

March 23, 2022

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Park Falls WI [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

TO:

10
NHTSA
1200 New Jersey Ave SE West Building
Washington DC 20590

Good Year Tire & Rubber Co.
200 Innovation Way
Akron, Ohio 44316-0001

FCA US LLC-JEEP
PO Box 21-8004
Auburn Hills MI 48321-8004

Subject: 2016 JEEP Wrangler Sport, VIN 1C4AJWAG0G [REDACTED]
Good year Wrangler ST tires-OEM equipment:

I purchased a 2016 JEEP WRANGLER SPORT February 18, 2018 from EWALD JEEP, Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The vehicle odometer read 24,303 miles, with the OEM GOOD YEAR WRANGLER ST TIRES: size 225-75-R75-16.

In the four years of my ownership the Wrangler it has been driven and additional 13,000 miles. The vehicle is always stored inside.

Beginning in 2020 we observed that the four OEM tires had developed cracks in the sidewalls. All four tires began to consistently lose air pressure. The tire pressure monitoring system repeatedly alerted that one or more tires were low on air pressure. With three air compressors in our shop we regularly reinflated the tires to the manufacturer's recommended pressure before driving the vehicle. The tires were rotated twice in my four years of ownership.

In 2021 all four of the installed OEM tires developed more severe cracks in the sidewall rubber. In January 2022 the left rear suffered a catastrophic blow out of the sidewall. Fortunately the vehicle was at 35-40 mph speed when the blow out occurred. My husband had difficulty changing the flat tire on a frozen, icy side road surface here in northern Wisconsin. After the Jeep twice slid off the Jeep supplied jack, he managed to remove the flat tire and install the Good Year ST spare, that had never been used before.

Examination/inspection of the failed tire revealed the side wall of the tire had severely deteriorated and ruptured.

My husband purchased a used tire at a Rhinelander WI auto salvage yard to serve as a replacement "spare" tire. That tire happened to also be a GOODYEAR WRANGLER ST. However the production date on the tire revealed it had been manufactured during at another time. That tire appeared to be sound, with good tread.

Two week later I drove the JEEP to visit my father in a Tomahawk WI nursing home, 60 miles away. After leaving there, traveling at approximately 50 mph, another of the GOOD YEAR tires blew out suddenly. I telephoned AAA Motor Service for help. The AAA service truck mechanic installed the newly acquired "spare" tire and I continued toward home, in very cold weather.

It was apparent the JEEP was no longer safe to drive, anywhere, any distance. Inspection of the remaining two of the four OEM tires revealed they also had severe side wall cracks. Air pressures in those tires had also lessened in spite of recent air pressure fills. We had never seen tires with such damaged, severely cracked side walls, ever! It was unsafe to even drive the JEEP to a tire shop for installation of new tires.

After removing all four wheel-tires from the JEEP, on March 18th my husband drove to Wausau, Wisconsin where he purchased four new MICHELIN tires for the JEEP. He installed those new tire/wheels on the JEEP here at home. The tire mount/installation cost more than standard, because we were unable to drive the JEEP to the tire dealer, and they refused to issue a Road Hazard Warranty for the new tires. The new MICHELIN LTX MS tires cost us over \$1,000.

It is significant that with the four tires that were installed on the JEEP as OEM tires, all suffered severe side wall deterioration, while the OEM spare tire, also a GOOD YEAR WRANGLER ST, with the same manufacture date, had no side wall cracks or deterioration at all. This is in spite of the fact that the spare tire is mounted on the rear of the JEEP without a cover, is exposed to more sunlight than the four tires on the wheel on the vehicle. Thus, sunlight damage cannot be blamed for the premature deterioration of the four tires on the JEEP. And with the climate in northern Wisconsin, severe heat certainly cannot be a cause of the tire deterioration.

At the Wausau Tire shop, the shop manager and their tire specialist were astonished at the poor condition of the four failed GOOD YEAR WRANGLER ST tires. They examined the ruptured sidewall of the latest flat tire; they had never seen such poor tires, only six years old, with 50% tread life remaining

NOTABLY, ALL FOUR OF THOSE DEFECTIVE TIRES STILL HAD MORE THAN 50% OF THE TIRE TREAD LEFT. All had at least 7/32 of tread left, well above the wear bars on each tire. The tire

treads were not worn out. Better quality tires with that tread left would have provided another 20 thousand miles of service, or more.

In comparison, the MICHELIN tires on three other of our 4WD trucks routinely provide 60,000 miles of useful service, and none of those tires suffered the side wall deterioration of these defective GOOD YEAR WRANGLER ST tires.

We are experienced conservative drivers; capable of routinely traveling icy, slippery winter roads for 5-6 months of each year. Yet good, safe driving skills cannot prevent catastrophic events due to a sudden tire blowout such as occurred with these GOOD YEAR tires. With the short wheel base of the JEEP WRANGLER, a sudden tire blowout, particularly on winter roads, could readily be far more dangerous than a tire failure on a longer wheel based vehicle. We were fortunate the tire blow outs occurred at less than modern highway speeds.

Tire data from the sidewalls:

-DOT MG71EYER 0716

-P225 75 R16

I have close up photos of the defective tires, and the seemingly undamaged Spare Tire of the same model and manufacture. I have photos of the JEEP up on Jacks when the wheels were removed last week to have new tires installed.

The GOOD YEAR tire warranty would of course have long expired. However this is not about normal tire wear or use. This is about defective tires that suffered catastrophic failures long before the tires were worn or aged.

I believe this information should be useful to NHTSA, JEEP/FCA, and GOOD YEAR. I expect to receive responses to this letter. And, I think some level of compensation is in order. Fortunately no catastrophic loss of vehicle control occurred. Please consider this, and the concern we have for other drivers who may have, or will be endangered by this model of tire on their vehicles.

Sincerely,



Park Falls, W

RETURN RECEIPT
REQUESTED

W41-306

CERTIFIED MAIL®



7020 3160 0001 7094 3843

NHTSA
1200 New Jersey
West Bldg
Washington DC

Department of Transportation

To: W41-306

Location Code: DOT

Cost Center: 4 West

Mail Point: NEC, NOA, NIA

External Carrier: PRIORITY

Sender:

Manufacturer:

Purchase Order:

DOT

3/31/2022 11:55:51 AM



70203160000170943843