

Our ref: 755,347

Your ref:

Operations Directorate Services Team  
Manager  
9th Floor  
The Cube  
199 Wharfside Street  
Birmingham B1 1RN

13 October 2017

Dear

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 15 September 2017 asking for our policy on replacement vehicle tyres.

In your email you asked for the following information:

*I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and in respect of the policy your organisation has in relation to replacement of vehicle tyres.*

*This might be on fleets directly managed or fleets managed on behalf of the organisation by an external provider or relate to the guidance or instruction given to employees or contractors in the event of a personal vehicle being used for a work purpose.*

*Specifically I am interested to learn:*

- 1. What is the number of vehicles is owned by your organisation (vehicle fleets both directly managed by the organisation or by an external organisation)?*
- 2. What are the types of vehicle owned by your organisation (e.g. car, small delivery van, larger delivery vehicle, 4x4, special purpose vehicle etc.)?*
- 3. Is there a minimum tread depth at which tyres must be replaced? This might be at a tread depth greater than the 1.6mm legal minimum or it might be that drivers are reminded of the legal minimum.*
- 4. If an instruction is not in place, is there advice or guidance given and if so, what is that guidance?*
- 5. If the organisation has vehicles that provide an emergency response and/or have to contend with specific conditions, e.g. sometimes operate off-road, as well as vehicles involved in routine journeys, please provide details if there a variance between the instruction and/or advice given.*
- 6. If some or all of the vehicles used for a work purpose are managed by an external provider, please detail whether the policy on tyre replacement is that of your organisation or something in place from that provider.*
- 7. Please provide details of any related instructions and/or guidance related to tyres - for example (though not exhaustive) how regularly tyre checks (tread, wear, inflation, damage) should happen? Whether winter tyres and summer tyres are used during the appropriate seasons? And so on.*
- 8. Please provide details if tyres used on vehicles for a work purpose have to be from an identified list of manufacturers or might be recommended to be from an identified list of manufacturers or whether there is more general guidance, e.g. 'only premium tyres should be fitted' or 'budget tyres are not advised'. Please provide this information covering vehicles that might be directly managed or managed by an external provider or in the circumstance of a*

*private vehicle being used for a work purpose - identifying any variance on the requirement or advice in every instance.*

Highways England owns 460 winter fleet vehicles; 437 salt spreaders and 23 snow blowers. Our service providers are responsible, under contract, for the suitable maintenance requirements of these vehicles which includes when tyres should be replaced. The types of vehicles include 18 tonne and 26 tonne HGV's, Rolba R400, and R1000 snow blowers.

For vehicles exceeding 3.5 tonnes, gross vehicle weight, current tread depth legislation requires that these vehicles maintain a minimum of 1mm of tread in a continuous band throughout the central three-quarters of the tread width and over the whole circumference of the tyre. The same regulation applies to regrooved tyres. However, for safety, best practice usually means tyres are replaced when they get to around 2-4mm, as the winter fleet may be expected to operate on wet, icy or snow covered roads, where grip and keeping traction is an essential requirement.

All our winter vehicles, as a minimum, operate on Mud + Snow tyres, however they can use tyres tested under the 3 peak standard. This requirement is not prescribed anywhere within the service provider contracts.

Visual checks of wheels, tyres condition, security and inflations are undertaken by all drivers prior to any use of any vehicle under the Driver Operators duties. In addition tyres are checked by qualified service personnel during all planned annual servicing activities;

- 8 x A services,
- 1 x Full inspection
- 1 x C service.

The fleet is usually serviced during the summer months, therefore no summer tyres are provided. Sourcing of tyres is carried out by the service providers who are able to source the best tyres suitable from a variety of tyre providers. Our service providers utilise the most cost effective means available to secure the best price on the most suitable product. This can either be buy using none premium brands, local or national tyre suppliers.

In addition, we have 222 vehicles in our Traffic Officer Service fleet, of which 30% are owned. The full policy relating to the types of vehicle and tyres is attached.

All other maintenance vehicles are leased or hired by, or for, our service providers, who have full responsibility for their maintenance.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk). You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number 755,347 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Email: [Ops\\_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:Ops_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk)