



HOW OLD ARE YOUR TIRES? WHAT ABOUT TIRE PRESSURE?

Do you know how old the tires are on your municipal vehicles? How often do you replace tires: 30,000 miles? 45,000 miles? 60,000 miles? Is there really any time or mileage limit before a tire is changed? Does it matter if it is a pickup truck or a large fire apparatus vehicle?

Here are a few actual cases about tires:

Scenario #1: During a training session of vehicle safety by one of our Risk Management Consultants, the program focused on tires, tire pressure, and other vehicle-related safety concerns. Tires are a major component of safe driving. So, to test vehicle tires, a simple method is to use an inexpensive tire pressure gauge; one that can be clipped to your shirt pocket.

Let's all go outside and check a few tires. There's a police vehicle parked nearby. Let's look at that one. First tire: Pressure is in the correct range. The same with the next two tires. Coming to the last tire, we note that the pressure is more than twice the limit set by the manufacturer. Why is that, we ask. Well, the reason is: This tire has a slow leak and we put in more air pressure to keep the tire inflated! WOW!

Consider this: You are the police officer driving this vehicle and are not aware that the mechanic has put too high a tire pressure in this specific tire. What might occur should this officer have to respond to an emergency and is travelling at a high rate of speed (with lights & siren turned on)? Correct! A possible blow-out and loss of control of the vehicle.

Scenarios #2: A fire truck had a tire blowout while it was en-route to a call, causing the fire truck to wreck. The reason for the blowout, the tire was too old and had dry-rotted.

Consider this: How often do you inspect your tires? Here we had an emergency vehicle enroute to a fire call. Had this vehicle been inspected prior to this incident? Would preventive maintenance spotted this adverse condition? Do you know when the tire was manufactured? How can you tell if the tire is actually 7 years old? Or was sitting in a warehouse for a few years prior to being installed on your vehicle.

There is a simple 4-digit code on every tire produced that gives you this important information. You may find it on the tire. Let's say the number is 1502. The first two digits give you the week during the year and the second number is the year.

Scenario #3: What about tread depth; a minimum of 2/32nds on every tread is required by state law. There have been instances where the tread depth did not meet this standard. One specifically, on a police car, being driven during a rainstorm, caused the police cruiser to wreck with significant bodily injury to the passengers in the adverse vehicle that was hit by the police vehicle.

Consider this: Are your vehicle's tire tread depth in the acceptable range for all 4 tires? Do you need to change the tire? Do you have a preventive maintenance policy regarding changing out tires?

Conclusions: Tire pressure is a critical ingredient in maintaining tire life and reduction of wear and tear. Tire pressure should be checked periodically to insure the tire pressure is within acceptable pressure ranges for the type of tire. Tread depth is another critical factor as noted previously.

While State Vehicle Inspections permits up to 2 plugs to fix punctures in the tread pattern; we recommend tire replacement on emergency response vehicles.

The age of the tire is also a critical ingredient. Assuredly, some vehicles are driven more miles than others; some driven a longer time period than others. Normal wear and tear is to be expected. Periodic inspection of tires is important. What of the tread wear, out-of-alignment, and other factors enter into the equation for replacement.

A sound preventive maintenance program should be in place to provide regular maintenance checks of critical vehicle components, tires being one of those components.

For additional information contact risk management services at **1- 800-228-0986** and select "**safety and risk control**" from the available options.

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