

# Tire aging: reader provides some historical data — plus an opinion

Concerning recent “safe” used tire legislation making the rounds in various states, a Modern Tire Dealer reader sent in these comments. For more on the issue, see our extensive coverage in the May 2013 issue of MTD plus more on [www.moderntiredealer.com](http://www.moderntiredealer.com). -Ed.

## Dear Editor:

Here is some history on the tire aging recommendations, including information from various owner’s manuals:

1. As early as 1988, the Porsche owner’s manual states: “Under no circumstances should tires over six years be used on your Porsche.”
2. The 1990 Toyota Land Cruiser owner’s manual stated: “Any tires which are over six years old must be checked by a qualified technician, even if damage is not obvious.”
3. The 1992 BMW 7 Series owner’s manual states: “Do not continue to use tires that are more than 10 years old for normal driving unless they have been used regularly, in normal conditions. Failing this, they should be replaced.”
4. The 1999 U.S. Department of Defense Handbook “Rubber Products — Recommended Shelf Life” states that pneumatic tires, both natural and synthetic rubber, have an expected shelf life of five years.
5. The 2000 BMW owner’s manual states: “BMW recommends the replacement of all tires when the tires are no more than six years old, even if tire life of 10 years is possible.”
6. The 2001 VW Passat owner’s manual states: “Tires age, even if they are not being used. Tires which are more than six years old should be used only in an emergency, and then with caution.”
7. On June 5, 2001, the British Rubber Manufacturers Association (BRMA) stated: BRMA members strongly recommend that “unused tires should not be put into service if they are over six years old, and that all tires should be replaced 10 years from their date of manufacture.”
8. The 2004 Mercedes owner’s manual states: “Tires and spare tire should be replaced after six years, regardless of remaining tread.”
9. On Nov. 10, 2005, Bridgestone sent a recommendation to its dealers that tires more than 10 years old should be replaced.
10. On Feb. 9, 2006, Michelin issued a technical bulletin on Service Life for Passenger and Light Truck Tires. That bulletin stated: “While most tires will need replacement before they achieve 10 years, it is recommended that any tire in service 10 years or more from the date of manufacture, including spare tires, be replaced.”
11. On Feb. 13, 2006, Continental Tire also issued Product Service Bulletin PSB 06-02 which stated: “Continental recommends that all tires (including spare tires) that were manufactured more than 10 years previous be removed from service and be replaced with new tires, even when tires appear to be usable, from their normal appearance, and the tread depth may not have reached the minimum wear-out depth.”
12. In 2006, after extensive testing by Dr. John Baldwin at Ford Motor Co., Ford placed the following verbiage in all Ford owners’ manuals: “Tires degrade over time, even if they are not being used. It is recommended that tires generally be replaced after six years of normal service. Heat caused by hot climates or frequent high loading conditions can accelerate the aging process.”
13. The 2007 Chrysler 300 owner’s manual states: “WARNING! Tires and spare tire should be replaced after six years, regardless of remaining tread. Failure to follow this warning can result in sudden tire failure. You could lose control and have an accident resulting in serious injury or death.”
14. In its 2007 report to Congress, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) stated that a large insurance company reported that during the period 2002-2006, 27% of its policyholders were from the southern and southwest states of Texas, California, Louisiana, Florida and Arizona. Yet 77% of tire-related claims came from those states, and 84% of those involved tires over six years old.



The Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability and Documentation (TREAD) Act of 2000 required that NHTSA provide a recommendation as to whether tires should have a “replace by” date. Yet as recently as 2012 a NHTSA representative stated that he had no prediction as to if and when such a recommendation would be made — 13 years after passage of the TREAD Act!

Unfortunately, neither the independent tire dealers nor the general public are aware of most of the above information.

So while the Texas and Florida legislatures struggle with the definition of a safe used tire, they are ignoring the age of the tire.

The vehicle manufacturers, as well as the three largest tire manufacturers, long ago decided that tire age is a critical safety indicator. It’s time that whether it is six years or 10 years, the Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA), Tire Industry Association (TIA) and NHTSA join them.

Fortunately, Randy Groh, the president of TIA, has stated that he intends to tackle this issue. It is long overdue.

Hopefully, NHTSA will also fulfill its mission as well.

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