

# techsavvy

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HANDS-ON | *by* KEVIN LIVINGSTON

## AN EYE ON INFLATION

Keeping tabs on tire pressure is easy with the new portable nVISION electronic monitoring system

**When dealing with motorhome safety, one often overlooked area is tire pressure monitoring.** Until the last few years, there was only one way to check tire pressure — using some type of gauge pressed against the tire's Schrader valve. While this method works as long as the owner manually checks the rig's tires before each trip, the onset of electronic tire pressure monitoring systems takes much of the guesswork out of the process while improving the convenience factor.

New to the growing family of electronic monitoring systems is the nVISION Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS). With enhanced functionality and simplicity, the TPMS sets itself apart from the rest. Installation of the TPMS follows a quick three-step set-up

process. The first step involves setting all of your tires to the desired pressure based on actual weight of the motorhome or dinghy vehicle. Make sure this is done when the tires are cold (the vehicle has been driven less than one mile).

The next step has you turning on the TPMS to display the default pressure type — pounds per square inch (psi), the common measurement used for tires. The screen directs you to one of four programming modes, where you can find the right configuration for your motorhome, with or without a dinghy vehicle. The monitor can check up to 24 tires through its various configurations, so you can easily keep track of any combination, including the pressure in the dinghy vehicle's tires (and even the spare tire).

PHOTOS: GARY BOHING

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The third and final step requires the installation of the TPMS sensors, which look like jumbo-size valve caps. An icon on the screen will prompt you when it's time to install the sensors, and a flashing tire position icon will guide you so the caps can be installed in proper sequence. It takes about 30 seconds for the sensor to recognize the tire's pressure. The individual sensors depress the valve core in the valve stem, so it's important to make sure the seal is secure (and not leaking air), without over-tightening the sensor. You'll get the feel as the resistance increases, and will end up turning the caps about one-sixteenth of a turn after it seems to be seated. You can verify the integrity of the seal by using soapy water.

The nVISION TPMS has a slew of functions. The primary warning system uses a highly precise pre-programmed, two-level warning system with audible and visible alerts. A 12.5 percent pressure drop triggers the first one, whereby a yellow light flashes on the monitor screen and the corresponding signal tone will beep for five seconds. The second one will be a blinking red light, indicating a 25 percent drop below your set PSI. In some cases, a 12.5 percent drop in pressure can affect tire loading and wear, so a corresponding pressure readout for each tire keeps the owners informed as pressure slowly decreases. We found this pressure readout to be very accurate when compared to numbers using a high-quality tire gauge. It's important for the owner to pay attention to these numbers.

In use, the monitor can be positioned on any flat surface and kept from sliding using the included rubber pad. It gets its power via a standard 12-volt-DC plug. Portability is its versatility; the device can be unplugged and moved to the dinghy vehicle so its tire pressure can be monitored while driven. The preset programming and tire pairing is maintained in the unit's memory.

The nVISION TPMS is made by Hopkins Manufacturing Corporation, a company that produces a long line of RV and automotive aftermarket products — including the BrakeBuddy dinghy-braking device. The TPMS has an MSRP of \$300 with four sensors; additional sensors sell in quantities of two for \$100.

**For more information**, call (800) 524-1458, or visit [www.nvisionsafety.com](http://www.nvisionsafety.com). Circle 229 on Reader Service Card. ♦

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