

# Checking the Age of Your Tires

By Rick Astley

Jack Renaud asked me to pass along some information he learned from ABC News concerning how to find out how old your tires are. The TV segment was titled "Are Your Tires Safe" and the message was that you should not use tires over 6-years old. Of course, this information comes from the tire industry and so it would be reasonable to think that they had an interest in having us change our tires as often as possible. No doubt tire life varies according to a number of factors, for example, tires that are kept in a garage are likely to last longer than those that see long exposure to strong sunlight; so use some judgment before rushing out to re-shoe your car, or continuing to use cracked and worn ones that are only 5-years old.

The Department of Transport requires that all tires made since 2000 carry the week and year of manufacture in the last 4-digits of the Tire Identification Number that follows the DOT code. For cars that have tires that are rotation direction specific, the code is on the back, while on all other tires, the code may be found on either the back or front side of the wheel. In the pictured example the last 4-digits of the code are 5107, which means the tire was made in week 51 of 2007.



Picture from [TireRack.com](http://TireRack.com)

Tires made before 2000 carry only a 3-digit code such as 267, which indicates that the tire was made in week 26 of (probably) 1997, but it could also mean that the year was 1987 or some other decade, the assumption at the time being that no tire would be found more than 10-years old, so the decade didn't need to be specified. Perhaps if the DOT sees some of club members' tires they'll decide it's necessary add more digits to identify the century or even the millennium of manufacture! ■