Offset – Positives, Negatives, and Everything in Between

We often get asked about offsets and backspacings, and how they relate to your vehicle. To start, when you hear someone specify an offset as a 4+2, it is generally more of a rough number that indicates the wheel was built with a 4" inner wheel half and a 2" outer wheel half. These dimensions will give you a rough idea, but do not include other factors that could affect the offset and backspacing.

Offset is a measurement from the theoretical center line of the wheel to the back side of the mounting pad of the wheel. Offset can be a positive, negative, or zero, and it is generally specified in millimeters. A positive offset is common on many independent suspension vehicles, and it means that the mounting pad of the wheel is pushed out towards the outside lip of the wheel keeping the overall width of the vehicle down. A negative offset means that the mounting pad of the wheel is closer to the inside lip of the wheel, which pushes the wheel out and widens the overall width of the vehicle. A zero offset means the mounting pad of the wheel is centered between the inside and outside lips of the wheel.

When changing wheel width it is important to remember that it will affect the offset. If the offset stayed the same dimension, but the wheel was 1" wider, than that extra inch of wheel width would be split evenly, adding a half inch to each side of the wheel.

Backspacing is also a common measurement used. Backspacing is the measurement from the mounting pad of the wheel to the very back lip of the wheel. On many vehicles it is necessary to keep the backspacing the same as stock, or slightly less. More backspacing means there is more wheel hanging to the inside of the hub, which can create clearance issues with the suspension and brake components.

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