

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****National Highway Traffic Safety Administration****49 CFR Part 571****[Docket No. NHTSA-03-15400]****RIN 2127-AI54****Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Tires**

**AGENCY:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Department of Transportation.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation Act of 2000 mandates that we conduct a rulemaking proceeding to revise and update our safety performance requirements for tires. In response, we are establishing new and more stringent tire performance requirements that will apply to all new tires for use on light vehicles, *i.e.*, those vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, except motorcycles and low speed vehicles. The final rule increases the stringency of the existing high speed and endurance tests, defers action on proposals to replace the existing strength test and the bead unseating resistance test with a road hazard impact test and a different bead unseating test, respectively, adds a low pressure performance test, and defers action on a proposal to add an aging test. Together with new safety information requirements that we recently established for those tires, the new performance requirements will improve tire safety.

**DATES:** This final rule is effective June 1, 2007. Voluntary compliance is permitted before that date. If you wish to submit a petition for reconsideration of this rule, your petition must be received by August 11, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Petitions for reconsideration should refer to the docket number and be submitted to: Administrator, Room 5220, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For technical and policy issues: Mr. George Soodoo or Mr. Joseph Scott, Office of Crash Avoidance Standards, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-2720. Fax: (202) 366-4329.

For legal issues: Nancy Bell, Attorney Advisor, Office of the Chief Counsel, NCC-20, National Highway Traffic

Safety Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Telephone: (202) 366-2992. Fax: (202) 366-3820.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Table of Contents**

- I. Executive Summary
  - A. Highlights of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
  - B. Highlights of the Final Rule
  - C. Adopted aspects of the NPRM
  - D. Deferred aspects of the NPRM
- II. Background
  - A. The Transportation Recall Enhancement Accountability and Documentation Act
  - B. Safety Problem
    - 1. Outdated Performance Requirements
    - 2. Safety Problems Associated with Tires
    - 3. Existing NHTSA Performance Requirements for Tires
- III. Pre-TREAD Enactment Agency Response to Safety Problem
- IV. Post-TREAD Enactment Agency Response to Safety Problem
  - A. Tire Testing and Opening of Docket No. NHTSA-2000-8011
  - B. March 5, 2002 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM)
  - C. Post-NPRM Technical Submissions to NHTSA Tire Upgrade Docket
    - 1. NHTSA Tire Testing at Standards Testing Labs (STL)
    - 2. Rubber Manufacturer's Association (RMA) Design of Experiment (DOE) and Confirmation Testing
    - 3. Ford Motor Company (Ford) Tire Aging Analysis
    - 4. Goodyear Endurance Testing
- V. Summary of Public Comments on NPRM
  - A. NHTSA's Proposed Test Procedures
    - 1. High Speed Test
    - 2. Endurance Test
    - 3. Low Inflation Pressure Performance
      - a. Generally
      - b. Low Inflation Endurance
      - c. Low Inflation High Speed
    - 4. Road Hazard Impact
    - 5. Bead Unseating
    - 6. Aging Effects
      - a. Generally
      - b. Adhesion (Peel) Test
      - c. Michelin's Long Term Durability
      - d. Oven Aging
  - B. Application of New Standard/Deletion of FMVSS No. 109
  - C. Modification to FMVSS Nos. 110 and 120
  - D. Modification to FMVSS Nos. 117 and 129
  - E. De-rating of P-metric Tires/Tire Selection/Load Reserve
  - F. Lead Time
  - G. Shearography Analysis
  - H. Revise UTQG
  - I. Additional Questions
    - 1. Opportunity to Harmonize
    - 2. "Real-world" Testing Procedures
    - 3. Vehicle Model Year 1975
    - 4. Required Inflation Pressures
  - J. Other
    - 1. Test Condition Tolerances
    - 2. Tire Pressure Load Reserve Limit
  - K. Costs
  - L. Benefits
- VI. Agency Decision regarding Final Rule
  - A. Summary of Final Rule and Rationale
  - B. Summary of Key Differences between NPRM and Final Rule
  - C. Performance Requirements
    - 1. High Speed Test
      - a. Ambient Temperature
      - b. Load
      - c. Inflation Pressure
      - d. Speed
      - e. Duration
    - 2. Endurance Test
      - a. Ambient Temperature
      - b. Load
      - c. Inflation Pressure
      - d. Speed
      - e. Duration
    - 3. Low Inflation Pressure Performance Test
    - 4. Road Hazard Impact
    - 5. Bead Unseating
    - 6. Aging
    - 7. Post-test Pressure Measurement
  - D. Tire Selection Criteria/De-rating of P-metric Tires
  - E. Applicability and Effective Dates
  - F. Other Issues
    - 1. Modification to FMVSS Nos. 110 and 120
    - 2. Modification to FMVSS Nos. 117 and 129
    - 3. Shearography Analysis
    - 4. Revision of UTQG
    - 5. Analysis of Responses to Agency Questions in NPRM
    - 6. Other
  - VII. Benefits
  - VIII. Costs
    - A. Original Equipment Tire and Vehicle Costs
    - B. Total Annual Costs
    - C. Testing Costs
  - IX. Effective Date
  - X. Rulemaking Analyses and Notices
    - A. Executive Order 12866 and DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures
    - B. Regulatory Flexibility Act
    - C. National Environmental Policy Act
    - D. Executive Order 13132 (Federalism)
    - E. Unfunded Mandates Act
    - F. Civil Justice Reform
    - G. National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act
    - H. Paperwork Reduction Act
      - 1. Plain Language
  - XI. Regulatory Text

**I. Executive Summary****A. Highlights of the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**

Section 10 of the Transportation Recall Enhancement, Accountability, and Documentation (TREAD) Act mandates that the agency issue a final rule revising and updating its tire performance standards. In response, the agency examined the value of modifying each of the existing tests in its tire standards applicable to tires for light vehicles, *i.e.*, those vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,000 pounds or less, except motorcycles and low speed vehicles. In addition, NHTSA examined the value of adopting several new tests. In doing so, it placed particular emphasis on improving the