TOOLBOX TALK

Illegal Tyre Tread on Company Vehicles

Why is this important?

Company vehicles are often used every day and can cover significant mileage while carrying tools, equipment and materials. Tyres can therefore deteriorate quickly.

Driving with insufficient tyre tread isn't simply a maintenance issue. It can affect the vehicle's grip, steering and braking performance, particularly in wet conditions, and increases the risk of losing control.

Having a current MOT does not remove the driver's responsibility to ensure the vehicle is roadworthy when it is being driven.

What is the legal tyre tread depth?

For cars and light vans, the legal minimum is:

1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the tyre's tread, around the entire circumference.

For larger vehicles, different requirements can apply. For example, vehicles over 3,500kg GVW generally require at least 1mm over the specified tread area.

Remember: 1.6mm is the legal minimum, not a maintenance target. Tyres should be identified and dealt with before they become illegal.



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What are the consequences?

Driving a company vehicle does not transfer responsibility away from the person behind the wheel.

If you're stopped with illegal tyres, you could face a fine of up to £2,500 and 3 penalty points per tyre.

That means multiple defective tyres can have serious consequences for your driving licence as well as potentially putting yourself and others at risk.

For commercial vehicles, DVSA roadside inspections can also identify roadworthiness defects and impose sanctions

There may also be consequences for the company, including vehicle downtime, disruption to projects, investigation of vehicle-management arrangements, reputational damage and potentially much more serious consequences if defective tyres contribute to a collision.

Your responsibility as the driver

Never assume somebody else has checked the vehicle.

Before using a company vehicle, drivers should carry out the required vehicle checks and report defects.

For tyres, check:

- **Tread depth** – is there adequate tread across the tyre?
- **Condition** – look for cuts, bulges, cracking and other damage.
- **Pressure** – tyres should be inflated according to the manufacturer's specification for the vehicle and load.
- **Uneven wear** – excessive wear on one part of the tyre may indicate another problem.
- **All tyres** – don't just check the easiest ones to see.

Government guidance specifically states that tyres should have the correct tread depth and be free from cuts and defects.

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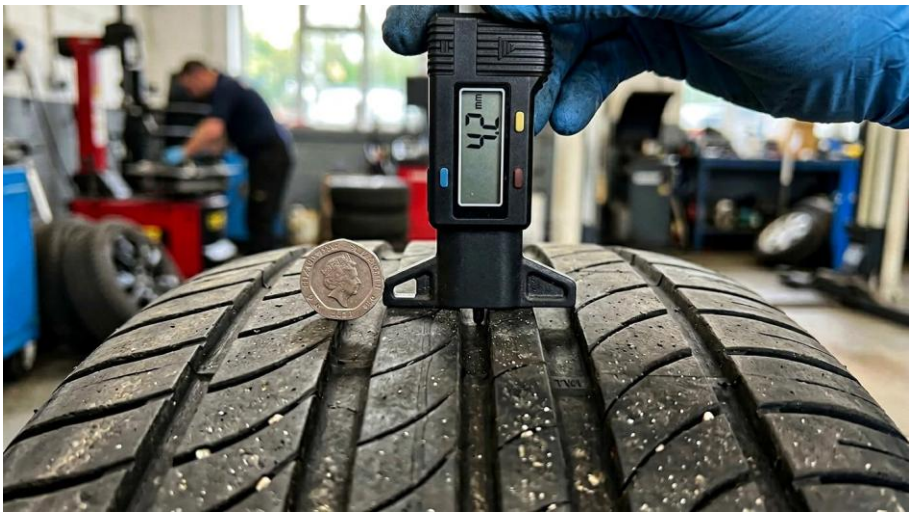
Don't rely on a quick glance

Tyres don't necessarily wear evenly.

Turn the steering where appropriate to help inspect the front tyres and check the tread at different points around the tyre.

A tread-depth gauge provides a straightforward way of checking tread depth.

The **20p test** can also provide a quick indication: insert a 20p coin into the main tread grooves. If the raised outer rim of the coin is hidden, the tread is above that approximate depth at that point. Check several locations because wear can vary. It should not replace proper measurement where there is any doubt.



What if you find a defective or illegal tyre?

DO NOT DRIVE THE VEHICLE.

If you discover a tyre that is below the legal limit, visibly unsafe or potentially defective:

1. **Do not start or continue the journey.**
2. Park the vehicle safely.
3. Report the defect immediately to your manager or the person responsible for the vehicle.
4. Record the defect using the company's vehicle defect reporting procedure.
5. Arrange for the tyre to be inspected/replaced.
6. Do not use the vehicle again until it has been confirmed as roadworthy.

Illegal Tyre Tread on Company Vehicles

Never continue driving because:

"The company owns it, so it's their responsibility."

Remember

You are the person driving the vehicle. If you believe it isn't roadworthy, don't drive it.

A two-minute vehicle check at the start of the day can identify a problem before it becomes a roadside breakdown, prosecution or serious collision.

Key message

CHECK IT – REPORT IT – DON'T DRIVE IT

- **1.6mm is the legal minimum for cars and light vans.**
- **Check tread, pressure and condition.**
- **Report defects immediately.**
- **Never knowingly drive a company vehicle with an illegal tyre.**