



U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

CONSUMER ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is recommending that owners of vehicles with certain models and sizes of Firestone tires not already being recalled by Firestone take a number of actions to assure their safety, based on NHTSA's analysis of Firestone's data.

On May 2, 2000, NHTSA opened a defect investigation into approximately 47 million ATX, ATXII, and Wilderness tires manufactured by Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. (Firestone). On August 9, Firestone announced that it was recalling 14.4 million of the tires under investigation. These include all Firestone ATX and ATXII tires of the P235/75R15 size manufactured since 1991 and all Wilderness AT tires of that same size manufactured at Firestone's Decatur, IL plant. Firestone has estimated that about 6.5 million of these tires were still in service as of that date.

NHTSA has continued its investigation into the remaining tires. As part of that investigation, NHTSA has reviewed data provided by Firestone on property damage claims, personal injury claims, and lawsuits regarding the tires under investigation. Although its investigation is not complete, that review indicated that the rate of tread separations for certain other tire models and sizes exceed those of the recalled tires, sometimes by a large margin. Therefore, NHTSA is concerned about the possible safety risk associated with those tires.

On August 30, 2000, NHTSA staff met with Firestone representatives in Washington and recommended that Firestone expand the recall to include these tire models. On August 31, Firestone advised NHTSA that it would not voluntarily expand the recall at this time. We are continuing our investigation, which may result in an order directing Firestone to recall these tires and any other defective tires. However, in view of the potential safety risk, NHTSA believes that it is important to alert the public of its concerns now.

The tire models with the high tread separation rates are set out in an Attachment to this advisory. A total of approximately 1.4 million of these tires were produced. However, since many of them were manufactured many years ago, it is likely that far fewer are currently on the road. Most of them were sold as replacement equipment and were not installed as original tires on new cars.



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
1-888-DASH-2-DOT

Since Firestone has chosen not to expand the recall at this time, you may not be able to obtain free replacement tires from Firestone. However, in light of these concerns, NHTSA recommends that you consider replacing the tires in question and that you retain all documentation.

If you have one of these tires on your vehicle, you should take the following steps:

- Check your tires to be sure there are no visible signs of a problem.
- Be sure your tires are properly inflated.
- Do not drive at a high rate of speed, particularly in hot weather. If possible, choose roads with relatively low speed limits.
- Make sure your vehicle is not overloaded.
- Wear your seatbelt.

Please be aware that while these precautions are good general guidelines to tire safety, they may not prevent a tire failure.

NHTSA will be moving to rapidly complete its defect investigation into these particular tires as well as the remaining Firestone tires under investigation. If the agency concludes that other tires should be recalled, it will act promptly to assure that the public is protected.

Attached: List of Tires Included in 9/1/00 Consumer Advisory

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TIRES INCLUDED IN THE SEPTEMBER 1, 2000 CONSUMER ADVISORY

<u>Tire Line</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Plant Code</u>	<u>Original Installation</u>
ATX	P205/75R15	VD	1991 Chevy Blazer
ATX	P225/75R15	HY	
ATX	30X9.50R15LT	VD	
ATX	31X10.50R15LT	VD	1991-94 Nissan Pick Up
ATX	32X11.50R15LT	VD	
ATX	31X10.50R16.5LT	VD	
ATX	33X12.50R16.5LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	27X8.50R14LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	235/75R15*	VD	
Firehawk ATX	30X9.50R15LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	31X10.50R15LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	32X11.50R15LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	33X12.50R15LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	265/75R16LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	255/85R16LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	31X10.50R16.5LT	VD	
Firehawk ATX	33X12.50R16.5LT	VD	
ATX 23 Degree	31X10.50R15LT	VD	
ATX 23 Degree	33X12.50R16.5LT	VD	
Widetrack Radial Baja	P225/75R15	HY	
Widetrack Radial Baja A/S	32X11.50R15LT	VD	
Wilderness AT	P235/70R16	W2	1996-98 Ford F150
Wilderness AT	33X12.50R16.5LT	VD	
Wilderness HT	P255/70R15	VD	

* Firestone's lists this model as a LTP235/75R15.

The majority of the tires listed above were sold as replacements in the aftermarket mostly for light trucks and SUV. In the right column are vehicles upon which the tires were originally installed by the vehicle manufacturer when ne-

How do I know if my tires are included ?

A. First you need to read the model name off of the sidewall of your tire and verify that it's on the above list. Once you establish that you have one of the models listed above, you need to check the tire size and verify it's on the list. The tire size is located on both sides of the tire in raised letters. The tire size should be one of the sizes listed above.

B. Next you need to locate the DOT code to determine where your tire was built (plant). The DOT number is located on the blackwall side of the tire, under the F in Firestone and it is 10 characters long, and it starts with DOT. Since this code is on the blackwall side of the tire, and not on the outside of the tire, you may need to crawl underneath your vehicle with a flashlight to find the code. There may be spaces in between some of the numbers, but be sure to count all 10 characters to ensure you have found the proper code. Examples include:

- DOT VDHL1PM046
- DOT W2HL1M0470
- DOT VDHLA16089

The first two letters of the DOT code are the DOT plant code (see right hand column above). If the first two letters of the DOT code are VD, HY, or W2 and you have the tire line and size shown above, then your tires are on the consumer advisory list.



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Media Advisory

NHTSA Administrator Issues Consumer Advisory

Dr. Sue Bailey, Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, today issued the attached Consumer Advisory concerning an additional 1.4 million tires that were not included in the Firestone Tire Company's initial August 9, 2000 recall of 47 million ATX, ATX II, and Wilderness tires.