



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EXPERIMENT STATION

MAFES DAWG TRACKS

Most everybody understands that tires need to be replaced when the tread becomes worn down from use. But do you know that tires may also need replaced after they are a certain age? That's right, just because it has good tread remaining does not mean it is safe and road worthy. Not only on vehicles, but tires on your trailers and equipment should also be inspected for defects, dry rot, and other issues associated with aging tires.

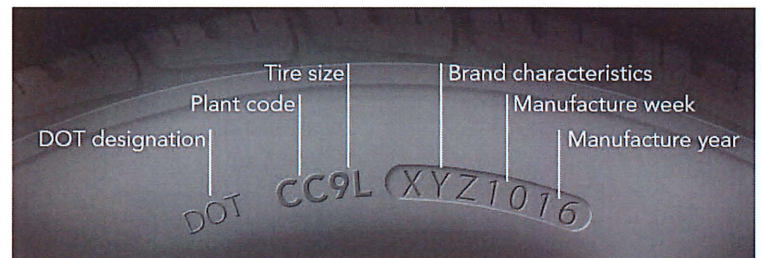
Many auto manufacturers recommend replacing tires every 6 years. While some tire manufacturers say to replace every 10 years. However, there is no way to put an exact date on when a tire will expire; factors such as heat, storage, inflation & conditions of use play a huge factor in the life of a tire.

- **Heat:** Environmental conditions, such as exposure to sunlight and coastal climates, can hasten the aging process.
- **Storage:** This applies to spare tires and tires that are sitting in a garage or shop. A tire that has not been mounted and is just sitting in a tire shop or your garage will age more slowly than one that has been put into service on a car. But it ages nonetheless.
- **Spares:** They usually don't see the light of day, but they're still degrading with time. If the tire has been inflated and mounted on a wheel, it is considered to be "in service," even if it's never been used. And if a truck's spare is mounted underneath the vehicle, it's exposed to heat, dirt and weather.
- **Conditions of use:** Is it properly inflated? Underinflation causes more tire wear. Has it hit the curb too many times? Has it ever been repaired for a puncture? Tires on a car that's only driven on the weekends will age differently from those on a car that's driven daily on the highway. All these factors contribute to how quickly or slowly a tire wears out.

Know How to Read Tire Date Codes

When buying "new" tires make sure they haven't been sitting for years in a warehouse. Or what about that work vehicle or trailer that only gets a few thousand miles or less put on it every year ... are the tires so old there may be a risk of a blowout, putting you broke down on the side of the road or worse, in an accident?

Tires made after 2000 have a four-digit DOT code. The first two numbers represent the week in which the tire was made. The second two represent the year. A tire with a DOT code of 1016 was made in the 10th week of 2016.



Tires made before 2000 have a three-digit code that is trickier to decode. The first two digits still indicate the week, but the third digit tells you the year in the decade that the tire was created. The hard part is knowing what decade that was. Some tires made in the 1990s (but not all) have a triangle after the DOT code, denoting that decade. But for tires without that, a code of "328" could be from the 32nd week of 1988 — or 1978. Really, you can ignore all that: If you see a DOT number ending in three digits, the tire was made at least 21 years ago and needs to be replaced as soon as possible.

Proper maintenance is the best thing a person can do to help ensure a safe tire. It is important to maintain proper air pressure in tires, rotate them regularly and perform routine inspections for tread separation, dry rot or any other defects.

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Sources:

<https://www.edmunds.com>

<https://danthetireman.com>