

CL-10201550-1211
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

August 20, 2007

2007 AUG 20 AM 10:45

RE: Firestone Tire recall/replacement for Ford Explorer

To Whom Concerned,

I have a problem with the Firestone dealer and their tire replacement procedures. Last fall I received a letter from Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire dated September 2006 asking me to check for and replace any P235/75R15 Firestone Wilderness AT tires that might still be present on either our 1992 or '93 Explorers, including the spare. We still had one as a spare, it never having been on the ground.

August 10, 2007 I took it into the Firestone dealer at 1239 W. Guadalupe, Mesa AZ 85202 where Todd Murphy the manager checked my VIN and tire against the notification letter and did a replacement. Upon picking up the replacement tire I complained to Todd Murphy that the new tire was not equivalent in size or structure to the original. He had installed a Firestone P235/75 R15 model FR380. This is a regular passenger car tire not an AT as was original and a mismatch for the tires currently on the vehicle.

This '93 Explorer has Michelin LTX A/T P235/75 R15 tires. The circumference at the center of this tire is 91 inches. From rim edge to rim edge in cross section around the tire is 20 inches. These dimensions are equivalent to the original equipment tires. I see a problem running this replacement Firestone opposite the Michelins for the Firestone not only has a much different tread pattern it is smaller.

The Firestone mounted/inflated circumference is 90.25 inches the arc in radius is 19.25 inches. Thus both measurements for the Firestone are 0.75 inches smaller. I requested a more comparable replacement but was informed by Mr. Murphy that he was allowed to use any tire on hand as a replacement as long as it was a P235/75 R15, and that he was not required to provide a closer matching tire to the original and to what is on the vehicle.

Due to the new Firestone tire being significantly smaller than what was original and what is currently on the vehicle I consider it be less safe than what I had. The car has limited slip differential and Ford requires both tires on that axle to be of the same brand, tread pattern and size. They are to be replaced as pairs. While the Firestone tire is a spare tire, if it were needed I would likely need to run it on the ground for a few hundred miles to find a shop for replacement. This use would create a safety problem and could cause damage to the differential.

Is there anything you can do to help me obtain a better remediation with Firestone on this matter?

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Chandler AZ [REDACTED]

phone messages: [REDACTED]

PS: attached is another note regarding previous problems with the original Firestone tires and their refusal to provide warranty service.

mc
8/22/07
cc

Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590

August 20, 2007

RE: 1992 & 93 Ford Explorers & their Firestone Wilderness At P235/75 R15 tires and refusal of warranty service in 1994.

To Whom Concerned,

These vehicles both came new with these tires mounted on all five wheels. We had a blow out on the '92 Explorer right rear while traveling on straight highway at about 60 mph. I experience no unusual handling problems. However, a Ford dealer in Nevada would not provide any tire warranty service even though the vehicle was still in warranty with less than 20,000, saying that was Firestone's responsibility. They sent me to Firestone, who also refused to provide warranty. So I bought a new matching Firestone tire.

About 3 months later I noticed a new vibration in the front. Upon inspection I found the right front had a large bubble on the tread and around to the sidewall. Upon checking all tires, two more were found with bubbles between the cord layers and the surface rubber on side walls, indicating delamination. I took these to a Firestone dealer in Ft. Worth, TX who again refused to provide warranty. His stance was that Firestone sold tires to new car manufacturers but these came without any warranty on defects or road hazard. I took both the Ford and Firestone service personnel word at face value.

I replaced those tires with Michelin LTX A/T P235/75 R15 which I have continued to buy and use without incident since. My good friend owned the '93 Explorer so I told him to watch for irregular surfaces developing on a tire after I had my problems. He found one and, even though his Firestones had little wear, replaced the four Firestone tires on the ground. I bought the '93 from him several years ago. Thus the tires on both Explorers were replaced at the owner's expense well before the service life of the original equipment Firestone tires were even half over. In both cases the tires were exhibiting excellent tread wear characteristics.

About 2001 I utilized the Firestone recall program to replace the original Firestone spare on the '92 Explorer. While I appreciated this service I believe Firestone should have been more responsible to us regarding their products with obvious manufacturing defects. We had encountered problems with these tires and complained to local dealers well before the Firestone tire failures/Explorer rollovers with fatalities had become national news.

This letter is only to be on record that I found Firestone to be negligent from the outset with the manufacturing and warranty of the tires supplied to Ford for the early Explorers.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Chandler AZ [REDACTED]