



Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations
200 4th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37201

February 4, 2021

Dear Customers,

Bridgestone is providing this supplemental communication in response to customer inquiries about Daimler Trucks North America's (DTNA) recently announced vehicle safety recall for model year 2020, 2021 and 2022 Freightliner Cascadia sleeper cab vehicles with specific air dam technology and featuring Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia steer tires.

This is a DTNA vehicle recall – not a Bridgestone tire recall. Bridgestone has not identified any manufacturing or design defect with the tires we supplied to DTNA. All tires supplied to DTNA have passed Bridgestone's internal quality tests and federal regulatory and compliance testing.

The tires identified in this recall are performing as expected on all other vehicle applications.

As stated in the recall report filed by DTNA with NHTSA and Transport Canada, DTNA has not determined the root cause of the reported tire failures on its vehicles. However, DTNA's report indicates that "the defect mechanism may be potentially caused by elevated tire temperatures during vehicle operation, leading to tire failure." The report lists factors that might contribute to tire failures. Many of the listed factors, such as under-inflation, speed, overloading, and application usage, are well-known in the trucking industry. Unique to DTNA's list are "high ambient temperatures and aerodynamic features."

High temperatures adversely affect all pneumatic tires. Heat around steer tires may be generated from several sources, including normal tire operation and engine/exhaust sources. Historically, this heat has been dissipated by air-flow over the tires. However, in one air dam-equipped Freightliner model, Bridgestone observed front fender well air temperatures which were significantly higher than ambient temperatures. Bridgestone believes that heat is building in the fender wells due to the lack of cooling air-flow over the tires. This decreased air-flow may be caused by low-ground clearance air dams found on DTNA's recalled vehicles. When air temperatures are high (as are typically encountered during summer months), the heat in the fender wells may reach levels not previously observed in commercial vehicle applications. Bridgestone believes this unprecedented high heat is responsible for the tire failures noted by DTNA in its recall.

Heat damage to tires is cumulative. Because Bridgestone steer tires on recalled vehicles may have been damaged by elevated temperatures, customers should replace their steer tires as directed by DTNA. DTNA will notify affected vehicle owners by mail.

Bridgestone recommends that fleet customers promptly work with DTNA to explore options to reduce elevated temperatures in the front fender wells during vehicle operation.

Please refer to the Q&A below to help address any questions you may have about Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S steer tire performance.

Best regards,

Chris Ripani
President, TBR&R, U.S. and Canada
Bridgestone Americas

Q&A

1. Is there any design issue with Bridgestone tires supplied to DTNA for use on recalled Freightliner Cascadia vehicles with sleeper cabs and air dams?

No. Bridgestone has not identified a defect in tire manufacture or design. All tires supplied by Bridgestone to DTNA have passed Bridgestone's internal quality tests and rigorous federal regulatory and compliance testing.

Bridgestone's data and testing are consistent with DTNA's suggestion in its report that elevated tire temperatures are occurring during vehicle operation, leading to tire failure. Specifically, Bridgestone believes that heat is building in the front fender wells of the recalled vehicles to temperatures well-above ambient. This heat build-up may be due to the lack of cooling air-flow over the tires because of the recalled vehicles' aerodynamic features.

Bridgestone recommends that fleet customers promptly work with DTNA to explore options to reduce elevated temperatures in the front fender wells during vehicle operation.

2. Why is this recall being issued by DTNA and not Bridgestone?

This is a DTNA vehicle safety recall – not a Bridgestone tire recall. Bridgestone has not identified a defect in tire manufacture or design. The Bridgestone tires covered under DTNA's recall have passed Bridgestone's internal quality tests and rigorous federal regulatory and compliance testing.

3. Have there been any injuries/deaths related to DTNA recalled vehicles and Bridgestone tires included in this recall?

Bridgestone is not aware of cases or claims involving the subject tires installed on the recalled vehicles that resulted in injuries or deaths.

4. Are Bridgestone and Firestone replacement tires currently installed on vehicles included in DTNA's vehicle safety recall eligible for replacement by DTNA?

Please consult DTNA regarding how to handle Bridgestone and Firestone replacement tires installed on vehicles included in this recall.

5. Can fleets continue to install Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires on DTNA's recalled vehicles?

Until a root cause is determined by DTNA, Bridgestone recommends fleets stop installation of all Bridgestone and Firestone replacement tires in the steer position on DTNA vehicles included in this vehicle safety recall. Bridgestone's data and testing are consistent with DTNA's suggestion in its report that elevated tire temperatures are occurring during vehicle operation, leading to tire failure. Specifically, Bridgestone believes that heat is building in the front fender wells of the recalled vehicles to temperatures well-above ambient. This heat build-up may be due to the lack of cooling air-flow over the tires because of the recalled vehicles' aerodynamic features.

Bridgestone recommends that fleet customers promptly work with DTNA to explore options to reduce elevated temperatures in the front fender wells during vehicle operation.

6. Can fleets continue to install Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires on DTNA vehicles without air dam configurations?

Yes. Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires can continue to be utilized on vehicles manufactured by DTNA without the sleeper cab and air dam configurations. Bridgestone's data indicates this is a vehicle application issue related to the aerodynamic features of the vehicles included in this recall and made during specific model years. Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires have passed Bridgestone's internal quality testing and rigorous federal regulatory and compliance testing. Bridgestone has not identified a defect in tire manufacture or design.

7. Can other Bridgestone or Firestone replacement tires be installed in steer positions on DTNA vehicles included in this vehicle safety recall?

Until a root cause is determined by DTNA, Bridgestone recommends fleets stop installation of all Bridgestone and Firestone replacement tires in the steer position on DTNA vehicles included in this vehicle safety recall. Bridgestone's data and testing are consistent with DTNA's suggestion in its report that elevated tire temperatures are occurring during vehicle operation, leading to tire failure. Specifically, Bridgestone believes that heat is building in the front fender wells of the recalled vehicles to temperatures well-above ambient. This heat build-up may be due to the lack of cooling air-flow over the tires because of the recalled vehicles' aerodynamic features.

Bridgestone recommends that fleet customers promptly work with DTNA to explore options to reduce elevated temperatures in the front fender wells during vehicle operation.

8. Can fleets continue to install Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires on vehicles not manufactured by DTNA?

Yes. Bridgestone's data indicates this is an application issue related to the aerodynamic features of the vehicles included in this recall. Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires have passed rigorous federal regulatory and compliance testing and we have not identified a defect in tire manufacture or design. Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires can continue to be utilized on vehicles not included in this recall.

9. Are there heat limitations / temperature guidelines for Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires?

As with any tire regardless of manufacturer, it is critical to avoid tire underinflation, overloading and operation at excessive speeds as these factors may contribute to increased tire temperatures. Refer to the ['Care and Service of Commercial Truck Tires'](#) guidelines outlined by the U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA) for more details.

10. How long will DTNA replace tires covered under this vehicle safety recall?

Please direct any further questions on this topic to DTNA as they are the company issuing this vehicle safety recall.

11. What replacement tires will DTNA use on vehicles affected by this recall?

Please direct any further questions on this topic to DTNA as they are the company issuing this vehicle safety recall.

12. Can Bridgestone dealers continue to sell Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires?

Yes. Bridgestone's data indicates this is an application issue related to the aerodynamic features of the vehicles included in this recall. As such, dealers may continue to sell Bridgestone R284, R268 and R283S Ecopia tires. We have not identified a manufacturing or design defect related to these tires and/or the tires supplied to DTNA as original equipment. This is a DTNA vehicle recall – not a Bridgestone tire recall. However, until a root cause is determined by DTNA, Bridgestone recommends fleets stop installation of all Bridgestone and Firestone replacement tires in the steer position on DTNA vehicles included in this vehicle safety recall.

###