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North American Tire

A run-flat future

Tires have come a long way since Harvey Firestone started the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company at the turn of the 20th century and Shojiro Ishibashi founded Bridgestone Tire in 1931. The one thing that has not changed is the legacy of these two pioneers: our company's endless pursuit of technological advancements that continue to drive today's modern tire technology and design.

Regardless of the type of vehicle—sedan, truck, minivan, SUV, or concept car—all share one thing in common: tires. And because tires are the only part of the vehicle connecting with the road, it is impossible to overstate their importance. The most advanced technology in today's tires is not a luxury, but a necessity.

And now, the next wave of tire technology is here: run-flat tires.

Our unique run-flat system allows tires to operate within specified speed and distance limits—typically 50 mph for up to 50 miles (80 km/h for 80 km)—after rapid tire air loss. This capability reduces dangerous driving situations and allows the driver to get to a safe place to replace or repair the tire. In most instances of pressure loss, tires experience a slow leak, and drivers can either repair or replace the tire before it becomes an emergency. In those instances where the tire suffers rapid air loss, the run-flat system enables the tire to retain its shape and functionality so that it does not go flat and remains on the wheel rim. In addition, the use of a run-flat tire eliminates the need for a spare wheel, freeing up extra space and reducing vehicle mass

Bridgestone Run-Flat Tire Original Equipment Applications	
Toyota Sienna AWD	2004 & 2005
Mercedes-Benz E and S (armored vehicles)	2003-2005
Lexus SC430 (a special Blizzak Run-Flat winter tire is also available)	2001-2005
BMW 3 Series	2003-2005
BMW 5 Series	2004 & 2005
BMW 6 Series	2004 & 2005
BMW 7 Series	2003-2005
BMW Z4 Roadster (a special Blizzak Run-Flat winter tire is also available)	2003-2005
BMW Z8	2001-2003
Infiniti Q45	2002-2005
Infiniti G35	2005
Ferrari 612 Scaglietti	2005

for better fuel economy.

At Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire, we believe that what makes run-flat tires unique and exciting is their indisputable connection with vehicle design. We are proud of our work with vehicle manufacturers to find ways to get our Bridgestone brand run-flat tires on their products as original equipment.

A pioneer in the early development of run-flat tires, Bridgestone Corporation introduced its run-flat technology in 1987



as a specifically designed fitment for the **Porsche 959**. The critical and commercial praise afforded this breakthrough gave birth to a whole new generation of Bridgestone-brand tires that have and will emerge as standard original equipment on a broad range of automobiles and SUVs.

With more than 1 million run-flat tires shipped, the Bridgestone Group is the leading run-flat tire supplier to global automobile manufacturers. The Bridgestone-brand run-flat tire is repeatedly chosen by automakers not only because of its durability, but also because the tire, unlike some other run-flat designs, is designed to be mounted on standard wheels and can be serviced with conventional tire-changing equipment.

It is important to remember that the run-flat tire is really a vehicle system technology. Run-flat systems require tire-pressure monitoring devices to let the driver know if a tire has lost air pressure. Most vehicles that come with run-flat tires also have unique suspension and other systems that match the performance and handling characteristics of run-flat tires.

The Bridgestone group of companies has primarily focused its Self Supporting Run-Flat (SSR) Tire System in the original equipment market. By working with the vehicle manufacturers, we can help ensure the body, suspension, and other systems are tuned to the run-flat tires. Thus, handling is normally not an issue because it is addressed during the actual vehicle-design process. In this system,

we use rubber-reinforced sidewalls to safely support the weight of individual vehicles after a loss of tire pressure. Our SSR tires mount on a conventional rim so that a comparable conventional tire could be put on the vehicle. Plus, our system uses conventional mounting and demounting equipment generally carried by all tire retailers.

Today, the Bridgestone brand has more original equipment run-flat fitments than any other tire, and as our ever-increasing list of original equipment run-flat applications indicates, what was once considered a novelty is now becoming the norm. With the continuing refinement of the Bridgestone run-flat technology, the company is now ready to become one of the first suppliers of run-flat tires for mass-market, family-type vehicles. From high-performance luxury to more mainstream vehicles, we're putting our experience to work in making the benefits and convenience of run-flat tires available to a much broader consumer base.

Consumers already enjoying the benefits of Bridgestone brand run-flat tires are supported by a network of more than 3400 points of sale throughout the United States, each staffed with technicians trained and certified to service run-flat tires.

So, as we look to the future of technology in the automotive industry, we recognize that the highly engineered marvels known as tires will continue to evolve. But one thing is certain, run-flat tires are the wave of the future. **aei**



Bridgestone's run-flat tire technology has reinforced sidewalls



Self-supporting run-flat tires mount on conventional rims