

Tire Aging

HOW LONG DO TRUCK TIRES LAST?

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED AS AN ENDORSEMENT FOR ANY PARTICULAR COMPANY. WE PRESENT IT AS A MATTER OF INTEREST SINCE THE SUBJECT OF THE LIFE OF A TRUCK TIRE IS VERY MUCH IN THE NEWS THESE DAYS.

What is a Truck Tire?

To begin, we must define truck tires. These are tires usually associated with use on light, medium and heavy commercial vehicles over 10,000 pounds GVW (Gross Vehicle Weight). These truck tires are generally constructed of a single steel body ply and 3 or 4 steel belts under the tread. They are designed to go hundreds of thousands of miles on their original tread, and then be retreaded and placed in service again for hundreds of thousands of additional miles.

The Age Limit Debate

Currently, age limits on tires are being discussed for passenger and light truck tires, and for four-wheeled vehicles that weigh less than 10,000 pounds GVW. Some claim that tires of a certain age, regardless of appearance, condition or remaining tread depth, must be replaced solely because their age exceeds some number of years. The age is determined by the date of manufacture. This date is molded onto the sidewall of the tire as a part of the DOT (Department of Transportation) identification number which is required to be on all tires used on U.S. roads.

OUR POSITION ON AGE LIMITS

Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions does not advocate the use of a "use by" date or age limit on commercial, steel body, tubeless or radial truck tires for the following

reasons:

1. These commercial products are designed for safe use over long miles, heavy loads, and sustained high speeds. Today's commercial, steel body, tubeless and radial truck tires are proven, durable, repairable and retreadable.

2. Commercial truck tires should be professionally maintained. Fleets have an economic incentive to regularly conduct a visual inspection of their tires and maintain their inflation pressure to provide safe, reliable and dependable vehicle operation.

3. Fleets have the responsibility to employ and train tire maintenance professionals to inspect tires and maintain inflation pressure.

4. Fleets may also contract with tire and tire service suppliers to perform regular fleet tire inspections and inflation pressure maintenance to supplement their own internal tire maintenance program.

5. Drivers are required by law to perform a daily vehicle pre-trip inspection, which includes tire inspection and checking inflation pressure.

6. Commercial truck tire dealers are also tire repair and retread providers. They are experienced in tire inspection, repair, retread and maintenance.

7. When a commercial truck tire is removed from service, it undergoes a standardized process of visual and tactile inspection by a repair/retread specialist to determine if the tire can be returned to service. The specialist also determines how that will be accomplished, and for which specific service (or application) the tire will be best suited.

8. Tires that are intended for repair and/or retread are visually and tactilely inspected. In most cases, they are subjected to an electronic method of detecting the existence and location of any tire punctures that could not be seen by visual inspection. Tires are then subjected to X-ray, Ultra Sonic, or Shearographic non-destructive inspection to confirm that the tire casing is intact and durable, and a candidate for repair and/or retread. If that is so, the tire is then repaired and/or retreaded and returned to service.

9. If a commercial truck tire is determined to be unserviceable, the inspector will destroy and scrap the tire in an environmentally-sound method.

10. Scrap tire surveys are routinely conducted by tire manufacturers to confirm and analyze the reasons for tire removal from service. Notations are made on the condition of the scrapped tire, the number and type of repairs on the tire, the number of times the tire has been retreaded, and the overall age of the tire casing. These surveys have determined that properly maintained, inflated, repaired and retreaded commercial truck tires may safely and reliably be in service for 10 years or more.

For the reasons stated above, it is our position that it is not necessary to assign an arbitrary, rigidly finite life span to commercial truck tires.

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