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Bulletin

CONSIDER TIRE AGE AS A SAFETY FACTOR

Does your business sell, service, or inspect vehicle tires? In June 2008, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration advised that the risk of a serious crash during hot weather can be heightened by tires that are worn out, under-inflated or **too old**. Most failures result in nothing more serious than minor property damage. For more serious crashes, NHTSA estimates that about 400 fatalities annually may have been attributed to tire failures.

The structural integrity of a tire can degrade over an extended period of time. When that occurs, tires are more prone to catastrophic failure, which could, at best, cause an inconvenience, or at worst, lead to a crash. The degradation of a tire occurs over time, mostly the result of a chemical reaction within the rubber components. That aging process can be accelerated by heat, sunlight or other factors such as under inflation.

If you sell, service, or perform safety inspections on tires for vehicles either as a normal service or for vehicles slated for resale, the age of tires on the vehicle should be very important to you. *Selling, servicing, or certifying safety of tires that are over 6 years old means that you are potentially putting your clients in danger.* Your company becomes open to a potential claim or lawsuit which could severely impact your business and even border on a criminal act.

If you have tires in inventory, check their age. If you are buying tires from a wholesale company, check the tire age before taking delivery. Make sure you are not selling tires which are old and potentially unsafe. Also, if you have a large inventory, rotate the stock. As new tires arrive, place them in line to be sold after the stock you already have in your warehouse.

Some tire and vehicle manufacturers, including Ford Motor Company, have issued recommendations for replacing tires that range from six to ten years of age. The age of a tire can be determined by checking the identification number on the sidewall that begins with the letters "DOT". The last four digits represent the week (of the year) and year the tire was manufactured.

You should consider not repairing, servicing, or inspecting a tire if it is over 6 years old. Instead, you should warn the tire owner of the age and potential risks they may be exposed to. If you have a vehicle for resale, part of the overall safety inspection should include checking the age of tires and replacing them if they are over 6 years old.

Unfortunately, the effects of aging on tires may not be visibly detectable. Since there is no standard test to assess the serviceability of a tire, even an inspection performed by an expert may not always reveal the extent of tire deterioration. In most cases, the deterioration is internal and not seen. Without a definitive standard test, we must consider age as a Safety Factor.



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Action Check list:

- ☑ Check your inventory.
 - ➔ Do not sell tires if they are approaching 6 years of age, even if they are sold as a spare.
 - ➔ Rotate your stock; first in – first out!
- ☑ If you service tires, do not repair tires over 6 years of age.
 - ➔ Instead, notify the tire owner of the potential risk that they face by continued use of this tire.
- ☑ If you are inspecting vehicles for safety, always consider tire age as a factor.
 - ➔ Document the tire age on your inspection sheet.
- ☑ If your dealer sells used vehicles, the safety inspection should document the tire age.
 - ➔ Document the tire age on your inspection sheet.
 - ➔ If tires are over 6 years old, they should be replaced before the vehicle is sold.