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Sizing Up Cross Border Shopping

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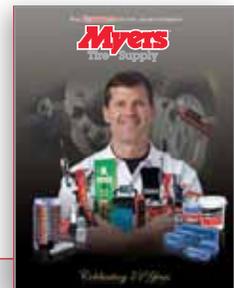
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SAFETY STARTS AT HOME: A CAUTIONARY TALE

By: Ken Essex, WCTD President



I salute our WCTD Safety Committee. Awareness, training, and making us think of what we do, when and how.

As a young lad—oh I would say 12 years old—the seed was in the ground, but we had some harrowing to do. It was a job that usually got delegated to me while my Dad was also in the field seeding with the bigger tractor. This particular Saturday he had to work at his off-farm job in the city and I was to go out and harrow the newly placed seed before the forecasted rain.

Now right off the bat—yes I was only 12—would we allow that today? No, probably not. But in that day we did; I had been taught well, and could manoeuvre this small, 17 hp Case VA tractor and 12 feet of harrows just as well and safely as my Dad.

I grabbed the gas pail, fuelled up, checked the oil and was ready. Except the tractor would not start. After trying and trying to start that blasted engine, killing the battery, boosting and charging it all day—and cursing my bad luck (after all this was my first time being left in charge and allowed to ‘work in the field’, out there alone). And the gall-durned tractor wouldn’t start.

When my Dad got home at supper time and found the tractor hadn’t moved all day, it didn’t take him long to solve the mystery. He asked me what pail I had used to fill the tractor with fuel. ‘Why, the gas pail of course’, I answered.

He had left a water / antifreeze mix in the gas pail he quietly told me! And he never raised his voice, got angry or anything, I totally blamed myself, while he defended me and said he shouldn’t have left antifreeze in a gas pail.

Turn the pages ahead several years, this time a late harvest. Again, Dad had to head off to work that day. Mid-afternoon I decided I would head out with the combine—a Case 960 Self Propel—and take a wheat sample; then come back and fuel up and service the unit for that day’s work. The wheat field was a good half mile away and I ran the combine about a quarter of a mile at full working throttle to take the sample. Before I could finish the combine engine was sputtering and running hot. Very hot! Painful memories of the Case VA fiasco came flooding back. And, funny as it may seem now, it was antifreeze related again. Dad quietly and humbly informed me later that afternoon that the antifreeze solution in the combine engine was a little weak and the night before he had drained the engine block fearing a really cold night.

Oh, and by the way, the wheat sample tested dry. Of course! Except we had to tear the engine down and replace a head gasket that evening!

That day my Dad and I had what we would call today a “safety meeting”! It was decided a cardboard tag with a string attached would hang in the shop. When one of us was servicing a piece of equipment, or had it dismantled in any way, that tag was tied to the steering wheel, or the hitch—somewhere where it would be seen. No more antifreeze fiascos! And no terrible accidents when one of us had crawled up inside a combine or under a swather and the other came along to drive away. Thank heaven.

Some 45 plus years later since the Case VA incident, I still have that old gas pail back in a corner of my shop! Never use it anymore—just can’t get rid of it!

The WCTD Safety Committee is adapting and recommending policies that hopefully prevents these types of accidents from ever happening again—because, tragically they have happened—with way more serious results than merely a damaged piece of equipment. Sometimes it is the most common and mundane parts of a serviceman’s job that can prove the most dangerous. And in this case not something he or she is doing wrong.

When I heard what the committee was working on, I called one shop here in the city to see if they had any safety policy in place with regards to equipment being started or driven away before it was safely able to do so. I was informed that Yes, they actually take the customer’s keys and padlock them to the steering wheel. And the service person keeps the key until the work is finished and all service people are away and in the clear. Sure don’t have to worry about losing the customer’s keys—but more importantly that vehicle cannot be started or moved in any way until it is safe to do so.

I salute our WCTD Safety Committee and the great work you are doing. And I salute any organization / business that puts their own safety committee together.

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SUMMER ROAD TRIPS: A TIME TO SAY "THANKS" FOR GREAT SERVICE

By: Andy Nagy, WCTD Executive Director

Summer – a time to travel, to see attractions and join in great times with friends and family – has finally arrived. However, not many people realize how critical it is for proper vehicle preparation to be completed by trained people to sustain you through the long journey. The technicians who work every day on hundreds of vehicles often go unnoticed. Well, I think it's time to say "thanks" to everyone involved in the tire and vehicle service business. Your hard work and attention to detail is what makes this a rewarding career. I am convinced, without a doubt, that all the time taken for training still pays off, both in terms of customer satisfaction and through return business.

Still more WCTD benefits

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Stay tuned for training

We are still working on a Training schedule for 2013. There is interest to have all the Train the Trainer courses available again, with the possible addition of a Train the Trainer in Earth Mover course. Due to the need to have the venue located close to the necessary equipment, we are still exploring our options. There are a lot of hurdles to overcome but, hopefully, I can give you more details in the fall.

Membership info online

You will soon see some changes to our website, particularly in terms of membership information. As in the past, this will still be listed alphabetically by province, then by name, address, and phone number. This system will allow easier access to add, delete or make changes. Also, I am looking into the possibility of adding banner ads to our website. All current advertisers in the Tracker will have the first opportunity. Letters for the 2013 advertising year will be going out this fall with the information on website advertising.

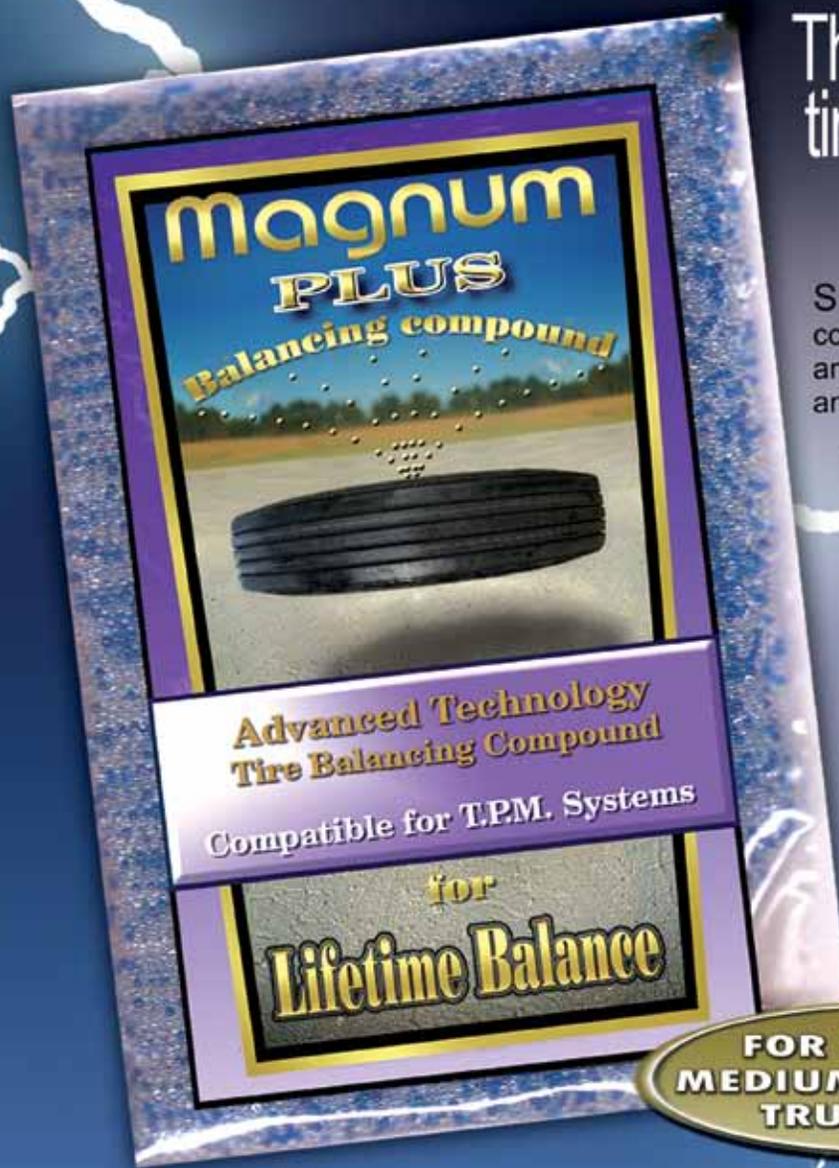
If you have any suggestions for other membership services, value added benefits or promoting our industry, please give me a call or drop me an email.

***Have a safe and
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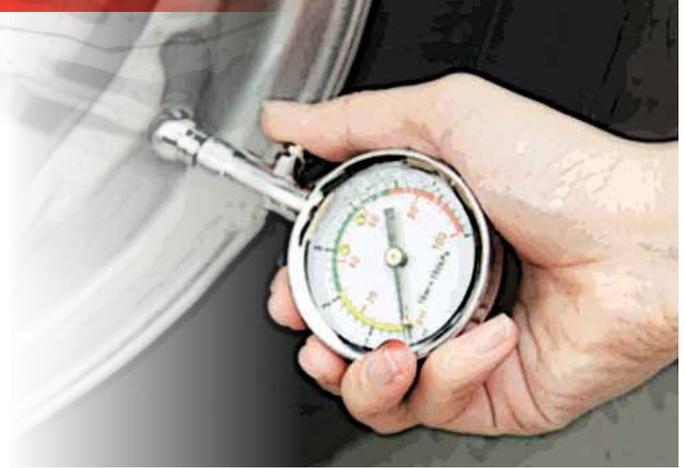
STARTS WITH YOU!

Even the simplest of routines can help customers and build return business.

TIA Director of Tire Service Matt White

Here are some good tips on how tire technicians can help their customers save on tires and fuel by following some straight-forward tire care best practices.

- 1) Consumers depend on their service provider for proper care of their tires and it is up to the technicians to perform proper inspection of tires when the vehicle is in for oil changes, brake service and especially when performing tire rotations. I see that a lot of technicians just rotate tires as fast as they can without performing any inspection at all. Not only is this very unsafe for the consumer but also overlooks other necessary repairs that are needed.
- 2) When performing rotations do a visual inspection on the tires. Look for abnormal wear; look for any cracks, cuts, abrasions, foreign objects and any other issues that could affect the ability for the tire to perform properly. Also during rotations, inspection of the wheel and fasteners is a must! Remember: if you perform any kind of service work, this is also a great time to check brakes, tie-rods, ball joints, CV shafts and more.
- 3) Remind the customer to check their air pressure monthly, as tires could lose anywhere from 2 to 4 psi. Also explain that the recommended cold inflation check is when a tire has been idle more than three hours or driven less than one mile. In winter time, the air pressure might need to be increased up to approximately 6 psi, depending on outside ambient temperatures. A lot of consumers don't realize that the pressure shown on the sidewall is the maximum pressure of the tire and the load that it could carry. It's the tire placard



on the door or door jamb that is the recommended pressure for the vehicle. For vehicles equipped with TPMS, the telltale low pressure indicator light comes on at 25% below the pressure shown on the door jamb placard, not the figure shown on the sidewall of the tire.

- 4) A great way to increase your customer base starts with correct tire care! One huge tip that really has helped me and my business is checking the spare. One thing that makes a customer frustrated is when they have a flat and they discover their spare is also flat!

These are a few simple tips that can make a huge difference to the level of customer service you provide.

INDUSTRY NEWS

TOYO LAUNCHING NANOENERGY ZERO LINE

European debut expected this year

Tire Review

Toyo Tire & Rubber Co. has launched Nanoenergy Zero, its latest fuel-efficient passenger radial, and part of the tiremaker's new Nanoenergy tire line.

Available for sale in Japan as of July 2, the size 195/65R15 91H tire has "achieved the highest grade under the Japan Automotive Tire Manufacturers Association testing and labelling system, both in rolling resistance coefficient and wet grip performance."

Nanoenergy makes use of Toyo's Nano Balance Technology, which the tiremaker describes as a "proprietary advanced foundational material

design technology, which manages the development of the tire's rubber materials at the nano-level."

The first in the line – Nanoenergy 1 – was introduced for sale in February. This was followed by Nanoenergy 2 in June. Both tires rated "AAA" in rolling resistance, Toyo said.

Those two tires will be launched in Europe later this year. The tiremaker offered no timetable for a North American introduction of the new tire.

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CROSS BORDER COMMERCE: A DEAL AT ANY COST?

By Tim Pawsey

As a kid in England, I grew up on an island surrounded by water. Yes, it was a big island at that. But if you wanted to go anywhere remotely exotic you had to take a boat or a plane—well, before Eurostar and the Chunnel made life so easy, and France so close. And there were, of course, Her Majesty's very diligent Customs, who made sure that nothing untoward was smuggled into the country; and that all tariffs were dutifully applied.

When I came to Canada I marvelled at the ease (decades before 9/11) with which Americans and Canadians could cross their common border. My first introduction to border hopping was the unlikely town of (then) Rock Creek / Beebe, where the celebrated Haskell Free Library and Opera House actually straddles the international boundary.

Built in 1904, deliberately right on the border, the hall has a black diagonal line right across it, placing the stage and half of the seats in Canada, and the remainder of the opera hall in the United States. As we walked down the main street, I was amazed at the casual way in which people wandered back and forth.

No more, of course. Not so today, I suspect.

Whether for business or personal use, it's become a whole lot more challenging for most of us to cross into the United States. But not so much if one's primary motive for visiting is to go shopping.

For folks living on or close to the border, the lure of cheaper goods from food, household effects and maybe even auto service or supplies is strong indeed. Sign up for a Nexus card and it doesn't take long to become a dedicated cross border shopper, where even contemplating a trip to buy gas can lead to a quick international jaunt.

Putting on my wine writer's hat, I'm reminded of the discussions that often—no always—take place surrounding the high cost of wine and other liquor products, that most of us north of the line

find tough to swallow at the best of times. Some of the most vocal complaints come from visiting Americans (often in the industry themselves) who are shocked at prices demanded on restaurant wine lists.

I'm not preaching that it's right or wrong but it's interesting that—even if they don't necessarily still like it, people always 'get it'. They understand the principal of paying for something where, perhaps, hopefully there's a chance that greater good can come of it.

That notion—of giving something back for the greater social good—is one that's lost on the more zealous advocates of cross-border shopping.

Then again, maybe I'm a bit of a different fish. When I'm on the small west coast island where I spend a fair bit of time, I make a point, whenever possible, of supporting the local businesses and artists. It's a no-brainer because it's not hard to see what would happen if we as a community didn't do that. That's not to say we don't 'go to town' for major purchases. Often we have to. But there's a balance that most seem to manage in understanding the very visceral need to sustain our own, very fragile economy.

As we move as a country to further harmonize our cross-border dealings with the U.S. there's no doubt in my mind that complex obstacles will need to be overcome in adjusting our respective fortress mentalities. (You'll get a sense of that as you read about the newly created Price Parity Committee.) And while we all want to see a level playing field that benefits business and consumer alike, hopefully, that sometimes evasive notion of fair play and of the need to ensure the continued economic health of our own communities will still be very much at the fore.

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TDAC, Regional Associations establish Price Parity Committee

As concerns mount over the impact of cross-border shopping on retailers, following the introduction of higher limits on personal exemptions, the Canadian tire industry is taking a proactive stance.

“The Federal Government increasing the allowance in how much you can bring across it makes it all the easier for consumers to take their business south of the line,” says TDAC Executive-Director Bob Bignell.

“We’ve been dealing with it on a regional level for several years,” he notes.

WCTD President Ken Essex says, “Our big issue is the fact that the Federal Politicians have pointed the finger at the Canadian Business people in general saying we are gouging the Canadian buying public. Which is not the case at all.”

“It’s easy to throw the retailers under the bus,” says Bignell.

“This has been an issue for many years. But when the currency is at parity it exposes the disparity in pricing. The last time when the currency was at parity, once the American dollar strengthened, the issue subsided. But this time, with the currencies now at par for an extended period it’s become so much of an issue that the regional associations have requested TDAC to take it on as a national effort.”

“As a result, we’ve formed the Price Parity Committee on a national level, with three representatives from each of the four regions plus TDAC president, Eric Gilbert, and chaired by the TDAC Executive-Director, for a total of 13 people,” says Bignell.

The intent is to work with the Retail Council of Canada and others on a campaign to resolve the issue, hence the formation of the committee makes for broad cooperation.

“Not only does The Retail Council have a major mandate, but the timing is beneficial for us because we were just beginning to look at the situation nationally; and had decided to work with other groups,” says Bignell.



As concerns mount over the impact of cross-border shopping on retailers, following the introduction of higher limits on personal exemptions, the Canadian tire industry is taking a proactive stance.

The TDAC Executive-Director notes that one of the categories the council had earmarked to be addressed was tires, so it turned out to make good sense, given that TDAC represents some 2,000 companies across Canada.

Bignell, Essex and other leaders have already met the Retail Council of Canada, who have presented a submission to the Canadian Senate.

“I am told the senators and staff who listened to that submission really had their eyes opened,” says Essex.



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IT'S A MAN'S WORLD —NOT!

The mechanic's shop used to be very much a male domain. But no more, thanks to trailblazers like Victoria's Heather Hunter.

By Tim Pawsey

Ask Heather Hunter how she came to be an auto service technician at Victoria's Tires Unlimited and the mother of four will tell you straight up that it was a matter of self-defence.

Pure and simple.

"It was just one of those things; I had a van that kept breaking down. I figured that either I was going to learn how to fix it or I'd have to continue to pay all those men money—when I wasn't sure whether they were lying to me or not."

"As a woman, there are some days you just feel that way; like every mechanic you encounter is lying to you!"

"Then one day, there was this fellow who could barely spell his name. I thought, 'If he can be a mechanic then so can I.'"

You could say she quit her day job. Hunter decided to stop being a bookkeeper and enrolled in Automotive Mechanical Repair at Victoria's Camosun College. The college has a well-earned reputation for being proactive and offers various programs for women to explore possibilities for following their chosen trade.

Once her training was complete, it didn't take her long to find work, first obtaining her apprenticeship and license at Victoria Car Clinic and James Bay Esso, and subsequently at Island Motor Sports, all the time gaining experience along the way.

Even though she's finished her training, the mother of four has found time to return to Camosun Inter-Urban Campus, to help motivate other women as part of its program for women in the trades.

Hunter relishes her role as mentor.

"There were 18 women in the course I spoke to of various ages and from all backgrounds. I talked to them about the road I had to travel to get to where I am today, explained some of the hardships and some of the fun parts," she says.

She's also been invited back to talk again.

As for her time with Miles Primrose, she can't say enough about the long-time Victoria independent tire dealer, who has been instrumental in encouraging her to pursue her new career.

"Miles is such an exceptional fellow," she says.

"He called me to see what I was up to; I wasn't employed in the industry at the time and he was looking for a mechanic to help him out. I



"Confidence and knowledge play a major role... Even though a male customer may express initial surprise, or perhaps some doubt, once the level of competence is understood, the response is just like any other."

- Heather Hunter



***Miles Primrose, Tires Unlimited
Victoria, BC***

Photo Credits: Jack R. Rasmussen

jumped at the opportunity," she says.

How did the men in the shop react to having a woman in their midst?

"They were fine," she says. In fact, one of the senior employees (who knew and recommended her for the job) really appreciated having someone fresh out of training.

"Between the two of us, we had all makes and models and every repair on the vehicle covered," says Hunter.

"It's pretty exciting!"

As for the customers, she experienced a number of different reactions—but just about all of them positive or better. Confidence and knowledge play a major role, she suggests. Even though a male customer may express initial surprise, or perhaps some doubt, once the level of competence is understood, the response is just like any other.

“When your customer hits your building with their car, what can you do?” You can take all the safety precautions you want, but when you’re in business for 50 years, something will inevitably happen that you’ll need your insurance company to come through. In my case, Federated Insurance did.

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My representative Trisha is awesome. She drops by at least twice a year to make sure I have the right coverage, and if I ever have any questions or problems, I call her up and it’s taken care of.

So when our customer hit my building, Trisha connected me with Federated Insurance’s claims service and they took it from there. Even when their quote for repair disagreed with mine, there was no fight; they treated me right and got my building fixed while I got back to my business. It’s that kind of trust, respect, and personal service that has kept my business with Federated Insurance for over 25 years.”

Sheldon Skakun,
Fountain Tire
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Knowing your business matters.

“It’s not like in Junior High or High School, where the school counsellors sit us girls down and say, “Hey, how about a lucrative exciting career in automotive!””

“There’s a couple of different ways that people react to me,” says Hunter.

“One older gentleman—say in his late 70s or 80s—saw me in my coveralls and just says: ‘Young lady I have a problem with my car. Can you help me?’”

“He didn’t hesitate,” she says.

It’s likely a generational issue, suggests Hunter, where the older generation, having seen women in all kinds of roles, and in uniform, who knew what they were doing, take the matter for granted.

“He thought nothing of it,” says the technician.

“As for his son’s generation—the guys 45 to 65 years old—not so much,” she allows.

“They tend to be a little more resistant. Their attitude still is that this is a man’s job; and some might think that a woman should be at home taking care of the family.”

Again, even though they might react in a different way, once Hunter has established her credentials, it’s fine.

“They’ll explain what’s going on and I’ll tell them what I think the problem might be. Once they hear that I know what I’m talking about, they calm right down... They come right around and say ‘That’s great! Can you take care of it?’”

“I’ll explain what we’re doing, why we’re doing it and what the parts and costs are—and by the time we’re through they’re completely accepting,” she says.

There’s no question that for more enlightened business owners, women in the trades are playing an increasingly visible and important role. But it’s not always easy sledding.

Although an increasing number of women are moving into the shop (and in some cases running their own businesses that very much cater to women) evidence of hiring bias against women continues.

Last year, in the United States; according to the San Francisco Chronicle, the Impact Fund, a Berkeley-based nonprofit civil and human rights watchdog group, found Bay Area repair shops were up to four times as likely to hire a man as a woman—even when they were equally qualified.

Impact Fund executive director Brad Seligman said what surprised him more than anything was “not so much that men were preferred, but by how much they were preferred and just how overt the discrimination was”.

Seligman advises that researchers twice sent qualified male and female applicants into “nationally known” repair shops specializing in oil changes, tuneups and tire installation.

The results showed that male applicants were favoured 47 percent of the time, while women were preferred 20 percent of the time. Employers

showed no preference in one of every three cases.

The report continued, “Some employers steered women toward cashier’s jobs. Others discouraged women from applying—one employer told an applicant an “auto lube job is hard for women” while another said, “We do not hire women”.

AskPatty.com CEO Jody DeVere says the basis for the hiring challenge likely is put in place much earlier.

“It’s not like in Junior High or High School, where the school counsellors sit us girls down and say, “Hey, how about a lucrative exciting career in automotive!”” says DeVere.

“Promoting careers in this field locally; doing apprenticeships; and working with young women to support interest is the key. Working with Girl Guides is another way to help young women who are at the career decision making period to look at working in automotive as a desirable choice.”



Within the industry itself other issues exist, she notes.

“On the challenging side is creating a culture at the shop that: (a) Women want to work at; (b) Supporting acceptance and respect of male counterparts of newly hired women technicians; and finally (c) Overcoming customers who might be dubious of the skill of a woman mechanic working on their cars.”

Meanwhile, back in Victoria, Miles Primrose (who obviously succeeded in meeting all those criteria) says the experience has been nothing but positive. In fact, his mechanic did such a good job that prior to this issue of The Tracker going to press, Heather Hunter was offered a job as a machinist with the Department of National Defence.

It was a position that she accepted with Primrose’s blessing.

“We were truly sorry to see her go,” says Miles.

“But it’s a good move for her.”

Hunter, meanwhile, says she’s still very much ‘in the trades’, even if—now as a machinist—she’s no longer in the tire business. And she’s still the only woman in her shop.

Plus, she’s still very much an advocate for women in the trades.

“And besides,” she says, “I’m still wearing coveralls!”



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WWYD?

Repair or Not Repair (and Under What Law), That is The Question

By Jim Smith Editor, Tire Review magazine

Recently, some tire dealers participated in an informal and unscientific straw poll regarding tire repairs.

Specifically, this group of tiremen – better than average dealers, and pretty successful businesspeople, by and large – were asked what they would do if a customer had a puncture in his HP or UHP tire.

Assuming the injury was within repairable limits, would they: A) repair the tire (using all proper, professional methods and materials), knowing they'd be on the liability hook if anything happened to the tire in the future, or B) turn the customer away, not wanting to take the risk and knowing that'd be the last time they saw that customer?

How would you answer this pickle of a question?

Would you roll the dice that your tire tech paid attention during their tire repair training classes – if they had any training to begin with? Would you put “your best man” on the job? Would you even give it a thought?

If it weren't you at the desk, how would your staff handle this situation? Do they know what your policy is for these instances? Even have a policy?

Are you about to check your business or garage-owners insurance policy to see if you have coverage for this?

Got your attorney's number on speed dial?

Let's add another ingredient to this brew: Would you repair that HP/UHP tire knowing that most tiremakers “void” the repaired tire's speed rating, reducing the radial to a mere S speed rating?

Does that change your answer? What do you think a Porsche owner's reaction to that bit of 411 might be? How about a Lexus driver? What about the guy with a Ford Focus? Do you (perhaps mistakenly) assume drivers of high-ticket cars will always opt for new rubber, while those more to the middle – or lower – won't really care if their tires drop in “capability”? Not like you can actually drive 168 mph anywhere in the U.S. of A., am I right?

Did you even know that speed ratings are usually voided once a tire is repaired? Even with a full and proper repair?

If you'd like to see the major tiremakers' position on speed rating retention, check out the online version of this column at tirereview.com.

What I'd like to do here is get your take on a couple of points. I'd appreciate it if you'd drop me an e-mail (jsmith@babcox.com) or an old-fashioned snail-mail letter and tell me:

- 1) How would you answer the question above? Would you do the repair or turn the customer away? And please give your reasons why or why not.
- 2) Do we need legislation/regulation – national or state-by-state – to educate and enforce proper and complete tire repairs by tire service outlets – including tire dealers, company-owned stores, mass merchants and chain stores, car dealers, or independent repair shops?

I will preface that second question by asking that you not fall back on “The government can't get anything right” or “We don't want government in everything we do.” Those answers are too easy and not very meaningful. I am looking for deeper, more thoughtful views on the question as it pertains to the entire breadth of the tire service market.

The point here is to create some legitimate dialogue on the subject that, perhaps, can help shape our future.

Returning to the original question that kicked off this column: there is, in my humble estimation, no right or wrong answer.

One could certainly understand why a dealer would choose to make the repair, provided it was done correctly and the customer understood the ramifications, and accept the liability concern.

We can also see why a dealer would avoid the situation all together, and walk away from someone who was either a loyal customer or a driver that could be converted into a returning buyer. We live in a sue-happy society, and small businesses don't want to be in the line of fire let alone on the wrong side of a judgment.

What I want to know is your viewpoint: How would you handle the situation, and why would you take that path?

In the not-too-distant-past, virtually no tiremakers even allowed their speed rated tires to be repaired; an ironclad policy, carefully developed by lawyers – and for some pretty legit reasons.

Thankfully, those positions have changed over the past 25 years. And that would not have happened without significant improvements in tire technology, tire repair training programs, and in the repair products themselves.

But is that enough? Are those improvements enough for you to tackle repairs to HP/UHP tires?

And are they enough to stave off a legislative mandate on how repairs will be performed?

Let us know what you think, and we'll share your input in a future issue.

How Major Tire Companies Handle Repairs to Speed Rated Tires

By Jim Smith Editor, Tire Review magazine

The following information was sent to me as a sort of refresher. Thought it might be helpful to you, as well:

- Bridgestone Americas, Continental Tire the Americas, Cooper Tire & Rubber Co., Yokohama Tire Corp., Hankook Tire America, and Kumho Tire USA Inc. void speed ratings and drop a repaired tire's rating to S. This applies to all of their individual house brands.
- Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. says a repaired speed rated tire retains its speed rating, but for only one repair. After that, no repairs are allowed. This applies to Goodyear, Dunlop and Kelly branded tires.
- Both Falken Tire Corp. and Michelin North America say their speed rated tires may be repaired up to three times without penalty, but run-flat tires can receive only one repair before the speed rating is voided. In the case of multiple repairs, the repairs must not overlap each other, and there cannot be multiple injuries to the same “body cord.” For Falken, this includes its Falken and Ohtsu brands. For MNA, this applies to Michelin, BFGoodrich and Uniroyal brands.
- Toyo Tire USA Corp. says that Toyo or Nitto speed rated tires may take up to one repair, but the subject tire's rating drops to either H or S, depending on the original rating.
- Pirelli Tire North America does not “endorse” repairs to its speed rated tires, but is apparently reviewing its policy.

The repair limits and policies for other brands can be obtained directly from those companies and/or their websites.

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TIRECRAFT WESTERN CANADA CELEBRATES VEGAS SUCCESS

By Miles Moore | *Tire Business*

Winnipeg-based Blue Diamond Technologies Ltd. has signed a deal with Hangzhou, China-based Insigma Technology Co. Ltd. to build up to 13 tire recycling facilities throughout China.

The joint venture, which will have initial funding of \$8 million and include exclusive rights to Blue Diamond's patented tire recycling technology, will complete incorporation in January 2012, Blue Diamond said.

The first plant, a 60,000-sq.-ft. facility in Hangzhou, will begin operations during the fourth quarter of 2012, the company said. It will produce crumb rubber, steel and fibre from scrap tires.

Blue Diamond and Insigma began discussions for the joint venture in October 2010, according to a Blue Diamond press release. With China generating 300 million scrap tires annually, the joint venture facilities are assured of a steady flow of raw material, the company said.

Both companies expect the other 12 facilities to be built rapidly after the first plant becomes operational. The Chinese government is offering public incentives to supplement initial investments in the venture, Blue Diamond said.

Blue Diamond was founded about four years ago, said Devron Kobluk, Blue Diamond president and co-founder, in a phone interview with *Tire Business*. Besides tire recycling, the company has operations for generating renewable energy and extracting nutrients from waste streams, he said.

Currently Blue Diamond has a pilot tire recycling operation in Minnesota, according to Mr. Kobluk. He declined to discuss the company's recycling technology, except to say it is water-based.

Blue Diamond is in discussions regarding projects in various parts of the world, including Vietnam, Thailand, and various parts of the U.S. including Wisconsin, California and New England, he said.



Winnipeg-based Blue Diamond Technologies Ltd. has signed a deal with Hangzhou, China-based Insigma Technology Co. Ltd. to build up to 13 tire recycling facilities throughout China.

INTEGRA TIRE EXPANDS INTO ONTARIO MARKET

Tire Business staff report

Village Tire & Auto of Mississauga has joined the Integra Tire & Auto Centres Ltd. network, becoming the first Integra Tire associate location in Ontario.

Village Tire & Auto, owned by Alan and Ann Langley, joined the Integra network after operating their business as a Goodyear Auto Service store for 16 years.

Mr. Langley was a district sales manager for the greater Toronto area for Goodyear Canada prior to starting his own business. Mrs. Langley was a customer service manager for a large plastic container company.

Village Tire, located in Mississauga's Streetsville neighbourhood, becomes Integra Tire's 74th location.

Integra Tire founder David Cosco started the business in 2008 with

a simple business model: to operate and remain a Western Canadian network.

As the Integra Tire network grew, however, to 73 locations in western Canada, it became clear that moving to Ontario and the Atlantic Canada was the next logical step, Integra Tire said.

Expanding nationwide will not only support the western stores but also will improve and solidify better programs and relationships with manufacturers and distributors.

Edmonton, Alberta-based Integra Tire has six corporate-owned locations and 68 independently owned associate locations. The business expects to announce more signings in Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces yet this year.

67 Passenger Coach with cargo, Toronto to Montreal, 542.4 km, 6 hours and 14 minutes.



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CR960



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Checklist

Superior abrasion resistance
Heavy load capacity capability
Great turning traction and stiffness

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CM980



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Commercial Tire Checklist

Commercial drivers have a different checklist when it comes to their tires. WestLake builds tires that are specific to the task. Only the highest quality materials and pattern designs go into our All Steel Truck & Bus Radial tires.

AUTOMATIC SNOW CHAINS PROVIDE INSTANT TRACTION FOR TRUCKS

RUD Chain said its Rotogrip automatic snow chain system is designed for a wide range of vehicles and works equally as well in reverse as it does moving forward.

Getting heavy vehicles safely and promptly to desired destinations across snowy and icy roads can be as easy as the flip of a switch. And even though it is scorching hot outside, it's never too early to plan for the upcoming winter season.

Automatic snow chain systems assure that any operator is well-equipped for all road conditions. These systems provide utility vehicles and truck fleets with universal snow chains for over the road travel.

With automatic chain systems, there is no longer a need for the driver to get out in dangerous roadside situations to apply manual chains as is the probability of calling a wrecker for a piece of equipment in the ditch.

"The time savings is great along with the safety when trucks use automatic systems," said Dave Woolverton of TMS Truck & Bus in Brighton, Colorado. "From a safety standpoint you don't have to get out of your vehicle and worry about oncoming traffic; that's the biggest thing. Truckers can just hit the switch."

Drivers can deploy automatic snow and ice chains from a control on the dashboard while the truck is in motion. This easy process is a critical step in making sure that vehicles reach their destination. Since the automatic tire chains can easily be engaged and disengaged right from the driver's seat, trucks stay on schedule.

"Some of the fleets that are using conventional chains need to stop and think," Woolverton said. "They need to think about their drivers' safety, the time, and money spent on these manual duties."

Many drivers do not want to chain up with manual chains because they are only in slick areas or on a small hill for a brief amount of time, and then they are out of it and don't need the chains any more. It just doesn't make sense to put on manual chains for these applications; that is why an automatic system is attractive. It is a quick way to get traction and keep vehicles from getting in trouble.

"I run in the mountains a lot," said 38-year trucking veteran Rob Courtier of Cheyenne, Wyoming. "Automatic chains provide a piece of mind that they are there and they are going to work when I need them."



"The idea is to keep the chains on the tire as short as possible only when they are needed. Tires take a beating if the chains run too long on them."

One manufacturer of automatic systems is RUD Chain. The company's Rotogrip system is designed for a wide range of vehicles and works equally as well in reverse as it does moving forward with traction provided at speeds as low as 4 to 5 mph.

For example, the 18-strand Rotogrip chain wheel system "throws" six bundles of three chain strands under the tire so that when it begins to spin, there are three pieces of chains under the tire. This process all works off of centrifugal force. The chains are needed most at lower speeds, when drivers are trying to find traction. Chains are not intended to be used at speeds in excess of 30 mph.

The RUD chain wheel design consists of three separate parts – the chain plate, the contact ring, and the aluminum carrier wheel. This system is designed so that they come apart in pieces. The chain wheel is the part that does all the work in this system.

Another aspect of the RUD chain wheel is that it has a flat surface on the wheel that contacts the drive tire. This provides a larger surface and much less slippage and greater contact to the drive tire, which affects the way the chain lifts.

The universal mounting system allows Rotogrip to be easily adjusted to fit a wide range of vehicles and can easily be installed in just a few hours.

"This is the fourth year that I have been using Rotogrip chains," Courtier said. "RUD systems are easy to put on and easy to maintain. It is one of the best pieces of equipment that I have ever put on a truck."

Any utility truck or fleet truck can utilize the Rotogrip Systems. The Rotogrip Classic (full-size) system is primarily used on heavier commercial vehicles with tire sizes 22.5 and up. The choice of six-, 10- or 18-strand chain wheels is frequently used with the larger trucks. The 18-strand chain wheel provides smooth running and operates well at lower speeds.

The Rotogrip Light Truck system is the solution for light commercial vehicles that do not have an on-board air supply. The design offers a unique cable pull-down system allowing either air or electric activation powered by the vehicles electric supply. An eight-strand chain wheel is most commonly used for this system on trucks with 19.5 size tires and smaller.

"I run in the mountains a lot," said 38-year trucking veteran Rob Courtier of Cheyenne, Wyoming. "Automatic chains provide a piece of mind that they are there and they are going to work when I need them."

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LAUNDERED REUSABLE SHOP TOWELS NO SAFETY RISK, STUDY SAYS

Metals remaining after laundering not readily transferred

Tire Business staff report

Laundered reusable shop towels present no health hazard to workers in auto repair shops and other machine shops, according to a study commissioned by the Textile Rental Services Association of America (TRSA).

The study, performed by the environmental engineering firm Arcadis U.S. Inc., indicated that metals remaining on shop towels after laundering are not readily transferred to the hands of workers that use them.

Arcadis measured traces of metal in laundered towels and used synthetic sweat in leachability tests to estimate residual elements that could be freed when towels are used. The company found zero to negligible detectable risk of metal transfer.



“By measuring leachate, and not simply relying on a modelling format, Arcadis realistically portrayed the minuscule amount of metals that shop towel users are exposed to, reaffirming our confidence that there is absolutely no risk to users,” said Joseph Ricci, president and CEO of the association.

The TRSA’s study counters contentions by Kimberly-Clark Worldwide Inc. that towels in auto repair shops, even when washed, can carry dangerous concentrations of toxic metals, oil and grease.

Kimberly-Clark, a manufacturer of paper towels and other paper products, said it went public last year with its assertions after conducting a study on towels from 26 industrial sites, including auto repair facilities.

CONTINENTAL ADDS VISUAL ALIGNMENT INDICATOR (VAI) TO EUROPEAN TRUCK TIRES

Tire Review

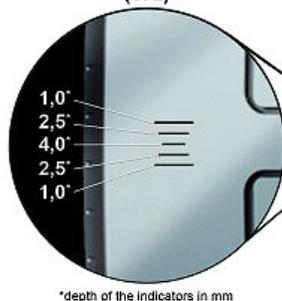
Continental AG has introduced new visual alignment indicators (VAI) on two long distance truck tire sizes sold in Europe, marking the first time such indicators have become available on truck tires in the continent.

Already employed on many of its passenger and light truck tires, this marks the first time such indicators have become available on truck tires in Europe. The VAIs aim to show operators incorrect wheel alignment on trucks and trailers more easily and without the use of expensive electronic measuring systems.

Conti says the system should help fleet operators to spot excessive positive or negative camber angles or too much toe-in or toe-out, all of which can decrease tire life through uneven wear and increase fuel consumption. Early detection through a simple visual check can be carried out as part of a routine maintenance inspection.

The indicators are pairs of sipes, which are one to four millimeters

Visual Alignment Indicator (VAI)



deep and positioned on each shoulder of the tire at five defined measuring points. At regular maintenance intervals, operators or service providers can simply compare the wear on the indicators on each side of the tire to check if the tire is wearing evenly.

Commercial marketing manager Tracey Hyem commented: “The indicators have been designed to alert customers to the first signs of incorrect wheel alignment, as this increases rolling resistance and causes premature wear and can lead to higher operating costs both in terms of fuel and replacement tires. The simplicity of the VAI also means that no specialist

knowledge is necessary, so everyone can benefit.”

The indicators will be included at no extra cost on selected long distance tires in the new 2+ range, initially in tire sizes 315/70R22.5 (standard and XL versions) and 355/50R22.5. While they have been used in the U.S. for many years, Continental is the first tire manufacturer to introduce VAI in Europe. (Tyres & Accessories) - Tire Review



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TIA TEAMS UP WITH MICHELIN ON TRAINING

CSA Tire inspection video covers truck tire guidelines

Modern Tire Review

In recognition of the Rubber Manufacturers Association's (RMA) National Tire Safety Week (NTSW) June 3-9, 2012, Michelin North America Inc. and the Tire Industry Association (TIA) partnered on a tire training video.

Produced for the tire and transportation industries, "CSA Tire Inspection" covers the guidelines for inspecting truck tires under the new Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

"We are proud to partner with Michelin and support FMCSA's efforts to improve safety on our nation's highways," said Dr. Roy Littlefield, TIA executive vice president. "This video will help the industry educate drivers and technicians on the federal inspection regulations for truck and bus tires."

"Michelin is strongly committed to the safety of the transportation industry," said Doug Jones, customer engineering support manager for Michelin. "This commitment is why we have partnered with TIA over the years to produce this series of safety related videos. We strongly encourage fleets, owner-operators and other industry personnel to utilize this and the other training videos to help promote safety in our industry."

The CSA Tire Inspection video is available for free download or viewing at michelintruck.com under the Tool Box tab or at youtube.com/michelintruck. Previous Michelin/TIA videos (In Shop Safety, Wheel End Safety, Tubeless Radial Truck Tire Safety, and Commercial Road Service) are also available for no charge at the Michelin truck website.

SHOP OWNERS RECOGNIZE NEED FOR FASTER SERVICE SPEEDS

Improved bay productivity and faster service lead to higher profits

Tire Business staff report

Failing to keep auto servicing equipment updated can cost repair shops dearly, according to the results of a survey of U.S. auto repair shop owners done on behalf of vehicle lift maker Rotary Lift.

More than half of the 327 shop owners surveyed anonymously said they have had to turn away business worth an average of \$1,582 per month — or nearly \$19,000 a year — because they lacked the capacity to do the job, Rotary Lift said.

In light of this, 92 percent of the shop owners surveyed said they would be interested in equipment that would enable their technicians to complete at least one additional job per week, especially if that equipment paid for itself within a few months.

Of those surveyed, 70 percent reported that the size of their average sales ticket has increased over the last five years, and 46 percent reported that the average number of tickets their shops handle also has risen during that time.

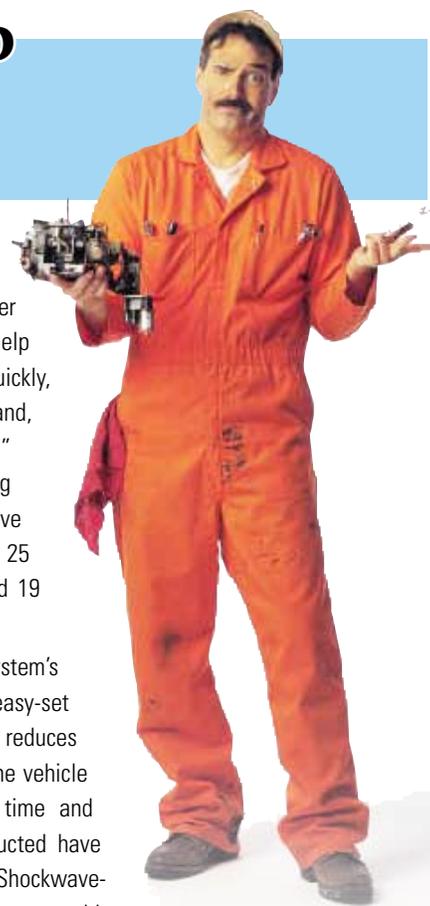
In response, 71 percent said they are focusing on improving bay productivity and speed of service so they can handle more business. Profits have increased as a result of these steps for 77 percent of shop owners surveyed, Rotary Lift said.

John Rylee, Rotary Lift director of marketing, said the vehicle lift is among the pieces of equipment most scrutinized because it's in use for most service jobs.

"By making the lift faster and easier to use, we can help technicians work more quickly, improving bay productivity and, as a result, shop profitability," Mr. Rylee said, referencing Rotary Lift's Shockwave system, which are rated at 25 seconds to lift a vehicle and 19 seconds to set it back down.

Coupled with the system's laser-spotting guide and easy-set superstructures, the system reduces the time spent positioning the vehicle for service. Rotary claims time and motion studies it has conducted have shown that adding a Shockwave-equipped lift to a single bay can enable a shop to complete at least one additional job per week, which Rotary calculates could generated annual profit of at least \$3,259.

Rotary Lift is a brand within Dover Corp.'s Vehicle Service Group.



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