

Determining the Age of a Tire

- courtesy of the Tire Rack

Editors note: England has passed a safety law banning the sale of tires over six years old and Ford is lobbying the U.S. Congress to pass a similar law. There is substantial evidence that tires deteriorate (even in storage) and are unreliable/unsafe beyond a certain age, regardless of wear. The National Highway Traffic & Safety Administration is looking at the problem after a U.S. television show randomly purchased NEW tires and found that some of them were FOURTEEN YEARS OLD! **How old are your tires – or the ones you're buying?** See the following courtesy of Tire Rack.com

When it comes to determining the age of a tire, it is easy to identify when a tire was manufactured by reading its Tire Identification Code. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) requires that Tire Identification Code be a combination of eleven or twelve letters and numbers that identify the manufacturing location, tire size, manufacturer's code, and week and year the tire was manufactured.

While the entire Tire Identification Code is required to be branded onto one sidewall of every tire, current rules also require the first digits of the Tire Identification Code (everything but the week and year) must also be branded onto the opposite sidewall. **Therefore, it is possible to see a Tire Identification Code that appears incomplete and requires looking at the other sidewall to find the week and year code** (the partial Tire Identification Code on the one sidewall reduces the risk of injury to the mold technician who has to install the weekly date code on the top sidewall at the hot tire mold).

Tires Manufactured Since 2000

Today, the week and year the tire was manufactured is contained in the **last four digits** of the serial number, with the **2 digits** used to identify the week a tire was manufactured immediately preceding the **2 digits** used to identify the year.

Examples of tires manufactured since 2000 with this Tire Identification Code format:

XXXXXXXX **0608**

06

06 - Manufactured during the **06th** week of the year

08

08 - Manufactured during **2008**

XXXXXXXX **0600**

06

06 - Manufactured during the **06th** week of the year

00

00 - Manufactured during **2000**

Tires Manufactured Before 2000

The Tire Identification Code for tires produced prior to 2000 was based on the assumption that no tire would be in service for ten years. They were required to provide the same information, with the week and year the tire was built contained in the **last three digits**. The **2 digits** used to identify the week a tire was manufactured immediately preceded a **single digit** used to identify the year.

For example, if the Tire Identification Code on a tire reads:

XXXXXXXX **068**

06

06 - Manufactured during the **06th** week of the year

8

8 - Manufactured during the **8th** year of the decade

While the previous serial number format identified that a tire was built in the 8th year of a decade, there was no universal identifier that confirmed which decade (tires produced in the 1990s may have a small triangle following the Tire Identification Code to identify the decade). The Tire Identification Code format used since 2000 accurately confirms the year.