

motor vehicles (other than motorcycles) that have a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 10,000 pounds or less and that were manufactured after 1975 and that tires designed for severe snow conditions, speed restricted tires, various trailer tires for special use, temporary service spare tires, and all bias tires should be excluded from FMVSS No. 139 and continue to be certified under existing FMVSS Nos. 109 and 119. RMA suggests that, under FMVSS No. 139, a passenger tire should be defined as one intended for normal highway service and its size designation typically shown as "P" metric or "Hard" metric and a light truck tire should be defined as one intended for normal highway service and its size designation includes "LT" and is load range "C", "D", or "E". JATMA requests that performance requirements for deep tread depth snow tires be stipulated apart from FMVSS No. 139 because of their special usage and design characteristics, e.g., deep grooved tread.

JATMA and GRRF stated that the tire size designation, in addition to the load range, should be clearly stipulated for LT tires. GRRF stated that depending on tire size, some high load capacity LT tires correspond to a gross vehicle mass greater than 10,000 lbs.

SEMA, ITRA/TANA, Denman and Specialty Tires requested that limited-production specialty radial and bias-ply tires remain subject to the current testing procedures of FMVSS Nos. 109 and 119 because (1) tires manufactured in limited production do not present a general safety issue; (2) limited production specialty bias-ply tires cannot meet the standard of proposed FMVSS No. 139 and will be unfairly outlawed; (3) the potential cost for small businesses to otherwise comply with these rules would not be justified; and (4) NHTSA testing procedures and requirements result from the testing and analysis of solely radial tires.

#### *C. Modification of Application of FMVSS Nos. 110 and 120*

AIAM believed that NHTSA inadvertently proposed a prohibition on the use of Load Range E tires on vehicles exceeding 10,000 lbs. GVWR by, in S5.1.1 of FMVSS 120, requiring each vehicle to be equipped with tires complying with FMVSS No. 119. AIAM recommends that NHTSA revise S5.1.1 of FMVSS 120 to permit the installation of tires meeting the requirements set forth in FMVSS No. 139 and the rims listed in accordance with FMVSS No. 139 on vehicles exceeding 10,000 lbs. GVWR, as long as the tire load rating is not exceeded.

#### *D. Modification to FMVSS Nos. 117 and 129*

ITRA/TANA recommended that retreaded tires not be subjected to the proposed road hazard and bead unseating tests because the retread process does not affect the structure of an original casing and it is redundant to test a casing twice.

GRRF stated that principle of requiring retread tires to meet the same performance requirements as new tires is followed in the United Nations ECE Regulations 108 and 109 for car and truck retread tires, respectively.

#### *E. De-Rating of P-metric Tires/Tire Selection/Load Reserve*

RMA and GRRF supported NHTSA's retention of the 1.10 load service factor used to reduce the load rating of passenger car tires when installed on an MPV, truck, bus, or trailer, as specified in Part 571.110 Paragraph S4.2.2.2 of the proposed rule. RMA believed that this reduction in load rating is necessary for the reasons stated by NHTSA and is also appropriate to reduce the load rating for passenger car tires used on light trucks, vans, SUVs, and trailers for the following reasons: (1) higher stress on the tire due to the higher center of gravity of these vehicles; (2) more severe service conditions as compared to passenger cars; (3) greater potential for overload due to open cargo areas and increased likelihood for towing; and (4) more tire related problems on light trucks, SUVs, and vans.

RMA and GRRF stated that selection based on vehicle normal load not exceeding 88% of the tire maximum load would reduce the potential for overloading of tires.

GM recommended that the tire selection criteria not be linked to the load used in the high-speed test.<sup>21</sup>

The Alliance, AIAM, Subaru, Honda, and GM strongly recommended that the tire selection criteria in the proposed standard be modified as follows: (1) De-rating of the tire load capacity by dividing by 1.10 be applied only when comparing the GAWR with the vehicle maximum load and not on the vehicle normal load on tire for passenger car tires used on MPVs and light trucks; and (2) for vehicle normal load on a tire, even when passenger car tires are used on MPVs and light trucks, use 88% of the maximum load rating of the tire as marked on the sidewall. These vehicle

manufacturers asserted that a lack of attention to the influence on vehicle design could lead to potentially serious unintended consequences (e.g., increasing tire size beyond the need to provide adequate load capacity could raise the center of gravity of the vehicle, which may adversely affect its handling and stability and increase the likelihood of rollovers in some situations).

Ford agreed with the agency that tire robustness could be increased through additional load margin in the application or rating of tires. Ford recommended that the agency require tires to be tested at 105% of their rated load for all vehicle applications 10,000 lbs. GVWR and below. They believed that this additional 5% reserve capability at the maximum rated load condition would provide increased robustness for tire application on all vehicles, not only in OE applications.

PC and Advocates commended the agency for requiring LT tires to provide for a reserve load. However, they believe that a 15 percent load specification does not adequately account for the typical loading conditions for the range of these vehicles. PC recommends that the agency require between an 18 and 20 percent reserve load for vehicles that exceed the 6000 lbs. GVWR. Advocates urged the agency to consider a reserve figure of 18 percent for all light trucks or, in the alternative, a reserve figure of 18 percent for those from 6,001 to 10,000 pounds GVWR.

#### *F. Lead Time*

RMA, ETRTO, JATMA, and GRRF stated that it would not be possible to comply with effective dates of September 1, 2003, for passenger car tires, and September 1, 2004, for light truck tires. RMA added that if their recommended changes are accepted, the number of modifications will not be as great and compliance could be accomplished on a more expedited basis, possibly within five (5) years from the date of the final rule.

JATMA stated that a 5-year lead time is required in case of tires supplied to original equipment manufacturers to evaluate and achieve the target performance for driving stability, riding comfort, and noise etc. Also, they stated that facilities need to be increased, test procedure needs to be formed, and employees need to be trained.

The Alliance, GM, Ford, DC, and Mitsubishi recommended that the new tire performance requirements and the amended vehicle requirements of FMVSS NO. 110 become optional as soon as the final rule is published, and become mandatory on September 1, 2007. They requested the longer lead

<sup>21</sup> The 88% used for the load in the high speed test is currently linked to the reserve load determination in FMVSS No. 110. In 1982, the agency stated in a rulemaking (47 FR 36180) that the 88% load on the test road wheel is equivalent to 100% load on a flat surface.