

## TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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### Tire Inspection Guidelines

JATMA (Japan Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association) has announced a new recommendation for passenger and light truck tires that have been in use for more than five (5) years. They recommend that, in addition to regular tire inspections, customers have their tires inspected by a qualified tire service person after five (5) years of use to determine if the tires can continue in service. It is recommended that spare tires be inspected at the same time. Further, even when tires appear to be usable from their external appearance or the tread depth may have not reached the minimum wear out depth, it is recommended that all tires (including spare tires) that were manufactured more than ten (10) years previous be replaced with new tires.

Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire, LLC ("BFNT") has elected to follow the JATMA recommendation. Although BFNT is not aware of technical data that supports a specific tire service life, we believe it is appropriate to follow the JATMA recommendation in the interest of further encouraging consumers to focus on the importance of maintaining and properly replacing their tires. The replacement of tires ten (10) years after the date of production is an important consideration, however, it is not an indicator of actual service life for any individual tire. Some tires will need to be replaced before ten (10) years due to operational conditions such as punctures, impact damage, improper inflation, overloading, or other conditions resulting from use or misuse of the tire. Also, while some tires may have been operated in a manner which would give them a service life beyond ten (10) years, BFNT believes that it is good practice and recommends that tires be removed from service ten (10) years after the date of manufacture.

Note that the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations found in the owner's manual may have instructions on the need for tire inspection and replacement intervals. The vehicle owner and driver should follow the recommendations in the owner's manual.

### Tire Manufacture Date

The tire manufacture date is determined by the last 3 or 4 digits of the DOT serial number (4 digit shown below). For the 1990 – 2000 decade some tires were marked with a triangle pointing to the last digit of the DOT serial number. Prior to 2000, the year code of the manufacture date was represented by 1 digit instead of 2 (i.e. 189 would represent the 18<sup>th</sup> week of 1999).



Additionally, it is important to note that these recommendations do not replace the need for proper tire maintenance which is an important factor for safe driving. BFNT recommends that drivers:

- Inflate – check tire pressure monthly
- Rotate – rotate tires as recommended by the vehicle manufacturer or every 5,000 miles
- Evaluate – routinely look for signs of tread wear or damage