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## Honk If You . . .

# Can't identify this dashboard indicator light

**Commuting** | By **VICKI HYMAN**

Golly, onboard diagnostics are so advanced these days. There's even an indicator that lets you know when you really, really have to go to the bathroom.

What? You say that's the symbol for low tire pressure? Then why is it in the shape of a toilet bowl with an exclamation point in the center?

Don't worry — nearly half of those surveyed about the indicator earlier this year could not correctly identify it. (Full disclosure: I once confused the check engine light in my Honda for the battery light and was terrified to turn off my engine for fear it would never start again. My husband almost had to drag me physically from the car.)

The tire pressure monitoring system indicator — it's actually supposed to look like the cross-section of a tire — has been standard on all cars since the 2008 model

year, and it lights up when the air pressure in one or more of the vehicle's tires is 25 percent below the manufacturer's recommendation.

Underinflated tires are a little-publicized, but potentially deadly, problem. Low pressure greatly increases wear on tires and leads to blowouts.

Low tire pressure is responsible for 700 crashes a day, leading to 33,000 injuries and more than 650 highway deaths each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Schrader, a leading manufacturer of tire pressure monitoring systems, estimates Americans also waste more than 3.5 million gallons of gas because of incorrectly inflated tires.

The correct tire pressure level is usually printed on a yellow sticker on the driver-side doorjamb. Digital tire gauges cost \$10 or less, and keep in mind it's best to check the pressure of your tires when



they're cold. For more information, go to [TPMSmadesimple.com](http://TPMSmadesimple.com).

That said, an indicator light about pending urological needs would be handy.

*Honk, or better yet e-mail [vhyman@starledger.com](mailto:vhyman@starledger.com) with any comments, questions or kvetches about driving in the Garden State.*

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