

Aged Tires:

A Hidden

Danger on the

Road?

**Contrary to popular belief, you
can't judge a tire by its cover**

**Researchers & experts agree
that along with tread depth &
proper maintenance, tire age is
also crucial to safety**



This tire was bought as new -- it has never been on the road -- but was nearly 14 years old when purchased



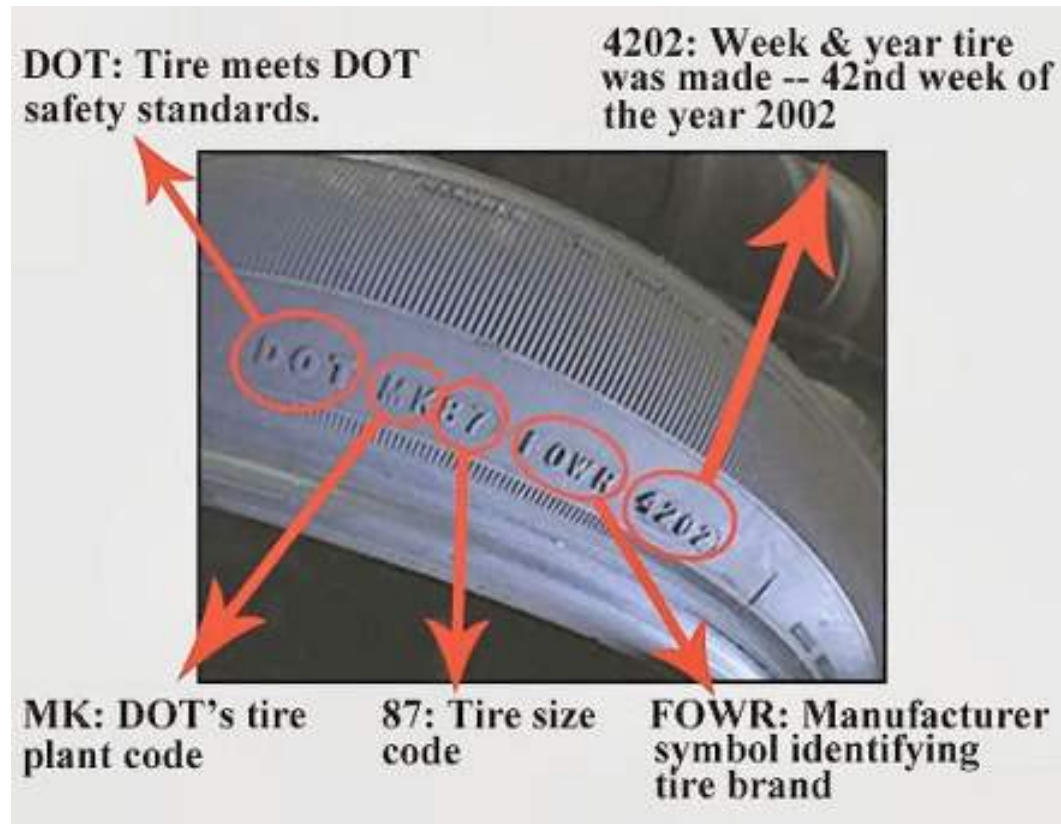
Despite its deep treads, this tire's inside layers have been slowly decomposing and drying out, what experts say make it like 'a ticking time bomb'



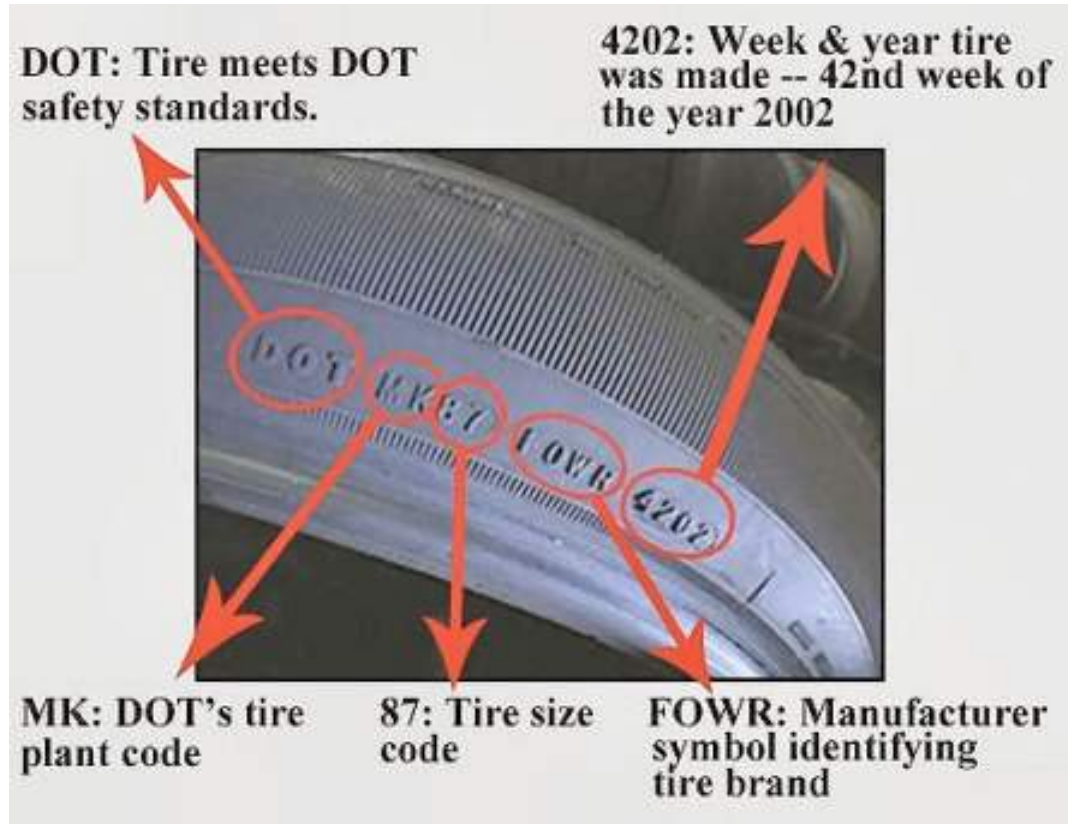
Attorney Roger Braugh shows Brian Ross that aged tires have a higher potential for dramatic tread separation, which in many cases has led to tragic endings for unsuspecting motorists



Braugh says his lawsuits on behalf of dozens of victims have uncovered a pattern of corporate neglect & government inaction on the issue of aging tires



A cryptic code of four numbers at the end of the 12-digit DOT serial number can tell the consumer which week & year a tire was manufactured



Can you tell when your tires were made?



This tire's DOT code indicates that it was made in the 41st week of 1994



Tires made in the 1990s have three numbers at the end of the DOT code, while tires made after 2000 have four numbers



**This tire is more than seven years old,
made in the 13th week of 2001**



Sean Kane, who runs a private auto safety research firm, says tires older than 6 years get increasingly more dangerous regardless of how long they've actually been on the road



ABC News' '20/20' sent producers undercover, rigged with hidden cameras, to tire retailers all over the country to see if any old tires are being sold as new



The undercover producers found half a dozen tires older than six years at this Sears in Jersey City - some were even older than a decade



**ABC News affiliates all over the country
did their own investigations
collaborating with '20/20' & the Brian
Ross Investigative Unit for this report**



In Indianapolis, WRTV-TV found old tires at three tire distributors, including this tire that was made in the 31st week of 2001



In San Francisco, KGO's reporters found a nine-year-old tire, made in the 45th week of 1999, sold as new at a tire dealer



In the New York area, undercover '20/20' shoppers found several Sears stores selling tires older than six years



At another Sears store, '20/20' was told that a tire made 12 years ago, in the 46th week of 1996, was perfectly safe