

NHTSA Headquarters  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590

May 22, 2006

2006 JUN - 17 6:17

Dear Investigator,

10159456

On the evening of May 14, 2006 (at approximately 8:30 P.M. near exit 10) while on the Massachusetts Turnpike at 65 mph, the sidewall on my daughter's 1995 VW Passat suddenly blew out. Based upon her description, as well as the testimony of her two college classmates who were with her at the time the event happened, the tire exploded suddenly without warning and without roadway hazard involvement.

I contacted Goodyear Customer Service (Case No: [REDACTED]) who in turn had me report to a local tire center to have the tire casing evaluated.

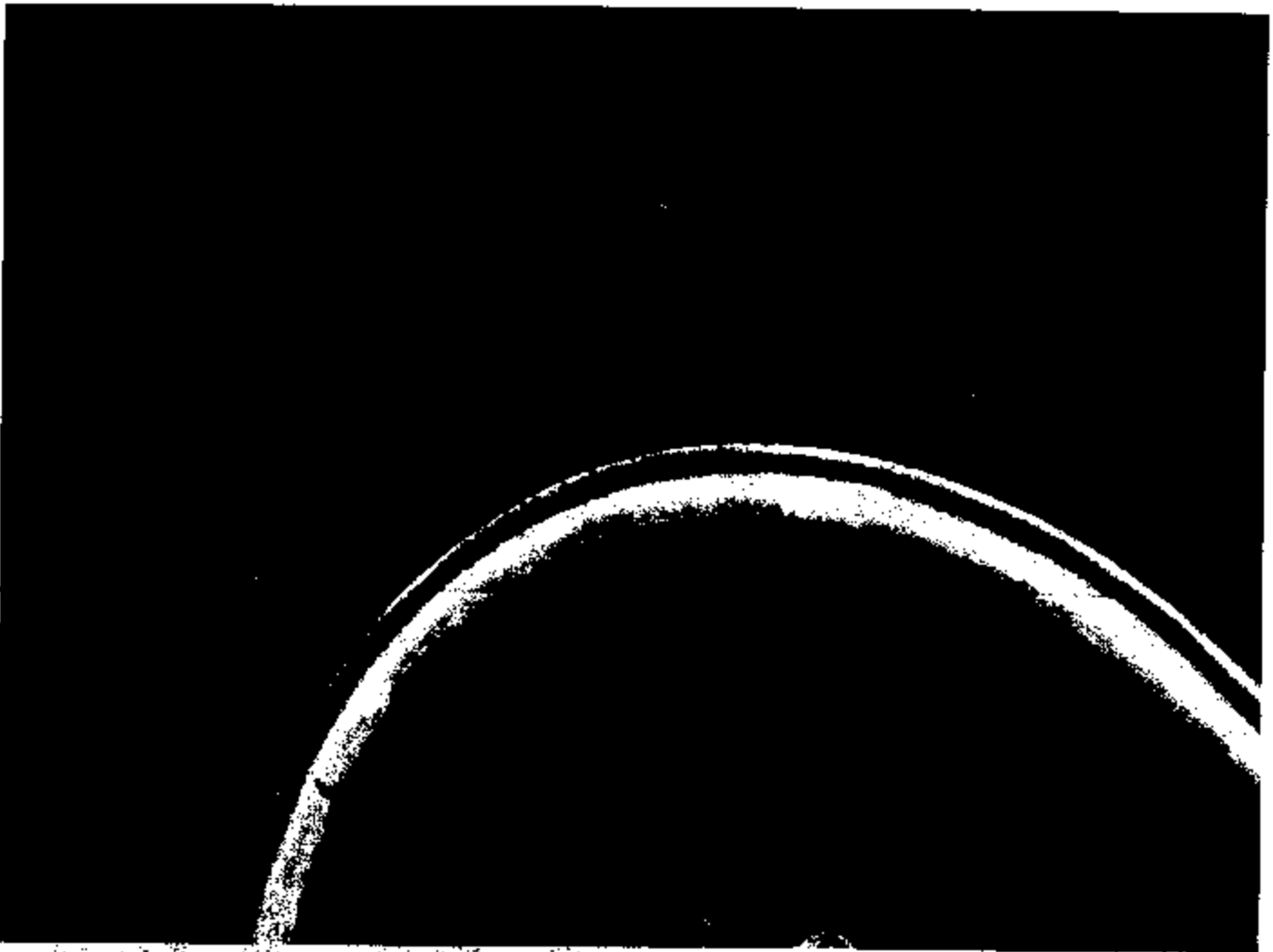


Figure 1: Goodyear Eagle GA

The tech who performed the inspection pointed out cracks were in evidence near the rim line, and even more importantly, that saturation cracks on the sidewall of this tire were in evidence over the entire sidewall areas of the remaining tires as well.

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Ultimately, these tires, which are only three years old, (as you can see in the photograph *l.e. 2402* as well as from the 'nubs' which are still intact), should not, by any stretch of the imagination, be showing such obvious signs of sidewall stress cracking and premature wear. Especially since the car has only been driven about 20,000 miles since the units were installed.

Given the fact that these tires are saturated with minute sidewall stress cracks, in addition to two of these tires exhibiting signs of premature wear, I am left with no alternative but to replace all of these tires to avoid any similar tread separation events.

It is because the failed tire clearly exhibits the classic signs of a steel belt induced 'sidewall/tread' separation, Goodyear should be concerned with investigating incidences such as this at a Corporate level and not at a local tire center level. Only personnel who are trained and equipped to make a critical and scientific evaluation should be involved in such circumstances so that all the tires on the vehicle can be inspected. Therefore, the means and methods employed in Goodyear's investigative program, and those involved in the process of discovery, should be dedicated only to improving product safety and reliability. To that end, should Goodyear representatives believe that the balance of the tires on such impacted vehicles be deemed safe then they should have no problem with putting these assurances in writing at the close of the investigative process.

Sincerely,



Walpole, MA

cc: The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company  
1144 East Market Street  
Akron, Ohio 44316-0001