

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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121st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2003

Legislative Document

No. 737

H.P. 543

House of Representatives, February 14, 2003

An Act To Clarify Inspection Standards Related to Vehicle Wheel Size

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative SMITH of Monmouth.
Cosponsored by Representatives: COLLINS of Wells, MARLEY of Portland, McKEE of
Wayne, McKENNEY of Cumberland, O'BRIEN of Lewiston, SUSLOVIC of Portland,
Senator: SAWYER of Penobscot.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §1917, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

§1917. Tires and wheels

1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Tread depth" means the amount of tread design on the tire. "Tread depth" includes original, retread and recap tread design and, in respect to a special mileage commercial tire, recut, regrooved and siped tread design.

B. "Special mileage commercial tire" means a tire manufactured with an extra layer of rubber between the cord body and original tread design, which extra layer is designed for the purpose of recutting or regrooving, and which tire is specifically labelled as a "special mileage commercial tire."

2. Safe tires required. A motor vehicle may not be operated on a public way unless it is equipped with tires in safe operating condition. A tire mounted on a motor vehicle is not considered to be in safe operating condition unless it meets the visual and tread depth requirements set forth in subsections 3 and 4 and the wheel size requirements in subsection 6. A vehicle may be equipped only with tires that meet or exceed the load and speed rating of the original equipment tires.

3. Visual requirements. A tire is not in safe operating condition if that tire has:

A. A fabric break or a cut in excess of one inch in any direction as measured on the outside of the tire and deep enough to reach the body cords;

B. A temporary repair by the use of blowout patches or boots;

C. A bump, bulge or knot related to separation or partial failure of the tire structure;

D. A portion of the ply or cord structure exposed; or

E. Sidewalls damaged to the extent that the body cords are damaged.

2 **4. Tread depth.** A tire is not in safe operating condition
if it is worn to the point where less than 2/32 inch of tread
4 design remains at all points at which gauge readings are
required. Tread depth must be measured as follows.

6 A. Tire tread depth must be measured by a tread depth gauge
8 that is calibrated in 1/32 inch.

10 B. Readings must be taken in 2 adjacent major tread grooves
at 2 points in each of the grooves not closer than 15 inches.

12 C. Readings for a tire that has the tread design running
14 across the tire or for a siped tire must be taken at or near
the center of the tire at 2 points of the circumference not
16 closer than 15 inches.

18 **5. Exemptions.** A farm vehicle used exclusively for
agricultural purposes, including, but not limited to, a
20 self-propelled combine, self-propelled corn and hay harvesting
machine or tractor used exclusively for agricultural purposes, is
22 exempt from this section.

24 **6. Wheels.** If the rim size has been altered, the overall
26 diameter of the wheel with the tire must be within the vehicle
manufacturer's specifications.

28
30 **SUMMARY**

32 This bill codifies 2 rules that are currently found in the
Department of Public Safety, Bureau of State Police's "Maine
34 Motor Vehicle Inspection Manual." This bill requires vehicles to
have tires that meet or exceed the load and speed rating of the
original equipment tires. This bill also requires the overall
36 diameter of a wheel, with the tire, that has an altered rim to be
within the vehicle manufacturer's specifications.