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Issue 1

Part-worn tyres

Advice on how to ensure minimum safety standards for the supply of part-worn tyres

To legally supply part-worn tyres, it is important that you and your staff are fully aware of The Motor Vehicle Tyres (Safety) Regulations.

Under the regulations, it is illegal to supply any part-worn tyre that is capable of being fitted to a motor vehicle or trailer unless the following conditions are met.

Marking

Part-worn tyres, except retreads, should have an EC approval mark (for example E11) and a speed and load capacity index (for example 76S – see diagram below), moulded into the side wall at the time of manufacture.

Beside these usual markings, all types of part-worn tyres must be marked 'PART-WORN' in upper case letters at least 4mm high. This wording must be permanently and legibly applied to the tyre, otherwise than by hot branding or cutting into the tyre.

Rubber labels can be cold vulcanised to the tyre and are available from companies that advertise in the trade press.

Condition

Part-worn tyres, whether deflated or inflated to the highest operating pressure at which they are designed to operate, must not have:

- any cut over 25mm or 10% of the section width of the tyre – whichever is the greater – on the outside of the tyre, deep enough to reach the ply or cord
- any internal or external lump, bulge or tear caused by separation or partial failure of its structure
- any ply or cord exposed internally or externally

In addition, part-worn tyres must be in such a condition that:

- the base of any groove that showed in the original tread pattern of the tyre must be clearly visible

- the grooves of the original tread pattern of the tyre must be at least 2mm deep across the full breadth of the tread and around the entire outer circumference of the tyre.

Retreaded tyres

- Instead of the EC approval mark, part-worn tyres that have been retreaded must have BS AU 144b, 144c, 144d, 144e or 144f markings on the side wall
- For tyres marked 144e and 144f a speed category symbol and load capacity marking should be present.
- A tyre has to comply with all the requirements detailed above whether or not it is fitted to a rim.

We recommend that a thorough inspection of the tyre must be made before fitting to the rim and after fitting and inflating the tyre to the highest operating pressure. Tyres which are sold unfitted will need to be inspected with particular care as it is still an offence to supply tyres with the defects listed above which become detectable when the tyre is inflated. Inflation and inspection is recommended.

Repaired tyres

If a tyre has been repaired, it must have been properly repaired.

Any tyre that has been repaired should be inspected very carefully. Repairs need to comply with BS AU 159f, 1997 – Repairs to tyres on the public Highway. If you are not competent to judge a repair we suggest the tyre is disposed of.

Please note that it is also illegal to have unsafe tyres in possession for sale, so you will need to be clear what is and what is not for sale.

Penalties

If you or your staff supply a tyre that does not comply with the regulations, on summary conviction, could render you liable to a penalty of six months' imprisonment, a fine of up to £5,000 or both.