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VEHICLES

Are your HGV tyres too old?

Enforcement. As part of its routine heavy vehicle checks, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) says it will carry out follow-up investigations if it finds a vehicle operator is using tyres which are over ten years old. Where no sufficient explanation can be given for using the tyres, or if the operator's tyre management systems are not adequate, they may be referred to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner for potential enforcement action.

Stay safe. Using old tyres can be very dangerous, especially during the winter months. They need to be in good condition to cope with wet and icy roads. According to the guidelines, tyres which are more than ten years old should not be used except on a rear axle as part of a twin wheel arrangement, and even then a specific risk assessment must be undertaken to justify their use.

Tip 1. Ensure your drivers carry out walkaround vehicle checks and that they include tread depth and general tyre condition. HGV drivers should undertake these daily. Keep any defect reports for at least 15 months.

Tip 2. The company operating the vehicle must have a programme of safety inspection. The frequency depends on the usage, for example the guidance recommends every five to ten weeks for average use (see **The next step**).

The next step

For a guide to maintaining roadworthiness, visit <http://tipsandadvice-healthandsafety.co.uk/download> (HS 17.12.08).

If you are operating HGVs with tyres over ten years old, get them changed. Operators found to be using older tyres may now be referred to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner for potential enforcement action.

WORK EQUIPMENT

Safety alert - vehicle lifts

Faulty equipment. The HSE has warned of a problem with a commonly used type of car ramp which caused a fatal accident. The BendPak two-post vehicle lift suffered a gear failure causing a car to fall onto the mechanic.

Tip. If you have one of these lifts, have it examined by a competent engineer to ensure that its arm restraint gear is in good order.

If you have a BendPak two-post vehicle lift, check its arm restraint gear for faults as highlighted in the HSE's safety alert. Where equipment is faulty, contact the supplier or manufacturer for a replacement part.