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Ottawa, IL

add to
10103249

August 13, 2005

Consumer Affairs Dept.
P.O. Box 7988
Chicago, IL 60680-9534

Ref: Steeltex R4S

Good morning:

It has been 9 months since I contacted Firestone about a new tire related problem and I figured it was about time I do it again. Hopefully you have some new employees in your Consumer Affairs Department and they will actually care about your customers.

I have enclosed a copy of my letter dated November 10, 2004 describing the problem I had concerning your Steeltex R4S tires. If you read the note I have added to the second page of the November 10th letter, you will see why, after getting the run-around from Firestone, figured it was time to bring this issue up again to Firestone.

In short, I started with the local facility who has been advertising and selling Firestone since at least the mid 1960's; to your Technical Service Center at 800-356-4644; followed by my November 10, 2004 letter to your office, which yielded me the response of calling the Technical Service Center again so that they could tell me that my local dealer was not a dealer, again.

If you are the top office of Firestone, which should have the slogan "the buck stops here", and wish to blow off this letter again by telling me to contact your Technical Service Center again, who will tell me that my local Firestone dealer is not a Firestone dealer, than save your 38 cents postage and I will get the message that Firestone just plain don't care. With all the problems you had with your 2000 manufacturing problems, I figured that you just may be interested in one of your tires that separated and did not blow out.

Encl: 4

CC: U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
NSA-10.01, 400 7th St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Maria
8/29/05

[REDACTED]
Ottawa, IL [REDACTED]

November 10, 2004

Consumer Affairs Dept.
P.O. Box 7988
Chicago, IL 60680-9534

Ref: Steeltex R4S

Good morning:

I happened to be the owner of a 2000 Ford motorhome which came equipped with Firestone LT225/75R16 115/112R Load Range E M/S. In the heat of the media exposure to several Firestone belt separation problems back in 2000 & 2001, The attached Associated Press article appeared in our local paper. After reading the article and determining that the tires on our motorhome were the ones being questioned, I contacted Firestone and was told that these Steeltex R4S were not being recalled.

This fall, just shy of 24,000 miles on the motorhome, the first of these original tires experienced a tread separation. The enclosed photo shows that this separation occurred on nearly half of the tire circumference. The second photo shows that six inches of the tire surface was separated. Fortunately, we heard the sound before the tire had a blowout.

Upon returning home, I contacted the local Firestone dealer who told me that these tires were not on the recall list, but he would be more than happy to sell me a new tire. When I asked about the other five tires and the spare, the local dealer told me to take it up with Firestone. With the information from the Associated Press article and the fact that I still had six of these Steeltex R4S tires which may go at any time, I was not in the frame of mind to replace this tire with another Firestone.

On Monday, September 20th I e-mailed Bridgestone/Firestone concerning this event and was told "You will receive a response within the next few days". On Friday, September 24th, Firestone e-mailed me back stating "we can assist you more efficiently through our Technical Service Center. Please call them toll-free at 800-356-4644". In my phone call to them I was told to contact my local Firestone dealer for a replacement tire. That put me right back to where I started five days earlier.

Since I've been around the Firestone circle, I figured it was time to add my complaint to the 160 others that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration had received back in about 2000. Maybe they will be interested in this Steeltex R4S, which did not blowout and still holds air.

By the way, while waiting for Firestone to take 5 days to tell me to call Technical Service, I replaced all six Firestone tires with another brand.


encl: 4

CC: U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
NSA-10.01, 400 7th St. S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Note: In November, as a follow-up to this letter, I received a call from Firestone saying that I should have taken the tire to my Firestone dealer. I told them that it went to Jim Boe Firestone in Ottawa the day after my highway problem. The response, after a couple of minutes was that Jim Boe is not a Firestone Dealer. I informed her that Jim Boe has been selling Firestone out of his facility for 25+ years and since he has a large Firestone sign over his front door, I assumed he was a Firestone dealer. She insisted that he was not. She also told me that I should have called their service center rather than writing this letter. They said I should still call 1-800-356-4644. Too bad they can't read. If they were to look in the 4th paragraph, they would have seen that I already called them back on September 24th. Talk about going round and round in circles, no wonder they are in the tire business.

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New look at tires

By NEDRA PICKLER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has received more than 100 complaints about another Firestone brand of tires reportedly involved in accidents in which two people died and a dozen were injured.

"The majority of the complaints occurred at highway speeds and allege a blowout, tread separation or other major failure," NHTSA said in its investigation report about the ~~Firestone~~ and A/T light truck tires.

The tires are original equipment on Ford F250 and F350 pickups, the Ford Excursion, General Motors' Suburban and G Van, a commercial vehicle.

A spokesman for Ford, Mike Vaughn, said the tires are used on all 75,700 Excursions and 40 percent of the F-series trucks and Excursion vans. Vaughn said Ford is cooperating with NHTSA's investigation.

Similar reports led Bridgestone/Firestone Inc. to issue a recall of 8.5 million Firestone ATX, ATX II and Wilderness AT tires last month. Those tires, standard equipment on the Ford Explorer, have been linked to 101 U.S. traffic deaths and more than 400 injuries.

Bridgestone/Firestone officials say they still have not determined the cause of the problems but have focused their investigation on manufacturing shortcomings at its plant in Decatur, Ill.

The R4S is a mud and snow tire and the A/T is an all-terrain tire with an aggressive tread. Both models are available in 15-, 16- and 16.5-inch sizes.

NHTSA had no estimate of how many of the tires have been produced. Bridgestone/Firestone did not respond to requests for

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Bridgestone/Firestone officials appeared caught off guard by Friday's announcement. They later issued a statement stressing the investigation "is not a finding of a defect but rather is a process to determine the facts surrounding complaints that have been filed with NHTSA."

Spokeswoman Anita Bodd said the company "will continue to have a policy of being open and responsive" to NHTSA.

NHTSA, the agency in charge of auto safety, has seen a surge in tire complaints since the Firestone recall was announced.

"Obviously, there's certainly a heightened sense of awareness about tire problems, and we've seen an increase of complaints across the board," said an NHTSA official who did not want to be identified. "However, this increase is much more significant than we've gotten with any other brand."

NHTSA's investigation report showed a total of 169 complaints involving the Firestone tires since Jan. 1, 1993, with all but two occurring in the last two months.

GM spokesman Greg Martin said his company had received "no reports or any information that suggests any problems with these tires."

"We monitor the performance of our tires, and we haven't seen any indication of a problem," he said.

Ford received harsh criticism after the Firestone recall was announced because it acknowledged ordering its own recall of the same tires in 16 other countries after receiving reports of problems. The foreign recalls began more than a year before the U.S. recall, but Ford never alerted NHTSA.

Bridgestone/Firestone has been criticized for not ordering a recall

Daily Times/TOM SIBIAK
Friday after the bank

ose

round," Clark said. Ottawa police officers pulled away from the high-speed chase to the bank.

bank robbery is the Ottawa in 6.5 months. The South Side branch of National Bank of Canada was robbed of \$1,474.

A. Furtak, 42, of Ottawa, pleaded guilty to robbing the bank and a Yorkville branch. He will be sentenced

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