

# KENTUCKY HAZ ALERT

## To Prevent Tire Failures,

### Employers should:

- Ensure that routine maintenance is performed on work vehicles
- Implement and enforce an employer seat belt safety program

### Employees should:

- Be properly trained in safe work vehicle operation
- Perform routine pre-trip and post-trip inspections, including inspection of the tires
- Ensure that tires do not run below 80% of the recommended pressure

## DRIVERS KILLED DUE TO TIRE FAILURES

From June through December 2012, four truck drivers were killed as a direct result of tire blowouts. Following are the case descriptions for the four driver deaths:

**Case 1:** A 46-year-old male flatbed truck driver who owned his own construction company was fatally injured when the front passenger tire failed and his truck ran off the road. The truck overturned and struck two trees. The driver was transported by air to the nearest trauma hospital where he died.

**Case 2:** A 59-year-old male semi truck driver died after his vehicle struck another semi truck that was traveling at low speed due to a tire failure. The driver was transported to the nearest hospital where he died of his injuries.



**Case 3:** A 46-year-old male driving a sealing and striping truck for an asphalt company died after the rear passenger tire failed. The truck overturned three to four times and the driver, who was not wearing a safety belt, was thrown from the vehicle and died at the scene.

**Case 4:** A daycare facility van monitor died after the van approached a side street in a 45 mph zone, and the rear passenger tire failed. The van veered to the left and struck a tree head-on. The monitor was transported to a local hospital and died.

**ALWAYS PERFORM A PRE-TRIP AND  
POST-TRIP VEHICLE INSPECTION!**

## **EMPLOYERS SHOULD ENSURE THAT ROUTINE MAINTENANCE IS PERFORMED ON WORK VEHICLES**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that tires should be checked before every trip for accurate tire pressure, and wear. Tires should be replaced when tread is less 2/16” (SaferCar.gov).

## **EMPLOYERS SHOULD IMPLEMENT AND ENFORCE AN EMPLOYER SEAT BELT SAFETY PROGRAM**

Kentucky and Federal laws both require drivers to wear seat belts when operating a vehicle. Kentucky Revised Statute 189.125(6) requires drivers and all passengers to be restrained by properly adjusted and fastened seatbelts. 49 Code of Federal Regulations §392.16-Use of seat belts, states that a commercial vehicle is equipped with a seatbelt, and the driver must properly restrain himself/herself with the seatbelt. Companies should utilize the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s program, “Commercial Vehicle Safety Belt Program”. A manual, “Increasing Safety Belt Use in Your Company” can help drivers understand the importance of wearing seatbelts. The manual can be found at:

<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/safety-security/safety-belt/increasing-safetybelt-usage-manual.htm>.

## **EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE TRAINED IN SAFE WORK VEHICLE OPERATION**

## **EMPLOYEES SHOULD PERFORM ROUTINE PRE-TRIP AND POST-TRIP INSPECTIONS, INCLUDING INSPECTION OF THE TIRES**

Employees should perform pre- and post-trip inspections of semi trucks and/or vans prior to each use. Inspections should document tire pressure, tire wear, window conditions, needed repairs, etc. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s Driver’s Vehicle Inspection form for commercial drivers should be adapted for 15-passenger vans.

## **EMPLOYEES SHOULD ENSURE THAT VEHICLE TIRES DO NOT RUN BELOW 80% OF THE RECOMMENDED PRESSURE**

It is important that tires are run at their maximum recommended pressure. Always check the tire for signs of wear and fatigue. Tire fatigue may be evidenced by:

1. Presence of marbling
2. Separation signs and tire liner deformation
3. Carbon dust as a result of tire liner degradation
4. Distortion, cracks, breaks, exposed cords, discoloration, irregular bulging or warping of the sidewalls of the tire
5. If signs of wear, dispose of the tire.
6. Know what certain wear patterns mean.

### **For more information, contact:**

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1-800-204-3223 (toll-free)

<http://www.kiprc.uky.edu/face.html>

### **References**

1. Heavy Vehicles Tire Blowout and Explosion. March 2009. URL: <http://www.irsst.qc.ca/media/documents/PubIRSSST/R-590.pdf>
2. <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/motorvehiclesafety/index.html>
3. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/motorvehicle/>
4. <http://www.chp.ca.gov/publications/pdf/chp108.pdf>

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