

300 Suspension, Steering and Brakes—General

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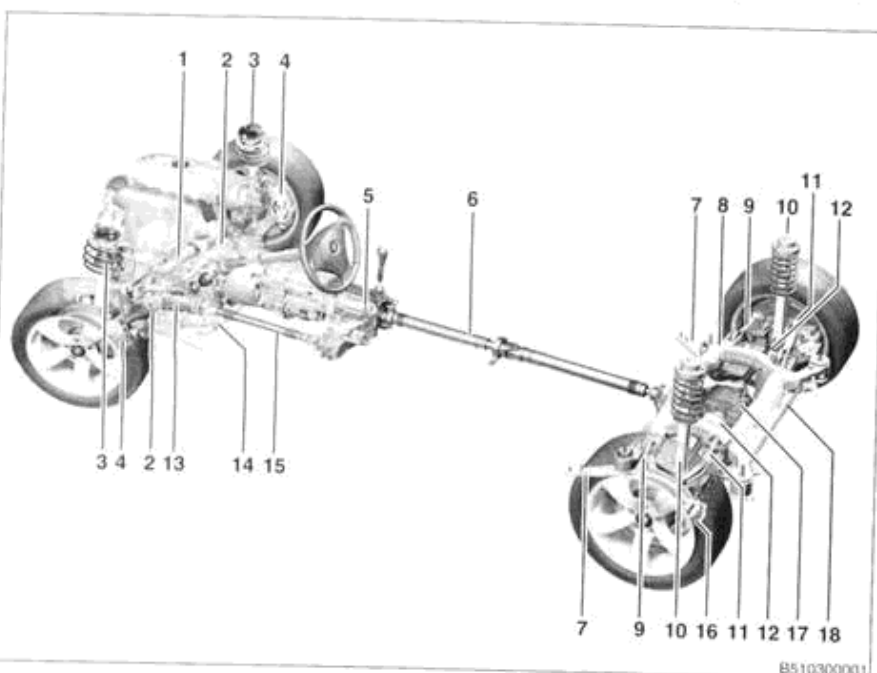
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GENERAL

This repair group includes overview information for the front and rear suspension, braking and steering systems. Also see:

- **200 Transmission—General** for xDrive transfer case information
- **600 Electrical System—General** for bus information
- **ECL Electrical Component Locations**

Suspension, steering, brakes (xDrive Sedan)



1. Steering rack
2. Front drive axle
3. Front strut and spring assembly
4. Front brake caliper
5. xDrive transfer case
6. Rear driveshaft
7. Thrust rod
8. Rear axle carrier (rear subframe)
9. Traction strut
10. Rear strut and spring assembly
11. Upper control arm
12. Rear drive axle
13. Front differential
14. Front end reinforcement
15. Front driveshaft
16. Rear brake caliper
17. Rear differential
18. Stabilizer bar

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Front Suspension

Aluminum suspension components

In order to reduce vehicle weight, aluminum suspension components are used. A test with a magnet easily reveals the metal used. When working with aluminum components, follow the cautions below.

CAUTION—

- Due to the chemical and corrosion characteristics of aluminum, do not bring into contact with battery acid.
- Do not use wire brushes with brass or iron bristles. Only use brushes with stainless steel bristles.
- Do not expose to flying sparks from grinding or cutting operations.
- Do not subject to steel welding splashes.
- Do not expose to temperatures over 80°C (176°F), even for short periods. Temperatures in painting facilities are not a problem.

FRONT SUSPENSION

◀ xDrive model right front suspension.

The 5 Series front suspension is a double-pivot, strut-type design with dual lower control arms. Many of its components are manufactured from aluminum alloy. Overall benefits of this front suspension design include:

- Increased vehicle agility.
- Improved comfort due to reduction of unsprung weight.
- Reduction in fuel consumption due to lowering gross vehicle weight and better axle load distribution.

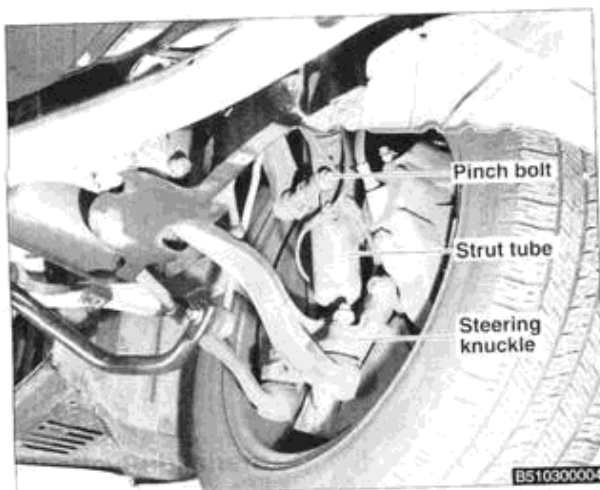
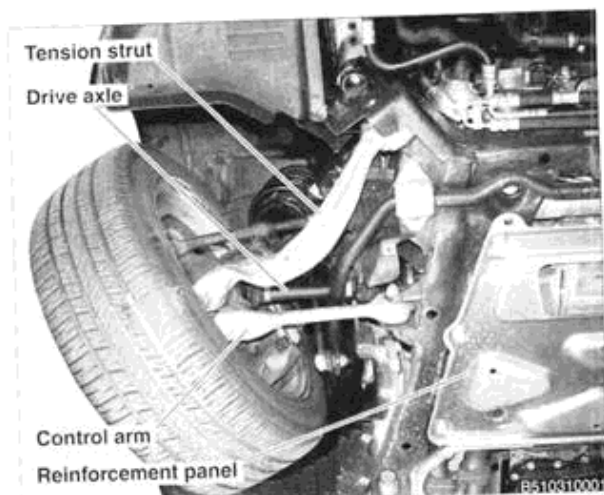
The aluminum axle carrier (front subframe) is made of cast alloy high tensile strength sections welded to extruded sections. It forms a rigid mounting platform for the front suspension arms, stabilizer bar, steering rack, engine mounts, heat shields and underbody splash panels.

The lower control arms (known as control arm and tension strut) are connected to the steering knuckles in a double pivot configuration. The tension struts (or thrust arms) are connected to the front subframe using hydraulic mounts.

◀ Each front strut assembly includes a tubular strut and a coil spring. The upper strut mount includes a bearing. The lower end of each strut housing is pinch-fitted to the steering knuckle.

On rear drive models, wheel bearings and hub assemblies are bolted to the steering knuckles.

on xDrive models, wheel bearing are pressed into steering knuckles. Use press tools to remove and install.



The aluminum thrust zone reinforcement panel, bolted to the front subframe to increase transverse rigidity, improves handling, noise level and crash performance. BMW specifies the following:

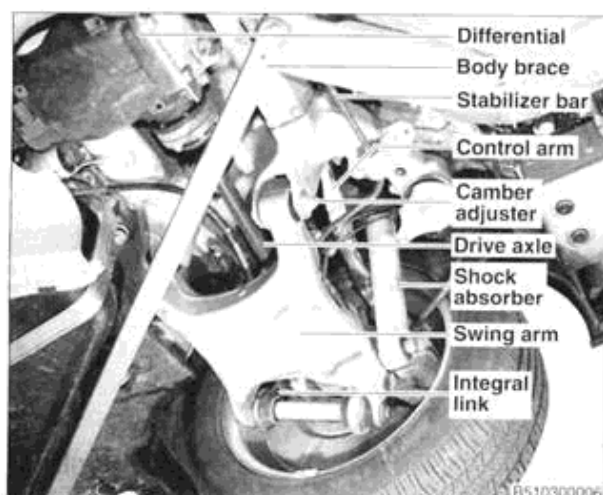
- Do not drive the vehicle with the front end reinforcement removed.
- When reinstalling the panel after repairs, replace panel mounting fasteners with new.

The front suspension also includes provisions for active stabilizer system (ARS).

Front suspension repairs are covered in **310 Front Suspension**.

The front differential is bolted to the left side of the engine oil pan. Drive axles with constant velocity (CV) joints at each end drive the front wheels.

Front differential and drive axle repairs are covered in **311 Front Axle Differential**.



REAR SUSPENSION

◀ Sports Wagon rear suspension.

The aluminum rear subframe mounts to the body through four large bushings. Rear suspension components attach to the subframe.

The rear suspension is an integral multi-link design. Three control arms on each side locate the rear wheels. The lower control arm, called the swing arm, is attached to the wheel bearing carrier through a pivoting integral link. Aluminum components reduce unsprung weight.

Sedan and Sports Wagon rear axle design, though basically the same, differ as follows:

- Sedan rear suspension uses conventional MacPherson struts and coil springs.
- Sports Wagon is equipped with self-leveling air springs, also known as electronic height control (EHC). By separating the air springs from the shock absorbers and placing the shock absorbers at a lower level and more widely spaced, the Sports Wagon design provides a larger and wider cargo space.

Rear suspension repairs are covered in **330 Rear Suspension**.

The rear differential mounts to the subframe using two rubber bushings in front and one hydromount at rear. Drive axles with constant-velocity (CV) joints at both ends transfer power from the differential to the road wheels.

Rear differential and drive axle repairs are covered in **331 Rear Axle Differential**.

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Active Stabilizers (Dynamic Drive)

ACTIVE STABILIZERS (DYNAMIC DRIVE)

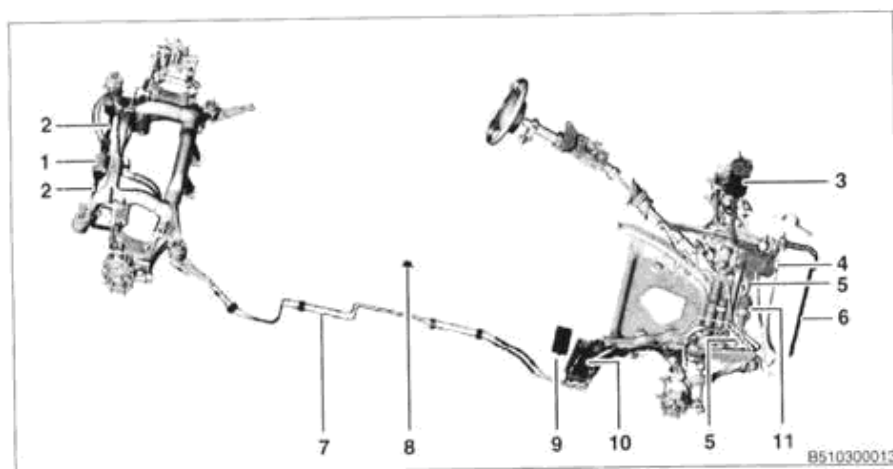
5 Series vehicles may be equipped with the optional active stabilizer system (acronym ARS). The system, also referred to as dynamic drive, is used to improve handling and suspension comfort.

With this system, front and rear stabilizer bars are split in half, with the halves connected to each other via hydraulic oscillating motors. An electronic control module operates through a valve body to control coupling of the two stabilizer bar halves. The stabilizer bar at each wheel is non-interacting with the stabilizer on the other wheel of the same axle and the suspension system as a whole does not respond if only one wheel is deflected by an irregularity in the road.

Suspension compliance adapts to suit driving conditions, varying from performance-oriented during cornering to smooth and comfort-oriented when the vehicle is proceeding in a straight line. During vehicle operation, the system responds to suspension travel by continuously cycling through closed-loop hydraulic control pulses lasting only fractions of a second.

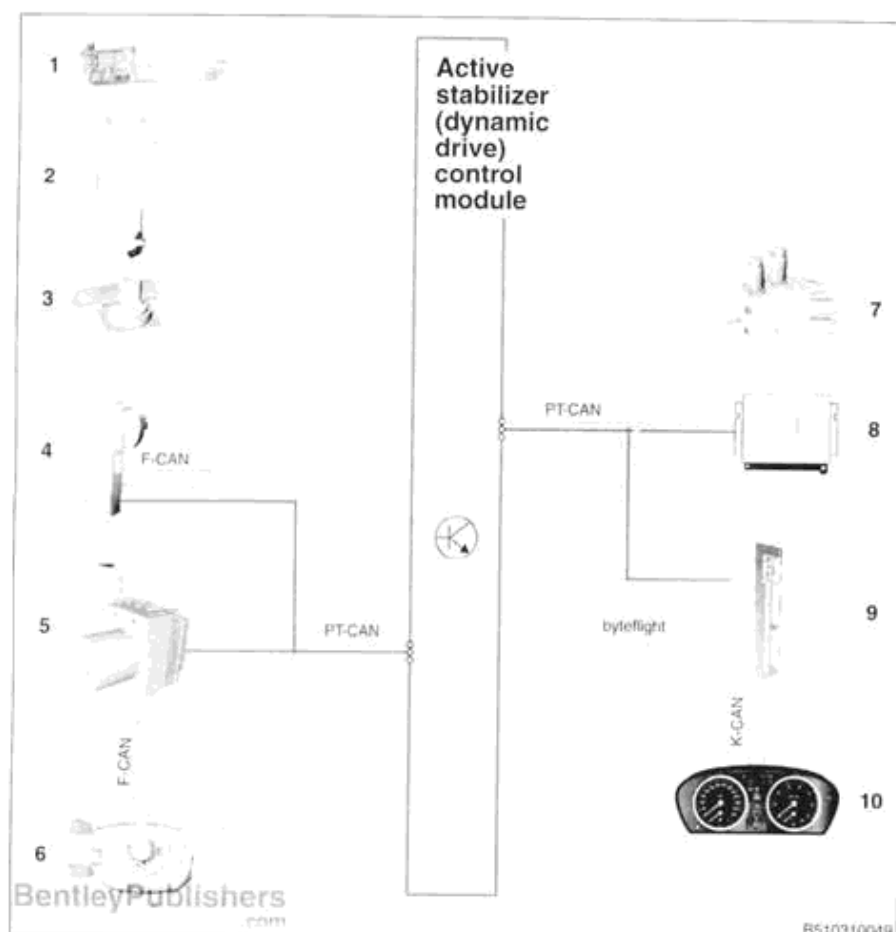
Front active stabilizer component replacement is covered in **310 Front Suspension**. Rear active stabilizer component replacement is covered in **330 Rear Suspension**.

Active stabilizer components overview



1. Rear oscillating motor
2. Rear stabilizer bar halves
3. Hydraulic fluid reservoir
4. Tandem fluid pump
5. Front stabilizer bar halves
6. Hydraulic fluid cooler
7. Hydraulic lines
8. Lateral acceleration sensor
9. Dynamic drive control module
10. Valve block
11. Front oscillating motor

Active stabilizer system inputs - outputs



1. Power supply, front fuse panel, behind glove compartment
2. Hydraulic fluid reservoir fluid level sensor
3. Lateral acceleration sensor, underneath passenger seat
4. Car access system (CAS) control module, underneath left side dashboard
5. ABS / DSC module, engine compartment
6. Steering-angle sensor, steering column switch cluster (SZL)
7. Valve block, behind right front wheel housing liner
8. Engine control module (ECM)
9. Safety and gateway module (SGM), behind glove compartment
10. Instrument cluster

Active stabilizer control module

The active stabilizer control module, located behind the passenger kick-panel, is supplied with power via terminal 30 (ignition ON) and is protected by a 10A fuse. The module uses input signals to calculate the operating commands for the valve block. Input signals are also checked for plausibility and used for system monitoring purposes.

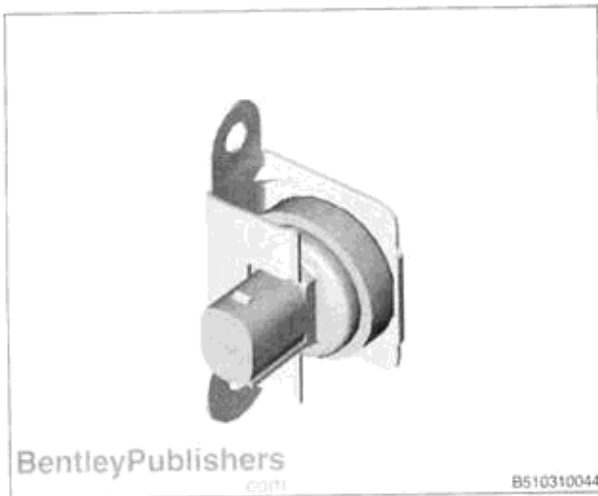
When the vehicle is started, the following electronic tests are performed by the control module:

- An authentication process compares the vehicle identification number from CAS with the vehicle identification number encoded in the stabilizer module.
- Control module hardware and software are checked.
- Valve block solenoids are checked for faults. In case of a fault, the system switches to fail-safe mode.
- The control module switches off if there is overvoltage.
- The control module learns the steering angle offset and the lateral acceleration zero-point during start-up and while driving.

If the control module is replaced, use BMW scan tool to code and program the new unit.

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Active Stabilizers (Dynamic Drive)



Lateral acceleration sensor

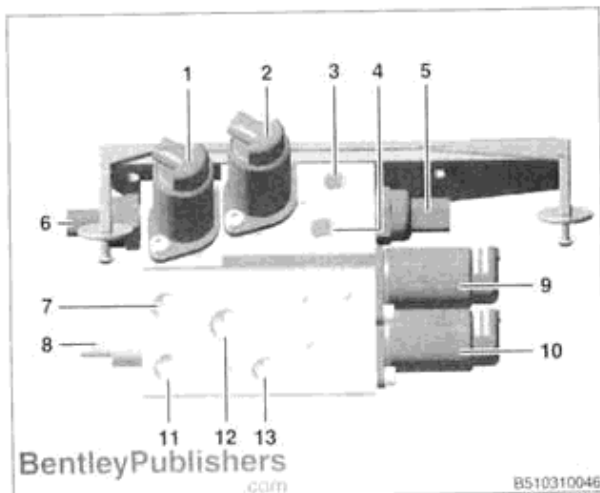
- The lateral acceleration sensor, mounted underneath the passenger seat on the floor, supplies the main sensor signal to the control module. When the vehicle corners, the sensor detects lateral acceleration up to a measuring range of approx. 1.1 g.

Tandem pump

The tandem pump, driven by the engine via accessory belt, consists of a radial piston pump for the active stabilizer system and a vane pump for power steering.

Valve block

- The valve block is behind the right front wheel housing trim.



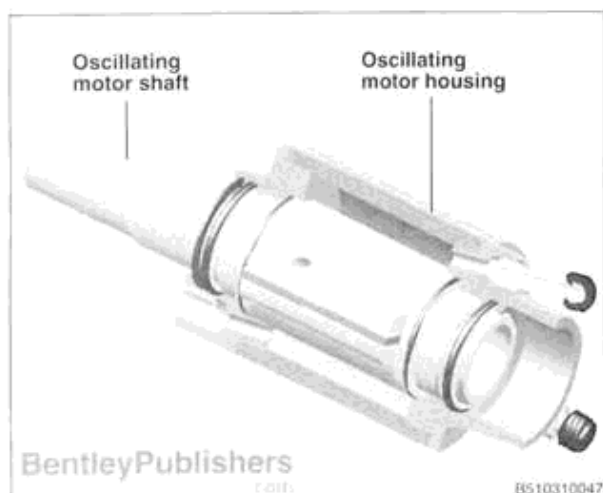
1. Rear axle pressure control valve
2. Front axle pressure control valve
3. Line 1, front axle oscillating motor
4. Line 2, front axle oscillating motor
5. Front axle pressure sensor
6. Rear axle pressure sensor
7. Tandem pump connection
8. Selector position recognition sensor
9. Fail-safe valve
10. Directional valve
11. Line 2, rear axle oscillating motor
12. Hydraulic reservoir connection
13. Line 2, rear axle oscillating motor

Pulse-modulated signals from the control module activate the valve block.

Pressure control valves adjust the actuation pressures for the front and rear axle stabilizer bars.

Directional valve specifies the direction of high-pressure fluid flow when vehicle is cornering left or right.

Fail-safe valve shuts off the front axle oscillating motor in case of a power failure or other detected fault. Thus the front active stabilizer bar behaves like a normal mechanical stabilizer.



Oscillating motor

- The active stabilizer bar consists of the halves of the stabilizer bar mounted to the oscillating motor and the oscillating motor housing.

The oscillating motor has three functions:

- It guides torque into the two halves of the stabilizer bar.
- It decouples the two halves of the stabilizer bar.
- In case of system failure (fail-safe mode), the front oscillating motor creates sufficient damping via hydraulic fluid (hydraulic locking) so that the stabilizer works like a conventional stabilizer bar.

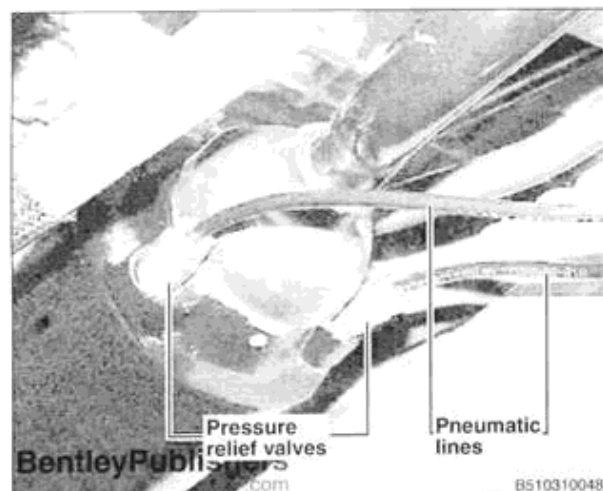
Since one half of the stabilizer bar is connected to the shaft and the other to the housing, the two halves turn in opposite directions, thus damping irregular suspension movements.

If the oscillating motor chambers no longer contain any fluid as a result of a leak, the front axle stabilizer bar can no longer create damping.

Pressure relief valves

- When the vehicle is driven on poor road surfaces, stabilizer bar movements give rise to cavitation in the fluid inside the oscillating motors and this may produce rattling noises. The pressure relief valves on the front oscillating motor eliminate these noises by allowing filtered air to flow into the oscillating motor. This small quantity of air is absorbed by the hydraulic fluid to form an emulsion, which is discharged during the next activations of the oscillating motor. The air separates out in the hydraulic fluid reservoir.

Because noises from the rear axle cannot be heard inside the vehicle, pressure relief valves are not installed on the rear stabilizer bar oscillating motor.



Service notes

- If the active stabilizer system fails, DSC can no longer be deactivated or if it is already deactivated, it does not switch back on automatically.
- Hydraulic connections for each components are different in dimensions and lengths so that they cannot be swapped.
- When installing cables and fluid lines, make sure they are correctly isolated and free of tension. Make sure they are covered by underbody protection.

Steering angle adjustment

The active stabilizer system is dependent on the precise setting of the steering angle sensor. After working on steering or active stabilizer components or replacing steering column switch (SZL) components, reset steering angle sensor. Connect vehicle to BMW scan tool and carry out steering angle sensor adjustment system function.

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Active Stabilizers (Dynamic Drive)

Active stabilizer, commissioning

WARNING—

- During commissioning, the vehicle performs very strong and rapid rolling motions. For this reason, make sure no persons are near the vehicle, particularly in the proximity of moving vehicle components. Also, make sure that there are no objects underneath the vehicle or in the wheel housings.
- Make sure that commissioning is carried out with the vehicle standing on a firm, flat surface with all four wheels on the ground. Do not perform commissioning with the vehicle on a lift, wheel alignment platform, shock absorber test platform, brake testing platform or dynamometer.

The purpose of commissioning is to teach the active stabilizer control module the parameters and zero point of system components. Commission the system any time the system is coded and programmed, hydraulics are opened or parts replaced.

Commissioning requires the use of BMW scan tool. The process is divided into 5 phases and takes approx. 25 seconds:

- Check of direction valve.
- Low pressure test.
- Front axle high pressure test.
- Rear axle high pressure test.
- Pressure control valve test.

Before commissioning, make sure of the following:

- Hydraulic fluid temperature of 50° - 70°C (122° - 158°F).
- Vehicle parked level and on all four wheels.
- Vehicle unladen.
- Engine at idle.
- Vehicle in rest status with doors closed and no persons inside.

Active stabilizer troubleshooting

The following may appear as Check Control messages in iDrive display screen:

- Vehicle instability icon in **yellow**. Active stabilizer system disabled. Vehicle leans more in curves. To continue driving:
 - Check fluid level in power steering and active stabilizer reservoir.
 - If there is no significant fluid loss, continue driving, but carefully around corners.

Bring vehicle to qualified repair facility as soon as possible.

- Vehicle instability icon in **red**. Fluid loss in steering and active stabilizer system. Do not continue to drive. Have vehicle towed for diagnosis and repairs.

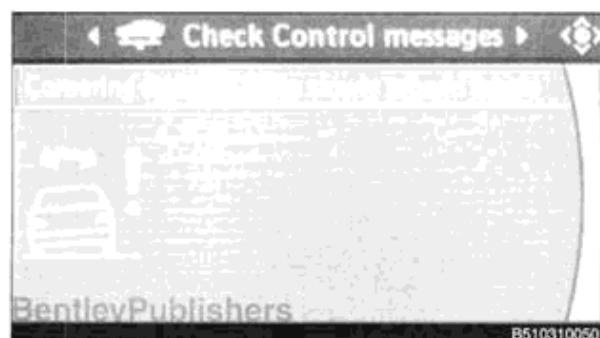


Table a lists commonly encountered active stabilizer faults and suggested solutions.

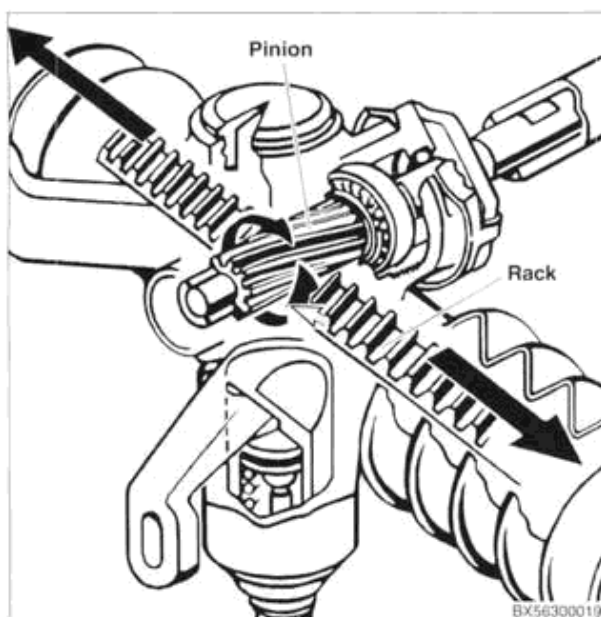
Table a. Active stabilizer troubleshooting

Problem	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Noises (banging, rattling) during straight-ahead driving and gentle steering through center.	Front or rear suspension bolts loose	Check front and rear suspension fastener torques.
	Stabilizer bar link loose or defective	Check stabilizer link ball joints for damage or play. Tighten or replace stabilizer link as necessary.
	Stabilizer bar mount loose	Tighten stabilizer bar mount bolts.
	Hydraulic lines distorted	Check hydraulic line alignment. Make sure that lines are installed in brackets tension-free, not twisted.
	Hydraulic lines fitted too closely or have insufficient clearance (elastic movement of line during pressure buildup)	Check hydraulic line alignment. Make sure that lines are installed with sufficient clearance.
	Hydraulic line brackets loose, missing or incorrectly fitted	Check hydraulic line bracket fasteners for tightness and fit. Replace if missing or damaged.
	Hydraulic line rubber isolating elements damaged or missing	Replace defective or missing rubber isolating elements.
	Valve block rubber isolating elements damaged or missing	• Replace defective or missing rubber isolating elements. • Replace valve block bracket.
Rattling noises on bumps and straight-ahead driving (without altering steering wheel position); noises to a large extent independent of temperature	Valve block defective	If after bleeding and initialization, faults are detected, replace valve block.
	Front or rear suspension bolts loose	Check front and rear suspension fastener torques.
	Stabilizer bar link loose or defective	Check stabilizer link ball joints for damage or play. Tighten or replace stabilizer link as necessary.
	Stabilizer bar mount loose	Tighten stabilizer bar mount bolts.
	Hydraulic lines distorted	Check hydraulic line alignment. Make sure that lines are installed in brackets tension-free, not twisted.
	Hydraulic lines fitted too closely or have insufficient clearance (elastic movement of line during pressure buildup)	Check hydraulic line alignment. Make sure that lines are installed with sufficient clearance.
	Hydraulic line brackets loose, missing or incorrectly fitted	Check hydraulic line bracket fasteners for tightness and fit. Replace if missing or damaged.
	Hydraulic line rubber isolating elements damaged or missing	Replace defective or missing rubber isolating elements.
	Protective rubber cap (black) not removed from front fluid lines Y-connector	Remove Y-connector rubber cap.
	Vent valve leaking	If black plastic air filter element is filled with fluid, replace vent valve and filter.
	Valve block defective	If after bleeding and initialization, faults are detected, replace valve block

Steering

Table a. Active stabilizer troubleshooting

Problem	Possible cause	Suggested solutions
Rattling noises on bumps and straight-ahead driving (without altering steering wheel position); noises only at higher ambient temperature or when vehicle is heated up	Valve block defective	During test drive, check if noises occur during straight-ahead driving or road bumps on one side. If after bleeding and initialization, faults are detected, replace valve block
Hissing noise	Hydraulic lines damaged	Check hydraulic lines to see if they are bent or crushed. Repair or replace as necessary.
	Valve block fluid flow problem	Use BMW scan tool to diagnose system. If fault in valve block is detected, replace valve block.
Whining noises during cornering	Tandem pump belt problem	Check whether noises are from pump or belt. If necessary, install noise-optimized belt pulley.
Pump noise from engine compartment depending on engine speed or only during cornering	Fluid pressure line damaged	Check fluid pressure line from tandem pump. If crushed or bent, replace line.
	Tandem pump defective	Check for pump damage. If other causes are ruled out, replace pump.

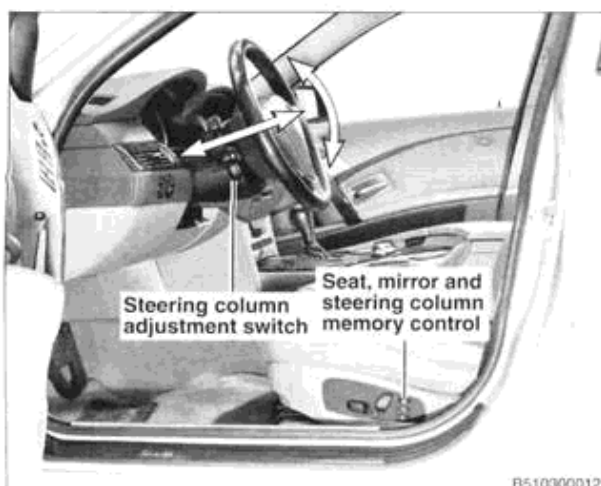


STEERING

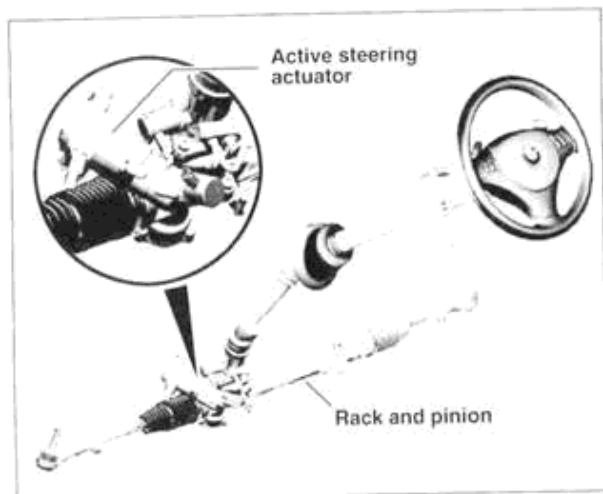
- The rack-and-pinion steering system is powered by an hydraulic pump driven by the engine accessory belt.

Power assist to the steering system is regulated in one of two ways:

- BMW Servotronic provides speed-sensitive variable power assist to the steering gear and is regulated by software in the safety and gateway module (SGM).
- Active steering (AS) incorporates Servotronic, but in addition provides variable steering ratio.



- The steering column is electrically adjustable for length and height. Seat and mirror memory control also adjusts steering wheel position.



Active steering

Active steering (AFS or AS), an option on 5 Series vehicles, allows variable steering ratio based on road speed and conditions such as yaw and lateral acceleration.

- Active steering manipulation of steering ratio from 10 : 1 to 20 : 1 is actuated by a planetary gear set driven by a 3-phase DC motor and controlled by the active steering control module.

BRAKE SYSTEM

5 Series vehicles covered by this manual are equipped with power disc brakes with integral antilock brakes (ABS) and dynamic stability control (DSC). See **340 Brakes** for details.

The parking brake is a dual-drum system integrated with the rear brake rotors.

Lightweight brake rotors are two-piece: The braking surface is made from grey cast iron, while the hubs are made from aluminum. The two parts are riveted together.

Each disc brake uses a caliper with a single hydraulic cylinder. Brake pads in the left front and right rear contain wear sensors. When brake pads need replacement, the sensors illuminate a light on the dashboard.

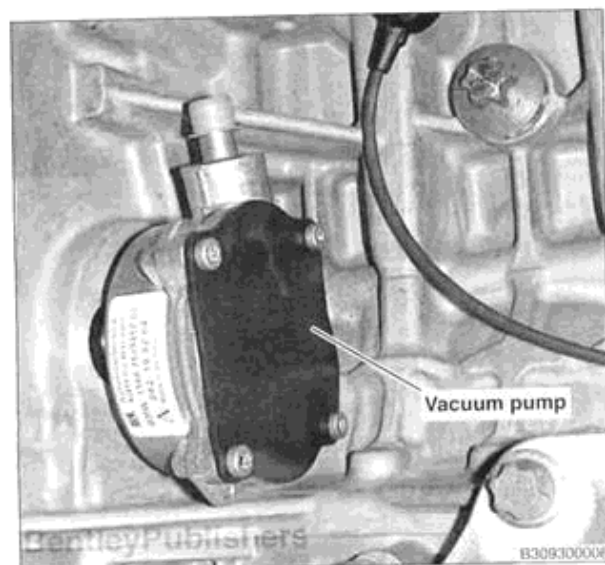
Power assist is provided by a vacuum booster when the engine is running. The brake pedal pushrod is connected directly to the master cylinder, so failure of the vacuum booster does not normally result in total brake failure.

Vacuum booster pump

In order to provide adequate vacuum for the brake booster, an additional vacuum pump is fitted, except in models with M54 engine.

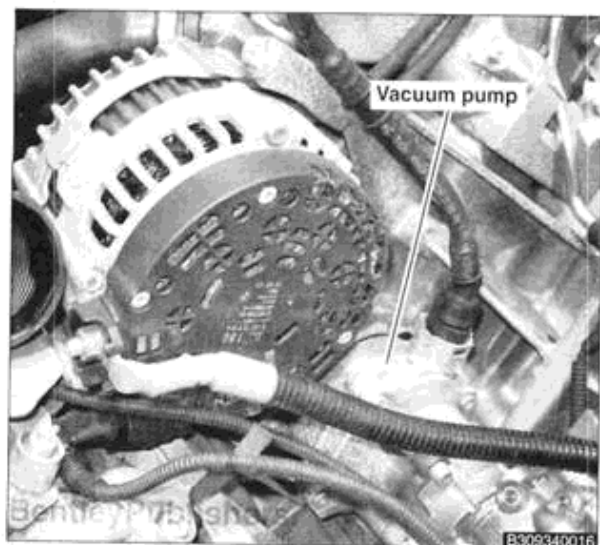
In 6-cylinder models, the pump is driven off the oil pump chain.

- N52 or N52KP engine: Vacuum pump is attached to rear of timing chain housing.

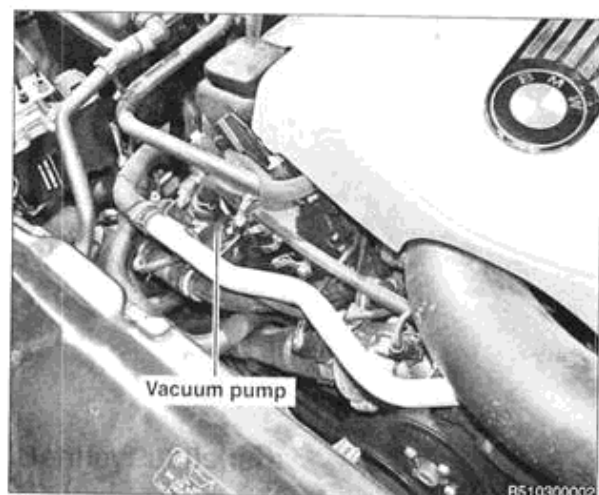


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Wheel Alignment



- ◀ N54 engine: Vacuum pump in tandem with high pressure fuel pump is attached to rear of timing chain housing, below and to right of alternator.



- ◀ V8 engine: Vacuum pump is attached to front of right timing chain cover and driven off the right exhaust camshaft.

See **100 Engine—General** for additional information.

WHEEL ALIGNMENT

Use electronic alignment equipment to check and set camber and toe for all 4 wheels. Be sure to check and adjust ride height prior to attempting wheel alignment.

For ride height and alignment specifications and procedures, see **320 Steering and Wheel Alignment**.

WHEELS AND TIRES

Run-on-flat tires are optional on 5 Series cars covered by this manual. Several different styles of wheels in 16, 17, 18 and 19 inch diameters are available from an authorized BMW dealer.

Flat tire monitor (FTM)

Flat tire monitor (FTM) uses input from the ABS wheel speed sensors to keep track of tire inflation pressures as the vehicle is driven. In case of pressure loss in a tire, the rolling radius and therefore the rotation speed of the wheel changes. This change is detected and the system alerts the driver using warning lights in the instrument cluster.

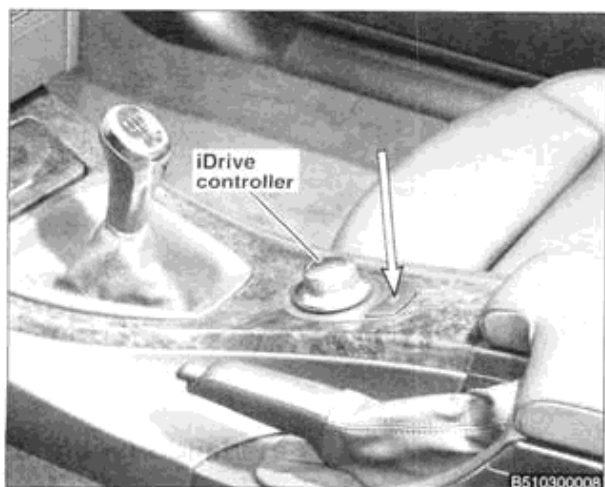
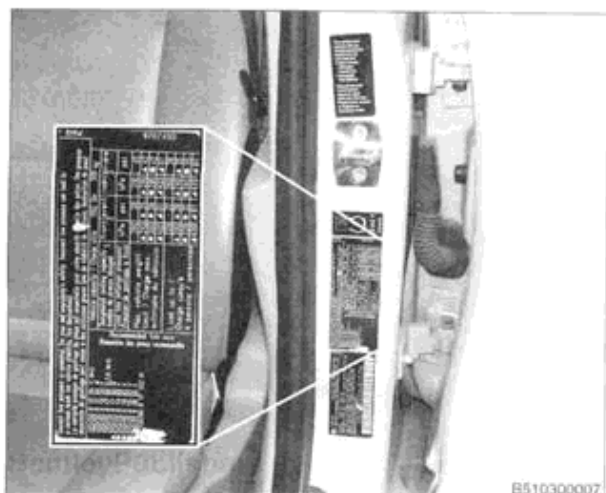
FTM electronic control is integrated in DSC control module.

FTM, initializing using iDrive

In order to assure reliability, use iDrive controller and display to initialize FTM system after tire pressures are set correctly.

- ◀ B-pillar door sticker (**inset**) provides factory-recommended tire inflation pressures.

Repeat initialization each time tire inflation pressures are corrected and after every tire or wheel change.



- ◀ With ignition ON, press down iDrive menu button (**arrow**) to open **Start** menu.

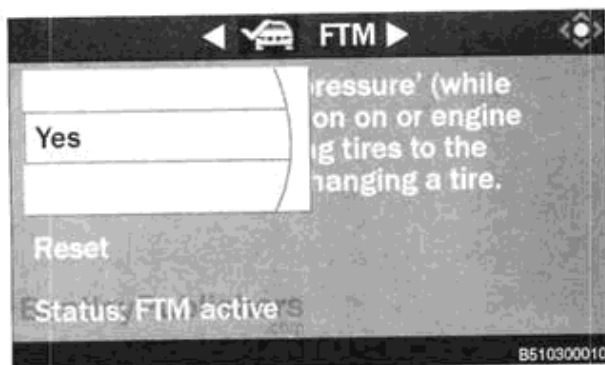
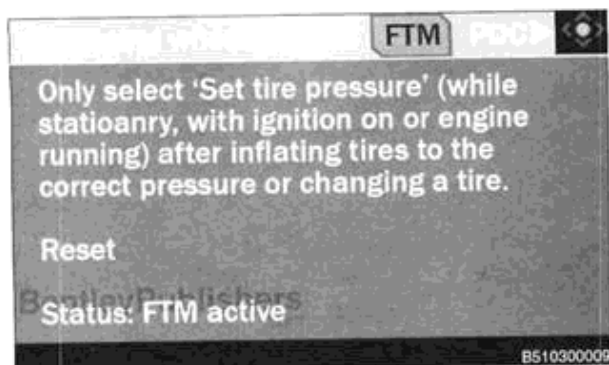
NOTE —

• Early style iDrive shown. Later version iDrive operates similarly.

- Press iDrive controller to open **info sources** menu.
- Select **Vehicle settings** and press controller.

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Wheels and Tires



➤ Select **FTM** and press controller.

- Start engine but do not drive.
- Select **Set tire pressure** and press controller.

➤ Select **Yes** and press controller.

- Start to drive. The message **Initializing** is displayed.
- Initialization finishes during driving and **Status: FTM active** appears again.

If driving is interrupted before initialization is complete, initialization continues automatically when driving resumes.

Do not initialize the system when driving with snow chains or compact spare tire.

Flat tire indication

➤ In case of a flat tire or extensive loss of air in a tire, the instrument warning light lights up red and a Check Control message appears. In addition, an acoustic signal sounds.

- Reduce speed. Stop vehicle carefully. Avoid sudden braking and steering maneuvers.
- Identify damaged tire and replace. See **020 Maintenance**.

Run-on-flat tires

In case of a flat tire warning in the instrument cluster:

- Cautiously reduce speed to below 50 mph (80 kph). Avoid sudden braking and steering maneuvers. Do not exceed a speed of 50 mph (80 kph).

WARNING —

• If the vehicle is not equipped with run-on-flat tires, do not continue to drive. Continuing to drive with a flat tire could cause a severe accident.

- At the next opportunity, check air pressure in all four tires.
- If tire pressure in all four tires is correct, FTM may not have initialized correctly. Initialize system.

- In case of complete tire pressure loss, use **Table b** to estimate safe distance for continued driving.

Table b. Driving distance with flat run-on flat tire	
Condition	Approx. safe distance to drive
1 - 2 persons, no luggage	155 miles (250 km)
2 persons, full luggage	94 miles (150 km)
4 persons, no luggage	
Full load: 4 persons, full luggage	30 miles (50 km)

WARNING —

- In case of a completely flat run-on-flat tire, drive cautiously and do not exceed a speed of 50 mph (80 kph).
- Vehicle handling changes with a flat tire. This can mean reduced tracking stability in braking, extended braking distance and altered steering characteristics.
- If unusual vibration or loud noises occur while driving on a damaged tire, this may be an indication that the tire has failed completely. Reduce speed and pull over as soon as possible at a suitable location. Otherwise parts of the tire could come loose, resulting in an accident. Do not continue driving.

System limits

FTM cannot indicate sudden severe tire damage caused by outside factors. It also does not detect an even pressure drop in all four tires. In the following situations, the system could be delayed or malfunction:

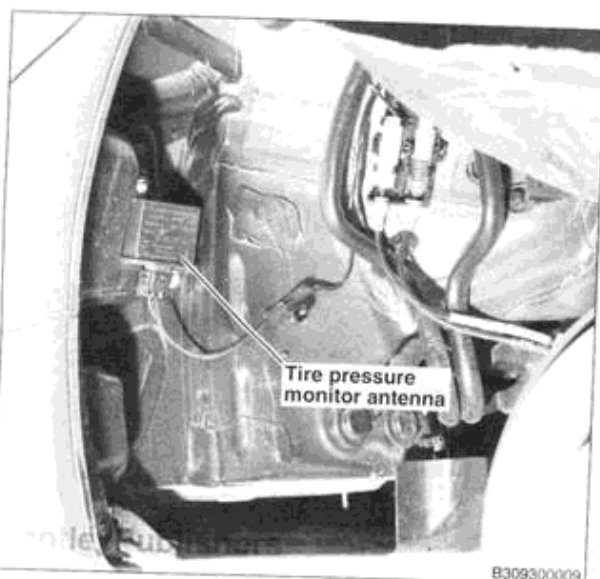
- Uninitialized system.
- Driving on snowy or slippery road surface.
- Sporty driving style leading to slip in the drive wheels, high lateral acceleration.
- Driving with snow chains.
- Driving with compact spare.

Tire pressure monitor (TPM)

Beginning with 2006 models, tire pressures are automatically monitored by the tire pressure monitoring system (TPM).

- ◀ A TPM antenna in each wheel communicates tire pressure data to a pick-up antenna in each wheel housing.

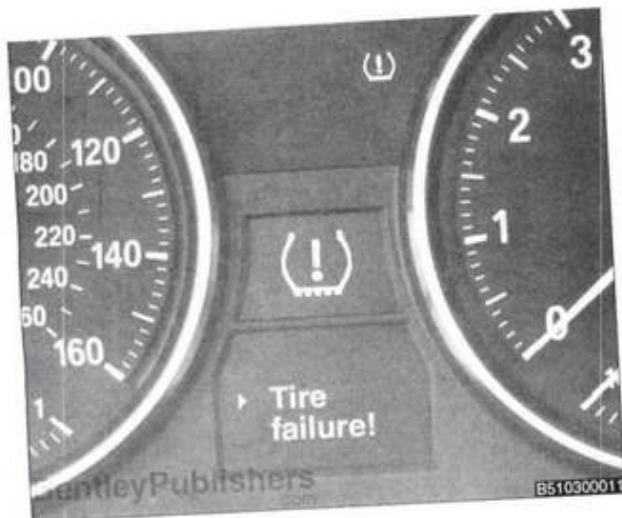
TPM electronic control is integrated in DSC control module.



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300-16 Suspension, Steering and Brakes—General

Wheels and Tires



◀ Tire pressure data from run-on-flat tires is monitored by the tire pressure monitoring (TPM) system. If a substantial loss of tire pressure is detected, warning lights in red illuminate in the instrument cluster and a tire failure message appears in Check Control display. In addition, an acoustic signal sounds.

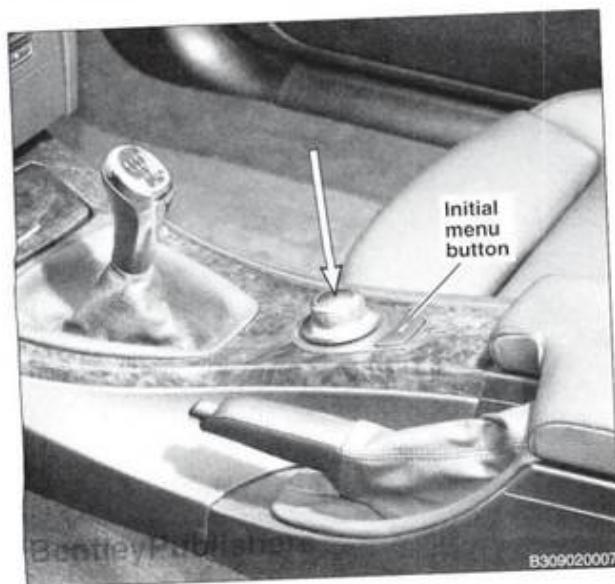
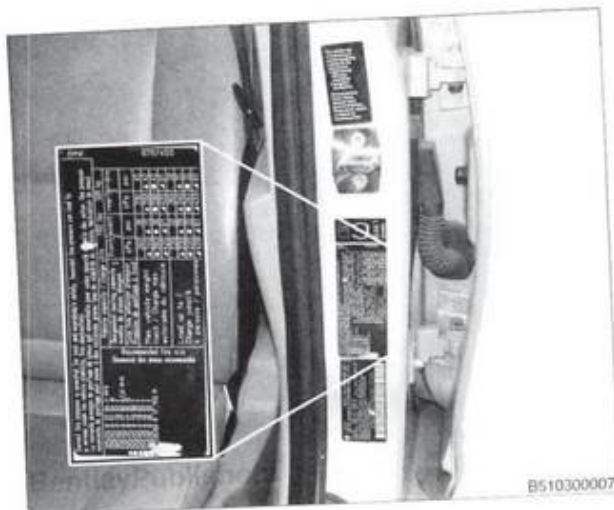
WARNING—

- In case of a completely flat run-on-flat tire, drive cautiously and do not exceed a speed of 50 mph (80 kph).
- Vehicle handling changes with a flat tire. This can mean reduced tracking stability in braking, extended braking distance and altered steering characteristics.
- If unusual vibration or loud noises occur while driving on a damaged tire, this may be an indication that the tire has failed completely. Reduce speed and pull over as soon as possible at a suitable location. Otherwise parts of the tire could come loose, resulting in an accident. Do not continue driving.
- TPM does not work correctly if it is not initialized.
- TPM cannot indicate a flat tire if a wheel without TPM electronics is mounted.

Avoid sudden braking and steering maneuvers. At the next opportunity, check air pressure in all four tires.

◀ B-pillar door sticker (**inset**) provides factory-recommended tire inflation pressures.

Immediately after correcting tire pressures or mounting a new wheel, reset TPM.



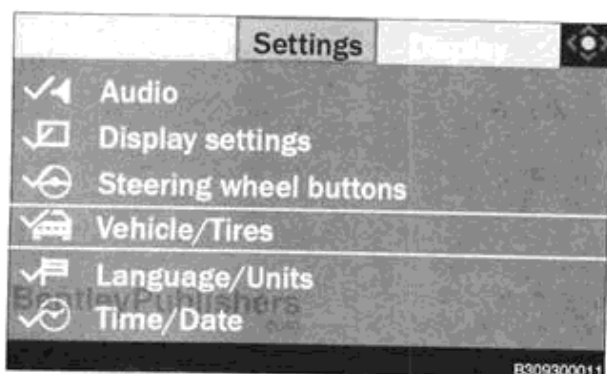
TPM, resetting

- Switch ignition ON.

◀ Press down iDrive controller (**arrow**) to select **Info sources** | **Settings** menu.

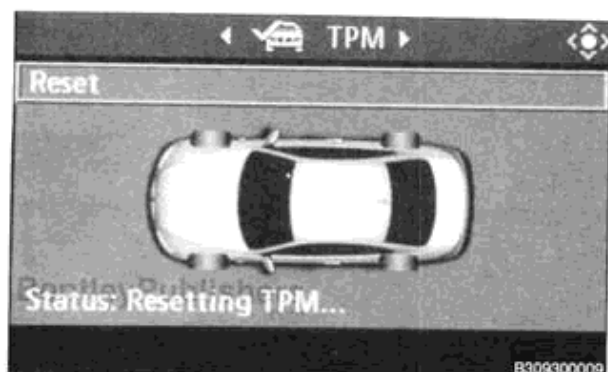
NOTE—

- Early style iDrive shown. Later version iDrive operates similarly.



◀ Rotate controller to **Settings**.

- Press down controller to select **Settings**, then rotate to **Vehicle/Tires**.



◀ Press down controller to select **Vehicle/Tires**. In similar manner, navigate to **TPM** screen.

- Start engine, but do not drive off.
- Select **Reset** and press controller.
- Select **Yes** and press controller.
- Start to drive. Initialization completes automatically while vehicle is on the move. Correctly inflated tires show up as green on iDrive display.



