

Why You Need a TPMS Tool – May 2010

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Tire Pressure Monitoring Systems are and have been a required feature on U.S. Passenger vehicles since 2008. Introducing this technology to the way we maintain our vehicles has improved safety and vehicle performance, increased fuel efficiency and tire life. It also has forever changed the way autos and tires are serviced. Any operation that works on tires has been faced with serious challenges to the way they do business. Thus is the nature of change. You can either run from it (lose business) or embrace it and seize the opportunity to grow and enhance your business.

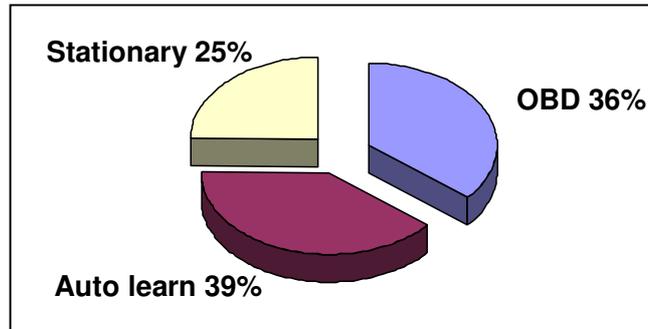
There are some obvious questions that you may ask. Should I get involved with TPMS? Should I invest in the tools and training? What will it mean to my business? For the purpose of this article, we are going to assume that you have dealt with many of these questions and you are at the point of taking on this opportunity and now question whether or not you need a TPMS Tool.

MY	Units Sold	Market Coverage	TPM Cars on the road
2010	11,200,000	100%	11,200,000
2009	10,700,000	100%	10,700,000
2008	13,242,801	100%	13,242,801
2007	16,149,647	70%	11,304,753
2006	16,559,970	20%	3,311,994
2006	16,994,655	20%	3,398,931
2004	16,913,361	10%	1,691,336
Estimated No. of vehicles with TPMS			54,849,815
Estimated No. of TPMS sensors in service			219,399,260

Before I answer that question, let's consider three important points. First, know that there nearly a quarter of a billion TPMS Sensors currently in use. Better than a third of those are at least 3 years old. Even more there are a large number of sensors that are on wheels that are ready to have the tires changed. There is a growing population that very soon will have battery issues. The bottom line is, if you haven't already, you will soon have TPMS vehicles in your garage or repair facility.

Secondly, you need to understand the types of re-learn procedures that you face. 25% of the vehicles have a Stationary method. The Stationary re-learn requires an activation tool and the car to be in a special re-learn mode. A series of key cycles or button pushes will put these cars into learn mode so you can then use an activation tool to trigger the sensors and program the sensor ID's into the control module. The challenge this method presents is the need to know all the different methods to get the car into learn mode.

Some vehicles can “auto-learn” or “self learn” new sensor ID’s. Essentially by driving the car after replacing the sensor, the car will assume a new ID is present after a pre-determined number of consistent transmissions from the sensor. The big issue here is time and driving. You can either drive your customer’s car until the light turns off or send your customer away with the light on, without knowing for certain that the light has gone off.



The last method requires an OBD Connection. These re-learns require that the sensor ID’s be programmed to or “written to” the TPMS control module directly. This is typically done with a Scan Tool or a COMBINATION Activation/Scan Tool. This method closely resembles the process used at the auto assembly line. Sensor ID’s are captured directly by activation (TPMS tool) and then connected to the OBDII port to write them (scan tool). This is the preferred method of re-learn as it is accurate and fast!

Finally, you need to know that your competitors are buying into this technology. Whether your competition is an OE dealer or another automotive service facility, they have the necessary tools to properly service TPMS vehicles. You can ill afford to let your competitors have the “leg up” on this emerging service. Having the ability to “turn out the TPMS light” will not only give you the ability to keep your customers happy but more importantly keep them from going to your competition.

So the answer to the question on whether or not you need a TPMS tool is simply yes. The majority of cars and trucks with TPMS require at a minimum an activation tool. A growing number of vehicles need a combination tool to get the ID’s programmed to the car. The best solution is a combination tool that handles all three types of re-learn situations, using the same process. A Bartec sales rep can tell you more about such tools.

CALL TOLL FREE (866) 407-TPMS for more information on or visit www.bartecusa.com



Scot Holloway is the General Manager of Bartec USA, LLC. Bartec USA and the Bartec Group of companies have long been experts in TPMS. With over 80 TPMS installations worldwide, Bartec programs the TPMS of all varieties of makes and models. Currently, Bartec brings this level of expertise and understanding to the complete range of aftermarket TPMS tools. Please visit www.bartecusa.com for more information on Bartec USA and Bartec Auto ID.