

# FIRESTONE GIVES DETAILS ON RECALL

The Firestone Tire & Rubber Company and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) have signed the final agreement covering the voluntary recall of several million Firestone 500 and other steel belted radial tires manufactured in the U.S. and Canada in 1976 and earlier. An agreement in principle had been announced by Firestone and the NHTSA on October 20.

Firestone Chairman Richard A. Riley said the recall is expected to take at least a year to complete.

"We are turning out 400,000 tires a month towards meeting the needs of the recall," Riley said.

"Despite our best efforts to fulfill the needs of the recall and to meet our continuing business requirements, however, there are likely to be occasional shortages of replacement tires in some areas from time to time," he continued.

"We will do our utmost to handle those who come in for the recall as quickly, fairly and conveniently as possible," he added, "and we appreciate the understanding and cooperation we have received from our customers during the first few weeks."

In July, the NHTSA made an initial determination that a defect relating to motor vehicle safety exists in the Steel Belted Radial 500 tires. The voluntary recall is being made to resolve the matter.

A defect of the type referred to in the NHTSA's initial determination may, according to the NHTSA, first be evidenced by appearance of a bulge or of a noticeable difference in ride characteristics. According to the NHTSA, tires covered by its initial determination may also fail without warning. The NHTSA believes that failure of the tires can result in loss of air with a possible loss of control of the vehicle which may result in vehicle crash.

The recall provides for free replacement of the following tires:

1) Firestone Steel Belted Radial 500 tires of seven-rib tread design, similar private brand steel belted radials and TPC tires (installed as original equipment on General Motors cars or sold as replacements) manufactured from Sept. 1, 1975 to May 1, 1976 (serial numbers ending 355 through 525 and 016 through 176).

NOTE: Serial numbers have 9 to 11 letters and digits, and are on the inside sidewall of the tire. The last digit designates the year of manufacture and the preceding two digits the week of that year. 385, for example, means the 38th week of 1975. Seven-rib tires have six deep grooves in the tread design. Five-rib tires covered in the following paragraph, have four deep grooves.

2) Firestone 500 tires of five-rib tread design and similar private brand steel belted radials manufactured from Sept. 1, 1975 through Dec. 31, 1976 (serial numbers ending 355 through 525 and 016 through 526).

3) Firestone 500 tires of

five-rib or seven-rib design and similar private brand steel belted radials manufactured from March 1, 1975 through Aug. 31, 1975 (serial numbers ending 095 through 345) and purchased as replacement tires on or after Sept. 1, 1975.

4) All other "500" and TPC tires manufactured before Sept. 1, 1975 (serial numbers ending 345 or lower) and purchased new after Sept. 1, 1975.

The Sept. 1, 1975 purchase date is a key date in the recall. The reason is that the law provides for free replacements only for tires purchased within three years of the specified recall date. No proof of purchase is required in the first two groups, because it is obvious tires made after Sept. 1, 1975 had to be purchased after Sept. 1.

The tires in the third group are assumed to have been purchased on or after Sept. 1, 1975, with no proof of purchase. Owners of tires in the fourth group need proof of purchase, showing they bought the tires on or after Sept. 1, 1975.

For the same dates of groups 1 and 2 private brand tires made by Firestone with similar or the same internal construction as the Steel Belted Radial 500 are included but will normally be replaced through the individual tire marketers.

In order to simplify the proof of purchase required, Firestone has agreed that "500" tires involved in the recall and purchased in the replacement market shall be considered sold on or after Sept. 1, 1975, if the tires' serial number indicate they were manufactured after March 1, 1975, even though the owner-purchaser presenting the tire may not have proof of the purchase date.

This provision is based upon the time replacement tires remain in inventory before being sold and is not applicable to tires that come as original equipment on new cars.

Customers with original equipment tires manufactured before Sept. 1, 1975, and replacement market tires manufactured before March 1, 1975, will be required to present proof the tires were purchased after Sept. 1, 1975, to have affected tires replaced free.

In all cases, tires to be replaced under the recall will have to be presented, along with proof of purchase as needed. Proof of purchase alone, without the tires, will not be sufficient to obtain free replacements under the recall.

Although use of tires worn down to or below the final 2/32 of an inch of tread is a violation of motor vehicle laws in 38 states and the NHTSA's recommended tire inspection standard, Firestone has agreed that such "worn out" tires included in the recall will qualify for free replacement if they are in use on the vehicle brought in by the owner-purchaser. No other "worn out" tires are covered by the recall.

Tires are considered "worn out" if treadwear in-

dicators, which appear when the tire reaches its final 2/32 of an inch of tread, are showing on two adjacent grooves at three different sections of the tire's circumference, according to the NHTSA definition.

Under the agreement between the NHTSA and Firestone, replacement will be made only for the owner-purchaser.

Since the recall was announced some news reports have focused on the fact that tires were being collected from dumps with the hope they might be covered by the recall.

"The agreement makes it clear that the recall is intended to replace tires on vehicles that people are using and not tires that have been collected by speculators, or that have been previously discarded, retreaded, adjusted or scrapped," Riley said.

In the interest of satisfying customers as fully as possible and in addition to replacing recalled tires free, Firestone is conducting a half-price replacement program covering earlier manufactured tires not eligible for free replacement under the agreement.

Persons still using Steel Belted Radial 500 and TPC tires purchased before Sept. 1, 1975, can have them replaced with Firestone tires for one-half the current retail selling price.

The half-price program excludes "worn out" tires, but puts no limit on how long before Sept. 1, 1975, the tire was manufactured.

As an additional part of its customer satisfaction policy, the Company, upon presentation of necessary documentation, is authorizing refunds to persons who already paid a pro-rata adjustment price on tires now eligible for free replacement.

Steel Belted Radial 721 and TPC tires will be used as replacements for most tires involved in the recall and adjustment program, but customers have the option of selecting other comparable Firestone tires, including constructions other than radial.

Due to different handling characteristics that could create serious driving problems industry guidelines discourage mixing radial and non-radial tires on the same vehicle, and these guidelines must be adhered to in selecting replacement tires.

Because of their limitations for seasonal usage, snow tires are not being offered as replacements.

Tires replaced free or at half-price will be mounted and balanced at no charge.

Individuals who bought new cars after Sept. 1, 1975, with affected tires as original equipment and registered owners of tires purchased in the replacement market after that date will receive recall notification letters from Firestone.

Firestone has hired R. L. Polk, a firm specializing in automobile registration records, to handle the mailing.

The Polk firm maintains records of current owners of vehicles based on the

car's serial numbers and has an address correction system for vehicle owners.

"We are taking this extra step of hiring the Polk firm to do the mailing so we can reach as many current owners as possible in order to make the recall as complete as we can," Riley said.

To the extent it is possible, the mailings will be coordinated with the availability of tires.

Firestone dealers and stores will check tires to determine if they are included in the recall and make appointments to replace them if they are.

Motorists who receive notification letters are being asked to contact Firestone outlets for an inspection and appointment so changeovers can be made with maximum convenience to customers.

Customers who believe that Firestone has not handled tire replacements as called for by the agreement may submit a question or complaint to Mr. Jack B. Scarcliff, Director of Consumer Affairs, The Firestone Tire & Rubber Company, 1200 Firestone Parkway, Akron, Ohio, 44317, or Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Washington, D.C., 20590.

## Boot Care Tips

You've bought a beautiful pair of fashion boots and have spent a lot of money for them. So you want your boots to last and to keep looking their best. If you take care of them properly they will.



1. Always polish your boots before you wear them. A conditioner and water-proofer that's good to use on leather and vinyl is mink oil. Remember not to use mink oil on suede.

2. To protect leather boots further, the boot experts at Kinney, the Great American Shoe Store, recommend that you use a silicone rain and stain guard—it protects boots against rain and snow. Just be sure to follow directions on the can and repeat the treatment periodically.

3. Wipe your boots clean with a damp cloth. If they are vinyl or a similar synthetic clean them with a cloth dampened in mild suds.

4. To remove dirt and old polish from leather boots, try the time-honored way—saddle soap.

5. Don't dry wet boots on a radiator. Stuff them with paper and let dry naturally.

6. Use boot trees to help your boots maintain their shape when you are not wearing them. Boot trees as well as other boot care products can be found at Kinney Shoe Stores.

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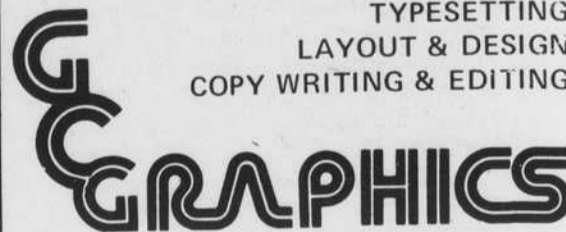
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