

OCT - 5 2009

U.S. Department of Transportation

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

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

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100148

Date Received

14-SEP-2009

Repository [ ]

Reference No. 10283878

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City HUDDLESTON

State VA

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

The information you provide will be used to identify potential safety-related defects. We may share your information with the applicable vehicle manufacturer during an investigation or recall in accordance with the routine uses described in the agency's Privacy Act notice. See 49 FR 53971 (Sep. 3, 2004).

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side

1FTZR45E72T

Make FORD

Model RANGER

Model Year 2002

Date Purchased

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number

Engine:

Fuel Type:

No: Cylinders

Original Owner [ ]

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

[ ] Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

Multiple Failure:

Incident Date(s)

[ ] Cruise Control

30-APR-2009

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Vehicle Component Codes: 190000 TIRES, 190000 TIRES

Failure Mileage 40000

Failure Speed 55

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make FIRESTONE

Tire Model (Name or Number) DESTINATION LE

Tire Size (Example P215/65R15) 245/75R16

DOT No. (Example: DOTM9ABC036) W270WL54208

[ ] Original Equipment [ ] Prior Repair

Failure Location: DRIVER SIDE FRONT

Tire Component Code 190000 TIRES

Tire Failure Type: BLOWOUT

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and injury(ies).)

Crash

Fire

Number of Persons Injured

Number of Deaths

Reported to Police

[ ] Yes [X] No

[ ] Yes [X] No

N

Narrative Description of Incident(S), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).

Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e. parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

TL\*THE CONTACT OWNS A 2002 FORD RANGER WITH TWO FRONT FIRESTONE DESTINATION LE P245/75R16 TIRES. WHILE DRIVING 60 MPH, THE VEHICLE STARTED VIBRATING. THE CONTACT DECREASED THE SPEED EXPECTING THE VIBRATION TO STOP; HOWEVER, WHILE DRIVING 55 MPH, THE FRONT DRIVER SIDE TIRE BLEW OUT. THE IMPACT CAUSED THE LEFT FRONT FENDER TO EXTEND OUTWARD APPROXIMATELY ONE INCH. A LOCAL REPAIR FACILITY MECHANIC STATED THAT THE BLOW OUT WAS CAUSED BY ROAD HAZARD MATERIALS. THE CONTACT WAS CONCERNED THAT THE VIBRATION CAUSED THE TIRE BLOW OUT. THE MANUFACTURER STATED THAT THEY INSPECTED THE TIRES AND SINCE THEY WERE UNABLE TO DETERMINE HOW LONG THE TIRES WERE ON THE VEHICLE THEY WERE UNABLE TO REPLACE THEM FREE OF CHARGE. THE FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 40,000 AND THE CURRENT MILEAGE WAS 45,000.

Please refer to the attached documents for a complete account of the incident.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974-Public Law 93-579 This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a Manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

NOTE: ALL ATTACHMENTS ARE IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

[REDACTED]  
Huddleston, VA [REDACTED]

9/25/2009

Dear Sir or Madam:

I wish to inform you about a very unpleasant incident that my wife and I experienced because of a Firestone tire. On April 28, 2009, in preparation for a trip we were making, I purchased 2 Firestone Destination LE tires for my Ford Ranger truck from Ayers Garage in Bedford, VA. I drove the truck home, about 7 miles, all seemed normal. We departed the morning of April 30, all still seemed normal until we reached turnpike speed, 60 mph, (speed limit, 65 mph) the truck began to shake violently with a strong pull to the left. Slowing the vehicle to a speed between 50 and 55 mph the shake and pull were less violent.

We reached a point 20 miles south of Charlottesville, VA, (a total of 97 miles on the brand new tire) when the left front tire blew-out. We managed to get the vehicle under control and maneuvered to a safe place on the shoulder to change to the spare. We noticed at that time that the force of the blow-out pushed the fender outward one inch. After the tire change the handling of the vehicle was normal once again. We drove on to Charlottesville and there purchased a replacement tire.

We returned from our trip May 15 and immediately took the blown out tire back to Ayers Garage. Mr. Ayers then gave the tire to a representative of American Tire Distributors. After 3 months, Mr. Ayers handed me the reply from American Tire Distributors, which stated that the blow-out was caused by a road hazard. I told Mr. Ayers no road hazard ever existed. He expressed frustration and confessed he did not know what to do next. I told Mr. Ayers I would contact the manufacturer.

I spoke with a representative of Bridgestone American Tire Operation, LLC of Nashville, TN about the incident. He sent me a report form with instructions that required me to submit the report with supporting papers and the blown-out tire, all at my expense. American Tire Distributors sent them the tire. Bridgestone sent their reply, dated September 8, (attached), stating they were not responsible for the tire failure.

The reason for their rejection is simply not valid. At the time of the blow-out the tire had less than 100 miles. The vehicle sat idle for 2 days and the tires all appeared normal. Upon reaching highway speed the vehicle began to shake violently and had a hard pull to the left. There was enough air in the tire to blow-out with such a force as to push out the fender. There were no road hazards and no flat tire due to lack of air.

Thank you for your time and consideration in dealing with this incident.


Respectfully Yours,  
[REDACTED]

Ayers Garage, Inc.  
 2685 Stone Mountain Road  
 Bedford, VA 24523

# Invoice

(540) 297-4984

DATE	INVOICE #
4/28/2009	8038

<b>Bill To</b>


<b>SHIP TO</b>

DUE DATE	P.O. NUMBER
5/18/2009	

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
	2- Tires 245/75/16 Frs Destinall	2	117.84	235.68T
	1- Set Brake Pads			49.86T
	2-tire Disposal	2	2.00	4.00
	Labor			40.00

Grady & Tim Thanks You For Your Business

Subtotal	329.54
5% Tax	14.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>343.82</b>

CLUB# 6365  
 970 HILTON HEIGHTS RD  
 CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22901-0000 US  
 (434)978-2122



485700 03085

See cashier for michelin registration card or visit  
[www.michelin.com](http://www.michelin.com) to register your tires

DATE 04-30-2009	NAME [REDACTED]	ADDRESS HUDDLESTON, VA [REDACTED]	PHONE # [REDACTED]
YEAR 2002	MAKE FORD	MODEL RANGER	COLOR White (Pearl)
LICENSE	ODOMETER 0	MEMBER ARRIVAL TIME 2009-04-30 01:27 PM	SERVICE COMPLETED TIME

Service Description	Service
TIRE INSTALL PACKAGE - Whitewall - IN - Tire Pressure - NO ACTION, Ft.0 R.0 - Dispose of Old Tire - NO ACTION - Valve Stem Install - NO ACTION - Balance (Required) - NO ACTION LUG TORQUE Drive Fronts 0 FT-LB	15.00 Dispose of Old Tire Accepted - NO ACTION New Tires - NO ACTION Tire Service Offered - NO ACTION

Merchandise Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Merchandise
P265/75R16 114T TOUR	1	123.23	123.23

Member Comments  
**PUT THE SPARE BACK**

Technician Comments

Total (Excluding Tax) 138.23

**DISCLAIMER**

I hereby authorize the stated repair work to be done along with the necessary material, and hereby grant Sam's Club permission to operate the vehicle herein described on streets, highways or elsewhere for the purpose of testing and/or inspection. An express mechanic's lien is hereby acknowledged on above vehicle to secure the amount of repairs thereto.

SAM'S CLUB IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO VEHICLES OR ARTICLES LEFT IN VEHICLES IN CASE OF FIRE, THEFT OR ANY OTHER CAUSE BEYOND SAM'S CLUB CONTROL.

04-30-2009  
 MEMBER SIGNATURE DATE

SALES ASSOCIATE: TIFFANY 605

HAVE YOUR LUG NUTS RETORQUED AFTER THE FIRST 50 MILES.



075 ROANOKE  
1634 SEIBEL DRIVE NE  
ROANOKE, VA 24013

BATCH: 2381062 CONTROL: 17.1 SU013657150

ACCT# 104050 540-297-4984  
AYER'S GARAGE INC.  
2685 STONE MOUNTAIN RD  
BEDFORD, VA 24523

LOCAL 6529 540-297-4984  
AYER'S GARAGE INC.  
2685 STONE MOUNTAIN RD  
BEDFORD, VA 24523

INVOICE NO.
8001365715
INVOICE DATE
08-AUG-09

SOLD TO

SHIP TO

ROUTE: 504A USED PAGE: 1

\*\*\*\*\* ROAD HAZARD - NOT COVERED \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* TERRAIN CREDIT MEMO \*\*\*\*\*

WHOLESALE CUSTOMER	TERMS	ITEM CODE
CUST. ORDER NO.	SALESMAN	OUR ORDER NO.
NO: 041014	NAME: BLANKENSHIP, JAMES I	VIA
		ATD Route

QTY. ORD.	QTY. SHIP.	PRODUCT CODE	SIZE	DESCRIPTION	BILING PRICE	EXCISE TAX	AMOUNT
-1	-1	187548547	P245/75R16 109S FRS	WE-BEST LE 109S	0.00	0.00	0.00
			60K 1*147016*1				
		Vendor Claim :N/A	D.O.T: w24208	Tread: 11	MILES: N/A	worn	
			Reason: ROAD HAZARD - NOT COVERED				

*1866 9447*  
*54443*  
*ref # 124464*  
*1866 650-393*  
*By: LK OLTMAN*  
*CELL-704 576 16*  
*Adymn*  
*1800 8473272*  
*BRIDGE STONE/FIRESTONE*  
*BOB HOWE*  
*HUTCHINS LL*

MERCHANDISE AMOUNT	+	EXCISE TAX	+	DISPOSAL FEE	+	SALES TAX	+	LABOR	=	PAY THIS AMOUNT
0.00		0.00		0.00		0.00				

Return product subject to 10% restocking fee. Drivers are not authorized to pick up returned products without a valid returned authorization form. Discontinued products are not eligible for return. **▲**

Invoices due NET on the 10th of the month. A Service Charge of 1½% (18% annually) or the maximum allowable rate under the law will be charged on all past due accounts.

Paid By: Cash  
ROA  
Amount

CONTROL NUMBER	CUSTOMER COPY	CUSTOMER SIGNATURE	PRINT NAME	TIME OF DE
56780043				

**BATO, LLC**  
1102 Appleton Drive  
Nashville, TN 37212

8 / 18 / 2009

Ref #: 724464

[REDACTED]  
Huddleston, VA [REDACTED]

In response to our phone call regarding the situation you experienced with your tire, listed below are the items that are required to process your claim for consideration:

1. Complete and sign the enclosed Incident Report.
2. Two estimates for the repair of your vehicle from a repair facility you would use. Photos of the damage are helpful, and can also be sent with the estimates.
3. A copy of the replacement tire invoice and a legible shipping cost receipt
4. Also, the tire that caused the damage must be shipped to us prepaid.

Upon receipt of all of the above items, we will advise you in writing of our decision, usually within 30 days. **Please make a copy of the paperwork, estimates and receipts for your own files. Original documents and pictures cannot be returned.** The tire that caused the alleged property damage to your vehicle must be shipped **freight prepaid** to the address shown on the enclosed shipping label. Your shipping cost will vary depending upon the shipment method you use. For reference, UPS, Ground Service, will cost about \$15 - \$30 for a passenger car tire. The freight company may require that you package the tire in a box for shipment. If we conclude that the claim should be accepted after we examine the tire, we will reimburse you for the cost of shipping the tire to us. If we conclude that the claim is denied and you request that your tire be returned after the inspection, it will be shipped by us **freight collect**. The estimated freight collect shipping cost is about \$30.

See the attached 'Help Us Help You' for details regarding the process and instructions for shipping your **Tire** and the requested **Paperwork**.

Following the included instructions and using the enclosed materials will expedite our review process.

Please keep in mind that any tire, no matter how well constructed, may fail in use as a result of punctures, impact damage, improper inflation, overloading, or other conditions resulting from use or misuse for which we are not responsible. Many of the submitted tires we receive failed for one of these reasons above and the claims are accordingly denied for payment

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 1-800-356-4644

# Incident Report

Time and Place	Date of Incident <b>4/30/09</b>	Time AM/PM <b>1:00 PM</b>	Exact Location Where Incident Occurred <b>20 MILES S CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA. RT 29</b>	
Customer Vehicle	Vehicle Make <b>FORD</b>	Year <b>2002</b>	Model <b>RANGER</b>	Mileage <b>40,000</b>
	Owner of Auto [REDACTED]	Email [REDACTED]		Telephone Number [REDACTED]
	Address [REDACTED]	City <b>HUDDLESTON</b>		State <b>VA</b>
	Driver [REDACTED]	Minor Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Telephone Number [REDACTED]
	Address <b>SAME AS</b>	City <b>ABOVE</b>		State [REDACTED]
	Passenger (List All) [REDACTED]	Minor Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Telephone Number <b>SAME AS ABOVE</b>
	Address <b>SAME AS ABOVE</b>	City [REDACTED]		State [REDACTED]
	Vin Number <b>1FTRH5E72T</b>	Trailer Hitch? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		What is towed? [REDACTED]
	Vehicle Usage: Recreational <input type="checkbox"/> Personal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>	Is this a motorcycle or conversion van? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Has the vehicle been modified? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	If Yes? What is the model? [REDACTED]		If so, how? [REDACTED]	
Property Damage to Customer's Car	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 <b>LEFT FRONT FENDER BLOWN OUTWARD 1"</b>		Estimated Cost <b>\$ 81.50</b>	
	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 your 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 \$ _____			
Property Damage to Other Car (If Applicable)	Customer Insurance Co. (Please include telephone number) <b>DONEGAL MUTUAL INS. CO. 540 721 8822</b>			
	Was another Vehicle involved? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Name and Address [REDACTED]	
	Damage [REDACTED]		Estimated Cost [REDACTED]	
	Does owner of vehicle have insurance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
	Insurance covering Damages to car? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Insurance covering Damages to Other car? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other Property Damage: [REDACTED]				
Injury?	Was anyone injured? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		If Yes, nature of Injury [REDACTED]	
Tire Data (If Available)	Tire Size <b>245/75/16</b>		Pattern Name <b>FXS DESTINAN</b>	Position Mounted <b>LEFT FRONT</b>
	DOT Number (10-12 digit # located on sidewall) [REDACTED]			Mileage on Tire <b>90 MILES</b>
Description of Incident	<b>I bought 2 Pirestone tires from Ayers Garage on 4/28/09, had them mounted on the front of the vehicle. Drove the vehicle home (approx. 7 miles), never exceeded 45 MPH. The next day my spouse</b>			
Signature of Customer	[REDACTED]			Date Signed <b>8/25/09</b>

see reverse side for continuation

and I were taking the vehicle to Dulles airport. (200 mis north of our home. Reaching the Lynchburg by-pass, (speed limit 65 MPH) we accelerated to the speed limit. The vehicle began to shake violently with a strong pull to the left. I reduced the speed to between 55 and 60 MPH and the shake was less violent, but still a strong pull to the left. Reaching a point 20 mis south of Charlottesville, Va. on state rte 29, the left front tire blew. He managed to get the vehicle under control and pull to the shoulder. He then had to drive on the rim for approx. 100 yds. to a safe spot to put the spare on the vehicle. He drove on to Charlottesville and bought a replacement tire from Sam's Club (receipt attached). He noticed then that the force of the blow-out pushed the fender outward about one inch. (estimate for repair attached) After the tire replacement the vehicle handled normal again. He barely made our flight connections.

**TEAM COACH WORKS, INC.**  
1560 Scruggs Road  
Wirtz, VA 24184  
(540)721-4027 Fax: (540)721-1804

**PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE**

Written By: Peter Defilippis  
Adjuster:

Insured: [REDACTED]  
Owner: [REDACTED]  
Address: [REDACTED]  
Day: [REDACTED]  
HUDDLESTON, VA [REDACTED]

Claim #  
Policy #  
Deductible:  
Date of Loss:  
Type of Loss:  
Point of Impact: 10. Left Front BIL

Inspect  
Location:  
Insurance  
Company:

Days to Repair

2002 FORD RANGER 4X4 SUPER CAB 6-4.0L-FI 4D P/U Int:  
VIN: 1FTZR45E72T [REDACTED] Lic: [REDACTED] Prod Date: 08/2001 Odometer:  
Air Conditioning Intermittent Wipers Dual Mirrors  
Console/Storage Clear Coat Paint Power Steering  
Power Brakes AM Radio FM Radio  
Stereo Anti-Lock Brakes (4) Driver Air Bag  
Passenger Air Bag Cloth Seats Rear Step Bumper  
Automatic Transmission 4 Wheel Drive Overdrive  
Styled Steel Wheels

NO.	OP.	DESCRIPTION	QTY	EXT. PRICE	LABOR	PAINT
1		FENDER				
2*	Rpr	LT Fender w/wheel opening molding			0.5	0.0
3*	Algn	LT Fender w/wheel opening molding			0.5	
4	R&I	LT Fender liner			0.6	
5	R&I	Splash guard front & rear			0.2	
Subtotals ==>				0.00	1.8	0.0

Parts 0.00  
Body Labor 1.8 hrs @ \$ 45.00/hr 81.00  
Body Supplies 0.5 hrs @ \$ 1.00/hr 0.50  
-----  
SUBTOTAL \$ 81.50  
Sales Tax \$ 0.50 @ 5.0000% 0.03

**Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations, LLC**

535 Marriott Drive  
Nashville, TN 37214  
Email: DavisNorma@Bfusa.com

724464

[REDACTED]

724464

Huddleston, VA [REDACTED]

9 / 8 / 2009

Dear [REDACTED]

Our office has received your tire: DESTINATION LE P245/75R16 - Dot No:W270WL54208 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. That insufficient air pressure condition is evidenced by the tattered sidewalls and the melted innerliner, and was the cause of the subsequent damage. 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.

If you would like your tire returned, please mail the attached tire return letter to BATO 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 reserve the right to dispose of your tire.

Very truly yours,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Paralegal

Attachment

[REDACTED]  
Huddleston, VA [REDACTED]  
9/14/2009

Bridgestone Americans Tire Operation, LLC  
535 Marriott DR  
Nashville, TN 37214  
Norma Davis, Paralegal

Dear MS Davis:

I am in receipt of your letter dated 9/8/2009, informing me that you refuse to accept responsibility for your tire. You indicated that insufficient air pressure for an unknown period of time caused the tire failure and subsequent damage to the vehicle. Ms. Davis, I submit to you that your conclusion is absolute nonsense. You know full well from the receipts you received, that the blow-out occurred only 24 hours after the tires were purchased. I am certain that members of your organization examined the tread wear, the tire had less than 100 miles use. Moreover the vehicle shook violently and had an extreme pull to the left at highway speed well before the blow-out.

The \$200. Loss I will incur because of your tire is not worth going to court, however I will inform the Better Business Bureau of this incident, the Virginia Department of Transportation and anyone else on the subject of tires. I will guarantee you that I will never buy a Firestone tire again as long as I live. All because you will not stand behind your product.

[REDACTED]

10283878