



**DOT Auto Safety Hotline  
Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire  
TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS**  
1-888-DASH-2-DOT  
(1-888-327-4236)  
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

2003 JUN 27 AM 9:03

**FOR AGENCY USE ONLY**

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
 Od\_or \_\_\_\_\_  
 r\_dt \_\_\_\_\_  
 od\_r1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 up\_lr \_\_\_\_\_

Reference No. \_\_\_\_\_

10025094

Daytime Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

**OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street No. \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 City Colmar State Pa Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle?  YES  NO  
 in the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date 6/10/03

**PRODUCT INFORMATION**

Vehicle Identification No. (VIN) (17 Digits) <u>1FDXE4550YHA15785</u>		Make <u>Dutchman RV</u> <u>on Ford Chassis</u>	Model <u>Class C</u> <u>31'</u>	Year <u>2000</u>
Purchased Date <u>2/14/00</u>	Dealer's Name <u>Indian Valley Camping Center</u>		Engine Size (CID/CCL) <u>450</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Turbo <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fuel Injection
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Used	Dealer's City <u>Souderton</u>	State <u>Pa</u>	Zip Code <u>18964</u>	No. Cylinders <u>10</u>
Manufacture Date (on driver's door or pillar) <u>10/99</u>	Transmission Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Automatic	Restraint System <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Driverside Air Bag <input type="checkbox"/> Motorbelt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Passengerside Air Bag <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2-Point Belt <input type="checkbox"/> 3-Point Belt	Cruise Control <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Drivetrain <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rear <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Wheel
Vehicle Type <input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Sport Utility <input type="checkbox"/> Van <input type="checkbox"/> Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Minivan <input type="checkbox"/> Motorcycle <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>RV</u>		Body Style <input type="checkbox"/> 2-Door <input type="checkbox"/> 4-Door <input type="checkbox"/> Stationwagon <input type="checkbox"/> Pick Up Truck <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

**FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION**

Part Name(s)	Location <input type="checkbox"/> Left <input type="checkbox"/> Right <input type="checkbox"/> Front <input type="checkbox"/> Rear	Failed Part(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Replacement	Handicap Adaptive Equip <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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**TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE**

Tire Brand <u>Firestone</u>	Tire Name <u>Steeltex Radial</u>
Complete Tire Size <u>R45 LT225/75R16 m/s 10 ply</u>	DOT No. <u>(don't have)</u>
No. of Failures <u>2 bkw</u> <u>2 about to</u>	Date(s) of Failure(s) <u>8/14/02</u> <u>9/26/02</u> <u>about to: 9/26/02</u> <u>4/24/03</u>
Mileage at Failure(s) <u>16000</u> <u>18500</u> <u>19500</u> <u>21000</u>	Vehicle Speed at Failure(s): <u>55</u> <u>55</u> <u>(Firestone dealer)</u> <u>(Ford dealer)</u>
Failed Part(s) Available? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	NHTSA Previously Contacted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION**

*(Please describe in detail the Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies). Attach photos if available.)*

Crash <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Fire <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Fatalities	Reported to Manufacturer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

See attached

Continue on back.

The Privacy Act of 1974 - Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to a 49 U.S.C. Chapter 301. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If NHTSA proceeds with administration enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

Time and Place	Date of Incident	Time	Exact Location Where Incident Occurred	
	9/26/02	10:30	I-10 E exit 465 Junction, Tx	
Customer Vehicle	Vehicle Make	Year	Model	Mileage
	Dutchman	2000	31' Class C	19,500
	Owner of Auto			Telephone Number
	Address	City	State	Zip Code
		Colmar	Pa	
	Driver	Minor	Telephone Number	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Address	City	State	Zip Code
		Colmar	Pa	
	Passenger (List All)	Minor	Telephone Number	
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Address	City	State	Zip Code	
	Colmar	Pa		
Vin Number	1FDXE45804HA15785		Trailer Hitch? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	What is Towed? Jeep Wrangler
Vehicle Usage	Recreational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Personal <input type="checkbox"/>	Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	
Is this a motorhome or conversion van? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	What is Model? 31' Class C		Has the vehicle been modified? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Did the vehicle rollover? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Was the vehicle involved in a crash? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Damage to Customer Vehicle	Wheel well molding, loose wires		Estimated Cost	
Sewer Outlet Compartment, Sewer hoses, fire extenders			\$900.00	
Have you submitted this to your insurance company? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Are you planning to submit this claim to insurance company? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Has your vehicle been repaired? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DEDUCTIBLE AMOUNT \$		250 <sup>00</sup>	
Customer Insurance Co. (Please include telephone number)	National Alliance Ins. Co.		800-727-8300	
Property Damage to Other Car (If applicable)	Was another Vehicle Involved? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name and Address		
	Damage			Estimated Cost
	Does Owner of Vehicle Have Insurance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Covering Damages to Car? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Covering Damages to Other Car? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
	Other Property Damage			
Injured Person	Was Anyone Injured? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Nature of Injury				
Tire Data (if available)	Size-Type	Mileage on Tire	DOT Number (10 or 11 digit # located on sidewall)	Position Mounted
	Stedtex Radial R4S	19,500	LT225/75R16	Outside left rear
Description of Incident	Tread came off tire which pulled the extender off the inside dual and let the air out. Outside tire retained air.			
	We limped up to Segovia Truck Stop for repairs to tires. Tread damaged Sewer Outlet compartment floor and punctured both sewer hoses and brake all connectors.			
Signature of Customer			Date Signed	
			10-16-02	

October 19, 2002

Dear Firestone,

We wanted to include a letter with this claim to let you know just how unhappy we are with our Firestone tires.

We bought our RV in 2000 and have been traveling summers since then. Winter months we stay in one spot and cover our tires. Summer months we check the tire pressures often and have our RV serviced, which at 15,000 miles called for them to be rotated.

On August 14, 2002 we blew the inside right rear dual tire on the Pennsylvania Turnpike with 16,000 miles on our RV. We had the spare put on and started looking for a Firestone dealer that had another tire for us. We found one in Nashville, Tn. And they replaced the tire for the amount of tread missing(see attached receipt).

On September 26, 2002, the incident our claim is all about happened. This time the tread came completely off the outside left rear dual, causing damage to the sewer area compartment floor and puncturing both hoses and breaking all connectors. It also pulled the extender from the inside tire, which released all the air. The outside tire retained air, so we were able to get to the exit and get the inside tire repaired. Of course this meant we were without a good spare, which made us very nervous considering we had blown two tires within 3000 miles. When we got to the closest Firestone dealer in Beaumont, Tx. we had them inspect each tire. They found another one that was bad and again replaced it less the tread used(see attached receipt)

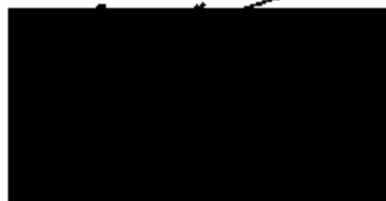
(The receipts are attached for your information only).

So this means we have had 3 bad tires with less than 20,000 miles on them.

What we'd ideally like to see happen would be for Firestone to replace all of our tires with another brand(like Toyo) that we would feel more comfortable with.

We hope you are following all incidents like ours and may consider that you have a problem with this tire before any legal action is brought to bear.

Thanks for your help in this matter,



**BFNT LLC**

1102 Appleton  
Nashville, Tennessee 37210

REF. No. 908650

10/25/2002

[REDACTED]  
Lutz, FL [REDACTED]

Subject: Inspection Of Tire

Dear [REDACTED]:

Our office has received your tire (STEELTEX RADIAL R4S, LT225/75R16 DOT No.VD1L1XD349) and it has been inspected by our Technical Services Manager.

We have carefully inspected the tire. That inspection showed that this tire was operated for an unknown period of time with insufficient air pressure to carry the load. This insufficient air pressure condition is evidenced by the deformation throughout the tire bead area. The tire failure did not result from a defect in either materials or workmanship.

While we regret that you have had this difficulty we must respectfully deny your request for compensation. You may consider turning this incident over to your vehicle insurance provider for their consideration and possible compensation.

If you would like your tire returned, please mail the attached tire return letter to Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. within twenty-one (21) days from the date of this letter. If we have not heard from you within the twenty-one (21) day period, we will dispose of the tire.

Attachment

Very truly your

*Norma Y. Davis*

Norma Y. Davis  
Paralegal

Refusal of claim letter

Letter sent to Firestone after we replaced all tires

[REDACTED]  
Colmar, Pa. [REDACTED]

April 25, 2003

Dear Firestone:

We are having a lot of problems with the Steeltex Radial R4S LT225/75R16 tires we had on our motorhome. We say had because we recently replaced them with Michelins. Let us tell you why. Last year, with 16000 miles on our rig, we blew a right rear inside tire in Pennsylvania. We had the spare put on and had the tire replaced in Tennessee, with them only charging us for 10% of tread. Then 6 weeks later, with 19,000 miles on our rig, we blew a left rear inside tire in Texas. This time there was damage to the motorhome. We called Firestone and were told to buy a new tire and submit a claim for the tire and the damage. Well, that was just a scam because you denied the claim. If we had just done what we did before, we are certain a dealer would have replaced it at no charge except the prorated tread. Which is just what happened when that dealer inspected our tires, found another one that was about to blow and replaced it for 18% of the tread. Now we are in Florida and took our motorhome for servicing, which includes inspecting the tires at 20,000 miles. They found one that was about to blow. We no longer feel safe with your tires so we replaced them all. That dealer is keeping all the tires for us until we resolve something with you. Your company has been very steadfast that we must be overweight or have the wrong air pressure in the tires. We have been weighed and are within the limits; we have the air pressure that Firestone Dealers recommended. When 4 of 6 tires are bad, we think it's time you stop trying to blame us. What we would like you to do is reimburse us for everything we had to spend tire-wise during this whole ordeal. That would come to \$1822.97. If we do not receive this from you in a timely manner, we will pursue legal action.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Ref # 908650

Letter sent to Dutchman

[REDACTED]  
Colmar, Pa. [REDACTED]

April 25, 2003

Dear Dutchman :

We are full-time RV'ers with a 31 foot Class C Dutchman with Firestone Steeltex Radial R4s tires. Last August, at 16,000 miles we blew a right inside rear tire in Pennsylvania. It was replaced at no charge less the prorated tread. In September, at 19,000 miles we blew a left outside rear tire in Texas and did some damage to our rig. We called Firestone and did what they asked us to, which was to file a claim with them and send in the tire. They said that since there was damage we could not get another tire from a dealer. We would have to buy one and they would reimburse us. Well that was just a scam because they denied our claim. Meanwhile, when we went to buy the new tire they told us we had another tire about to blow, which they replaced at no charge less the prorated tread. Now we are in Florida and took our rig in for servicing and they tell us we have another tire about to blow! We just gave up and put 6 new Michelins on because we can't keep worrying about tires blowing.

When Firestone first denied our claim we tried to fight them because we knew it was their problems, not ours. We are within our weight limits and the air pressure is where the Firestone dealer put it. They are being what we call nonresponsive. That is, they will talk to us but the answer is always the same-that we must be overweight or have too little air pressure. We wrote to Highways magazine, who in turn wrote to Firestone; they did not respond.

We are writing to you because you may want to reconsider buying Firestone tires when they treat your customers so badly.

Sincerely,  
[REDACTED]

P.S. We are enclosing copies of everything we have been through in case you would like to pursue this with Firestone.

**THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS  
DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED  
TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED  
INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY  
PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF  
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).**