

Summertime & Your Tires



Al Cohn and Frank Sonzala from PSI will be live on Truckin BozoRadio Network 12:00 - 6:00 am July 1, 2011. Tune in to AM 700 WLW XM/Sirius Channel 166. Talking Tires, Inflation, CSA and Awarding Prizes Galore

Alligators on the nation's highways become more prevalent every summer season. Driving on some segments of the interstate system is like driving through a slalom course. Drivers need to pay close attention to avoid this nasty road debris and be ready to react. A road alligator can do significant damage to your vehicle running at high speeds.

The motoring public believes that alligators come from those "awful" retreads. This is a total myth. Today's retreads utilize state of the art technology. From the hi-tech tire casing inspection process all the way through building and curing, retreads will have similar treadwear characteristics (miles/32") versus a new tire. Traction is uncompromised. Retreads typically do have a little less initial tread depth to keep the casing running cool versus new tires so total miles at removal will be slightly lower. There is a reason that 90% of all fleets run retreads today; it's an economically smart decision.

were run underinflated. Tires, regardless if they are new or retread, require air to carry the load. Tires that run underinflated will eventually fail and become a road alligator. Summertime is the worst time for alligators because of the high ambient heat which is then compounded by additional heat caused by serious sidewall flexing in an underinflated tire. Heat is a tire's worst enemy. High speeds, high loads, and an underinflated tire will lead to a road alligator.

So why does a tire lose air? A tire is like a balloon. You add air to a balloon and through the osmosis process, the balloon slowly loses air. Commercial radial truck tires can similarly lose anywhere between one and four psi per month depending on the specific materials used to produce the tire. Tread area punctures are the primary reason tires can become underinflated in a very short time. A 12-penny nail that has penetrated through a tire groove and into the casing can cause a tire to lose several psi in a 24-hour period. It will not take very long for a tire to begin generating extra heat which can lead to a tire road failure.

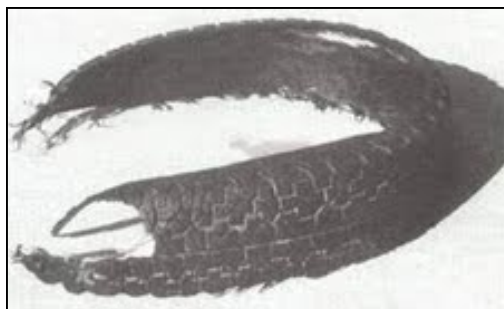
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So what are those alligators on the highway? Industry studies always show the same results. Alligators may be from new tires or they may be from retreads. The one common denominator is that the tires

Industry road debris tire surveys find a high percentage of alligators to be from trailer tires. That's because trailer tires are the most neglected wheel position, and inside dual trailer tires usually have the lowest air pressure. It is not always easy to bend down, grab your pressure gauge and squeeze inside the wheel hand hole and measure those inside tires.

A high percentage of fleets are using tire pressure monitoring or automatic tire inflation systems to keep trailer tires running at the proper inflation pressure. Keeping tires properly inflated all the time will seriously minimize the road alligator problem.