex when tightened making it seem like the rim is tight. As the vehicle is driven, debris build-up will break away causing the wheel assembly to come loose.

For safety reasons, we would like to ensure that all the necessary steps are taken to avoid this most serious issue.

Guidelines to follow when installing a spare wheel are:

- 1) Ensure that the spare wheel is free of rust, dirt, or any other type of material that may interfere with the proper installation of the spare tire.
- 2) Using a wire brush or scraper, clean the mounting surface of both the hub and the wheel. This includes the opening in the wheel which fits over the axle hub. It may be necessary to use a battery terminal cleaner brush to clean the lug nut recess in the rim.
- 3) Install the spare wheel on the vehicle, ensuring that the proper star tightening sequence is used.
- 4) If the spare wheel was in poor condition or you have any doubts, drive the vehicle for a short distance and re-check the tightness of the lug nuts to ensure that they are properly seated on the rim surface.
- 5) If you do not feel comfortable installing the spare wheel in its condition, the vehicle should be towed to a place of repair

Discuss with the manager of the tow operation where you work as to proper guidelines that should be followed when situations such as this are encountered.