businesscompanion
trading standards law explained

Part-worn tyres

In the guide

Marking
Condition
Part-worn retreaded tyres
Repaired tyres
Tyres in storage
Trading Standards
In this update
Key legislation

In this guide, the words 'must' or 'must not' are used where there is a legal requirement to do (or not do) something. The word 'should' is used where there is established legal guidance or best practice that is likely to help you avoid breaking the law.

This guidance is for England, Scotland and Wales

The Motor Vehicle Tyres (Safety) Regulations 1994 set out minimum safety standards for the supply of part-worn tyres. To comply, it is important that you and your staff are fully aware of the requirements.

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 certain conditions are met regarding specific markings and the general condition of the tyre.

Most importantly, all types of part-worn tyre must be marked 'PART WORN', any repairs to tyres must comply with British standards and it is illegal to have unsafe tyres in your possession for sale.

Marking

Part-worn tyres (except retreads) must have an ECE approval mark (for example, E11) and a speed and load capacity index (for example, 76 S) moulded into the sidewall at the time of manufacture.

In addition, all types of part-worn tyres must be marked 'PART-WORN' in upper case letters at least 4 mm high.

This wording must be permanently and legibly applied to the tyre, otherwise than by hot-branding or cutting into the tyre, and adjacent to every approval mark.

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 25 mm 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
- any penetration damage that has not been repaired

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

Part-worn retreaded tyres

Part-worn tyres that have been retreaded must have one of the following:

- BS AU 144b, 144c, 144d, or 144e markings on the side wall (if first supplied as a retread on or before 31 December 2003)
- an ECE approval mark (if first supplied as a retread on or since 1 January 2004)
- a permanent mark to identify the original model and manufacturer, the word 'RETREAD' moulded on to or into its sidewall (in upper case letters at least 4 mm high) and further markings in accordance with ECE rules. You may need to seek further advice as to which rules apply

The indication 'PART WORN' must also appear next to the BS or ECE approval mark, or next to the word 'RETREAD'.

For tyres marked BS AU 144e, a speed category symbol and load capacity marking must be present.

A tyre has to comply with all these requirements, regardless of whether it is fitted to a rim.

We recommend that a thorough inspection of the tyre be made before fitting to the rim, and also after fitting and inflating the tyre to the highest operating pressure. Tyres that are sold unfitted will need to be inspected with particular care as it is an offence to supply tyres with the defects listed above, even if they only 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 must comply with British Standard BS AU 159f: *Specification for repairs to tyres for motor vehicles used on the public highway*. The current Standard is BS AU 159G, but the Regulations have not been updated to reflect this change. It is always best to follow the most up-to-date version of any standard.

Tyres in storage

It is also illegal to have unsafe tyres in your possession for sale, so you will need to be clear what is and what is not for sale. If you have tyres in storage, but not intended for sale, they should be clearly marked as such.

Trading Standards

For more information on the work of Trading Standards services - and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law - please see 'Trading Standards: powers, enforcement and penalties'.

In this update

No major changes.

Last reviewed / updated: October 2024

Key legislation

- Motor Vehicle Tyres (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Motor Vehicle Tyres (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2003

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links go to the legislation.gov.uk website. The site usually updates the legislation to include any amendments made to it. However, this is not always the case. Information on all changes made to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

© 2026 Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Source URL: *https://businesscompanion.owastaging.co.uk/en/quick-guides/product-safety/part-worn-tyres*