

U.S. Department
of TransportationNational Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)

NATIONWIDE 1-888-DASH-2-DOT

1-888-327-4236

www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

137

Date Received

28-SEP-2000

Od_or

rt_dt

od_rt

up_ltr

Reference No.

871526

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? ☐ YES ☐ NO
 In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name and address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner _____ Date ____/____/____

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN) (located at front of vehicle or driver's side)	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Year	Current Odometer Reading
1FMDU34X7NUD59615	FIRESTONE	ATX	1900	

Purchase Date	Dealer's Name	Engine Size (CID/CCL)	☐ Turbo ☐ Diesel ☐ Gas ☐ Fuel Injection
☐ New ☒ Used	City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____	No. Cylinders	

Transmission Type ☐ Manual ☐ Automatic	Antilock Brakes ☐ Yes ☒ No	Restraint System ☐ 3-Point Belt ☐ Driverside Airbag ☐ Passengerside Airbag ☐ Motorbelt ☒ 2-Point Belt	Cruise Control ☐ Yes ☒ No	Drive Train ☐ Front ☐ Rear ☐ 4-Wheel	Vehicle Type ☐ Car ☐ Van ☐ Minivan ☐ Other	Body Style ☐ Sport Vlt ☐ Truck ☐ Motorcycle ☐ 2-Door ☐ 4-Door ☐ Stationwagon ☐ Pick Up Truck ☐ Other
--	---	--	--	--	--	--

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component 02740000	Part Name(s) TIRES: TREAD	Location ☐ Left ☐ Front ☐ Right ☐ Rear	Failed Part(s) ☐ Original ☐ Replacement
No. of Failures 0	Date(s) of Failure(s) 12-SEP-2000 Mileage at Failure(s) 70000 Vehicle Speed at Failure(s) 65	Failed Part(s) Available? Yes No	NHTSA Previously Contacted? Yes No

APPLICATION INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies) on the back of this form)

Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No	Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No	Number of Persons Injured 0	Number of Fatalities 0	Estimated Property Damage	Reported to Police ☐ Yes ☒ No
--	---	--------------------------------	---------------------------	---------------------------	---

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), INCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)

PE00-020; WHILE DRIVING ABOUT 65 MPH RIGHT REAR TIRE HAD TREAD SEPARATION. TIRE DID NOT LOSE AIR, AND CONSUMER COULD KEEP CONTROL OF VEHICLE. FORD, EXPLORER 1992 P235/75R15, DOT VNHL1M0192. *AK

CONTINUE ON BACK IF NEEDED

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.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

DOT Auto Safety Hotline

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire (VOQ)

NATIONWIDE 1-888-DASH-2-DOT
1-888-327-4236
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY '97

Date Received

26-SEP-2000

OFFICE

DEFECTS INVESTIGATION

Co_or
rt_dt
od_rt
up_tr

Reference No.

871526

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

642157

Work Number

Home Number

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? ☒ YES ☐ NO

In the absence of an authorization, NHTSA WILL NOT provide your name and address to the vehicle manufacturer.

Signature of Owner

Date 10/10/00

VEHICLE INFORMATION

Vehicle Ident. No. (VIN) (Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side)	Vehicle Make	Vehicle Model	Vehicle Year	Current Odometer Reading
1FMDU34X78UD59615	FIRESTONE	ATX	1992 1992	73175
Purchase Date 7-92	Dealer's Name SWANSON FORD		Engine Size (CID/CC/L) 4.0 L	☐ Turbo ☐ Diesel ☐ Gas ☒ Fuel Injection
☒ New ☐ Used	City LOS GATOS State CA Zip Code 95032		No Cylinders 6	
Transmission Type ☒ (Manual) ☐ Automatic	Antilock Brakes ☒ Yes ☐ No	Restraint System ☒ 3-Point Belt ☐ Motorbelt ☐ Driverside Airbag ☒ 2-Point Belt ☐ Passengerside Airbag	Cruise Control ☒ Yes ☐ No	Drive Train ☐ Front ☐ Rear ☒ 4-Wheel
Vehicle Type ☐ Car ☒ Sport Utl ☐ Van ☐ Truck ☐ Minivan ☐ Motorcycle ☐ Other		Body Style ☐ 2-Door ☒ 4-Door ☐ Stationwagon ☐ Pick Up Truck ☐ Other		

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Component 02740000	Part Name(s) TIRES: TREAD	Location ☐ Left ☒ Right ☐ Front ☒ Rear	Failed Part(s) ☐ Original ☒ Replacement
No. of Failures 1	Date(s) of Failure(s) 11-SEP-2000 Mileage at Failure(s) 78000 72604 Vehicle Speed at Failure(s) 65	Failed Part(s) Available? ☒ Yes ☐ No	NHTSA Previously Contacted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

APPLICATION INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es) and injury(ies) on the back of this form)

Crash ☐ Yes ☒ No	Fire ☐ Yes ☒ No	Number of Persons Injured 0	Number of Fatalities 0	Estimated Property Damage 100	Reported to Police ☐ Yes ☒ No
--	---	--------------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------------	---

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF FAILURE(S), INCIDENT(S), INJURY(IES)

PE00-020; WHILE DRIVING ABOUT 65 MPH RIGHT REAR TIRE HAD TREAD SEPARATION. TIRE DID NOT LOSE AIR, AND CONSUMER COULD KEEP CONTROL OF VEHICLE. FORD, EXPLORER 1992 P235/75R15, DOT VNHL1M0192. *AK

CONTINUE ON BACK IF NEEDED

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.

Fold to show Return Address (no stamp needed) Fasten with tape or staple and mail

INFORMATION ON TIRE FAILURE(S) (IF APPLICABLE)

TIRE IDENTIFICATION NO.*

D O T V N H L I M O I 9 2

MANUFACTURER/TIRE NAME

FIRESTONE RADIAL ATX

SIZE

P235 75 R15

* The identification number consists of 7 to 10 letters and numerals following the letters DOT. It is usually located near the rim flange on the side opposite the whitewall or on either side of a blackwall tire.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

See Attached

☆ U.S. G.P.O.: 1992 - 675-897 / 60096

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO. 73173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NAT'L HWY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Information Management Staff NSA-10.01
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

Congressman Tom Campbell
910 Campisi Way, Suite 1C
Campbell, CA 95008

Dear Congressman Campbell,

On September 11, 2000, my wife and I were returning to Santa Clara California after attending a wedding at Lake Tahoe when a Firestone Radial ATX tire on our 1992 Ford Explorer lost a large piece of tread and began to come apart. Thankfully, we did not crash like so many other Explorers in the news. However, we were not treated well by either Ford or Firestone when we tried to get replacement tires.

For background information, the Firestone Radial ATX tires came on our Explorer from the factory when we purchased the vehicle new in 1992. During the past years we have replaced tires when needed with the same Radial ATX's from Firestone. I have regularly checked the air pressure in our tires. I maintained them to the recommended pressure of 35psi that is molded into the sidewall of the tire. I was not aware of the Ford recommendation of 26psi that is listed on the doorframe of our Explorer until the recall story hit the news. When we saw the recall notices, we went to Swanson Ford in Los Gatos on either August 17th or 18th and were placed on the waiting list for replacement tires. We were told that it would be a 4 to 6 week wait for the replacements. I had called other Ford and Firestone shops and this was the same time frame given by all the shops. Around the end of August, I read that Costco was also replacing tires so I went to the Sunnyvale Costco and was also placed on their waiting list. My wife and I were concerned about having the recalled tires on our Explorer, however, we were on the recall lists and had been driving on these tires for over 8 years, so what's a few more weeks?

While driving 65 mph on Highway 80 on our way home, I noticed a vibration coming from the rear of our Explorer. I pulled off the Highway at Travis Blvd. in Fairfield California. Initially I didn't see any problem with the tires, however, I ran my hand over the tire and cut my fingers on the metal cords that were sticking out of the tread. When I bent over to look closer I found that an area of tread approximately 2 inches by 20 inches was missing from the inside edge of the tread on our right rear tire. When my wife saw the section of tread missing she started to cry and shake saying, "We should be dead like the others."

At this point the tire was still inflated and we were parked next to the Fairfield California Highway Patrol Office. We went to the California Highway Patrol Office for directions to either a Ford or Firestone dealer. The California Highway Patrol staff directed us a few blocks to the Fairfield Ford Dealership. The tire appeared to be holding pressure so I drove to the dealership. At the Service Department an Advisor came out and look at our tire. He said that he did not have any tires but we should check with Firestone, which was located about a mile away on the other side of the freeway.

My wife Sharon asked if he could at least call Firestone to see if they have any tires. He then agreed to call the Firestone shop. After a few minutes he returned and said that Mike at Firestone said that he would replace just the one tire that was bad and that we should drive over there. I again asked if they had any tires at Ford and was told that they had none. We then drove to the Firestone shop with the defective tire still on our Explorer.

While driving to the Firestone shop my wife (who was still shaking) and I were very concerned about only getting one replacement tire, due to our fear of the other tires also being defective. We agreed that we would insist on a complete set if they have them available since we were still some 70 plus miles from home.

When we arrived at the Firestone Tire & Service Center at 1340 Travis Blvd. Fairfield, CA 94533, Mike Ellis was busy with another customer so a female employee Jessica James helped us. When we told her we had a tire that was defective and coming apart she said that she would have to check it herself which she did. She was callused and did not appear to be concerned about the significance of our defective tire with tread missing. While walking back inside the store she stated that she could only replace the one defective tire and that we would have to be placed on a waiting list for the others. I said, "That's unacceptable since we have already been on a waiting list for almost a month and we almost died today on a waiting list." Her response was, "You will have to wait like everyone else. I've had people on the waiting list for a long time and I can't put you ahead of them." I said, "The others waiting might have bad tires, we have one tire coming apart and what's to say the others aren't going to fall apart when we get back on the Highway." She then said, "Mike told Ford when they called that we would replace ONE tire only, we have others but they are for our customers on our waiting list."

Both my wife and I were afraid to travel farther on the other tires after seeing the metal cords on the one tire. I then told Jessica James, "We're not leaving until we get a complete set of tires, one's coming apart what's to say the others aren't going to start falling apart." She then agreed to replace all our tires but said, "It's going to be a long time probably around 6pm before we could get to you". It was now about 1:30pm.

Jessica then filled out our service request and I asked if it was at all possible that we could get the tires sooner since we were trying to get home to get our children from our family who were babysitting. She again said, "You'll have to wait for us to take care of all our customers in front of you and that's going to be around 6pm." We then went outside to wait.

About 30 minutes later Mike came outside to eat his lunch. I asked him, "How many people are in front of us anyway." His response was, "I told Ford when they called that I would replace one tire. If you had let us do that we would have had you in and out of here. But since you insisted on a full set, you pissed her off so she's making you wait." My response was, "That's a fine way to run a business." He then made a comment about being on his lunch and walked to his truck and drove away.

My wife and I discussed Mike's comment that "Jessica was pissed off so she's making us wait". We then decided to confront Jessica with the comment that Mike made.

We went into the office and Sharon tried to calmly talk to Jessica saying, "I realize you are numb to the whole recall situation but we could have been killed today and made our two children orphans. I've worked in retail and this is no way to treat your customers. We're not asking for a tire alignment or shocks we have tires falling apart, is there anyway you can get to us before 6pm". Jessica's response was "your going to have to wait like everyone else".

I then told Jessica that "I just talked to Mike while he was eating his lunch outside and he had told me that you're pissed off about us insisting on a new set of tires so your making us wait until 6pm." Her response was, "No that's not the reason, he shouldn't have told you that I said that, I'll have to talk to him about that." She again said, "There are a lot of customers ahead of you and you're just going to have to wait your turn." I looked around the waiting area and there was one customer sitting waiting.

During this last conversation a male customer came into the store and was listening to our conversation with Jessica. He stated to us that he had just come from the Goodyear store down the street and they have tires that fit Explorers. He said he was just coming to this Firestone store to pick up a form to submit his receipt for the tires he just bought at Goodyear. With that information and the total lack of service from Jessica and knowing that she was going to make us wait as long as she could, we elected to drive to the Goodyear store.

We drove a few blocks to the Petillo's Tire & Auto Center at 307 Travis Blvd. Fairfield, CA 94533, which is a Goodyear business. I explained our situation to the General Manager Don Tronnes who was working the counter. He came out and checked our tires with another employee. One of their comments was "your lucky to be alive, do you know what could have happened". I replied that, "I've been a Firefighter and a Paramedic for 21 years, I've seen what could have happened".

Don said that he had three different styles of tires to choose from, all of which he had in stock. Two of the brands he would sell us for equal to the rebate amount offered by Firestone and the third we would have to pay an additional charge for. We elected to purchase five of the Pirelli Scorpion AS's which he sold us for a total price of \$495.75 so we would be under the \$100.00 per tire limit established by Firestone.

Don and his staff were wonderful. They worked quickly and within an hour we were on the road home on a safe set of tires. Don and his Goodyear staff showed us what true good customer service is all about. Unlike how we were treated by Ford and especially Jessica James and Mike Ellis from Firestone.

We then returned to Firestone to confirm the names of the individuals that we had been dealing with. Jessica James identified herself and she told me that Mike's last name was Ellis. I have no way to know if these are their true names.

We then drove home feeling lucky that we survived a Firestone Radial ATX tire failure that had reportedly killed so many other Explorer passengers.

Our final comments and lessons learned are:

When at home I closely inspected the tires in question. I found that I could place my fingers between the exposed steel belts and pull the steel through the otherwise solid tread of the tire. This was very unsettling to me knowing that I was able to pull the tire apart with my fingertips.

Ford and Firestone both have had public relations campaigns where CEOs are stating how their companies are committed to helping their customers any way possible. Their employees obviously do not share this commitment.

We almost died while on a waiting list from a Ford Dealership to deliver our replacement tires. Then when we went to another Ford Dealership with tread missing and steel belts showing, we were told to drive a mile down the road to check the Firestone store for replacement tires.

On 09/13/00, I called Swanson Ford to inquire about my standing on the list for replacement tires. The Service Advisor told me that they had only received fifty (50) tires for replacement since the recall was announced. The Advisor could not tell me how much longer I would have to wait for my replacements.

It is incomprehensible that Firestone employees would insist that a customer continue to drive on a set of recalled tires in which one of the tires had just failed while driving at highway speeds.

If tires are in such short supply, why did the Goodyear dealer have three choices for my selection? We have learned our lesson and are thankfully alive to tell it. In hindsight we should have not waited for Ford to replace our tires. We should have tried to locate tires from another tire supplier (Goodyear) and just wait for our refund from Firestone.

I heard from Firestone employees that the refund could take up to 4 to 6 weeks. This now forces my wife and I and all other customers who elected to purchase safe replacement tires to assume the financial burden for these tires until Firestone gets around to paying us. We have not started this phase of the recall yet, however, we have already been forced to transport our defective set of tires home inside our Explorer. Who knows what hoops Firestone will make us jump through next to get our reimbursement?

Our suggestion to Ford and Firestone if they truly want to do everything possible for the consumers with defective tires is; allow those with recalled tires to go to any retail outlet (Goodyear) and get their tires replaced. Then have the tire retailers (Goodyear) submit the claims to Firestone and free the consumers from this financial burden.

The lesson for anyone waiting on a list: DON'T WAIT call and find replacement tires today. Your life and the lives of your family members and other passengers might depend on it.

Congressman Campbell could you please forward our story to the appropriate organizations. Thank you for your assistance.

For additional information please contact