

Seven is the Magic Number

Most emergency response apparatus don't log many miles. Low mileage aside, short trips, high speeds, quick stops and especially the aging process take their toll on the life of a vehicle's tires. For apparatus and other low-usage vehicles, tire replacement must be based on age as well as tread wear.

Rubber compounds in truck tires are designed to last for only a few years. Over time, tire rubber loses its strength, causing tires to fail without warning, potentially resulting in vehicle damage, accidents, injury or even death.

The average life for truck tires is 25,000–100,000 miles per year. Many emergency apparatus will never come near those mileage estimations. When developing your routine maintenance plan for vehicles and tire replacement, consider these three things:

1. Know and meet any applicable federal, state and local guidelines.
2. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations—most recommend replacing tires once they reach a certain age, *regardless of mileage*.
3. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) requires that *fire apparatus tires must be replaced every seven years or more frequently*. NFPA 1911, Inspection, Maintenance, Testing, and Retirement of In-Service Automotive Fire Apparatus (2007, Section 7.3.4), mandates that apparatus tires

“shall be replaced at least every seven years or more frequently when the tread wear exceeds state or federal standards as determined by measuring with a tread depth gauge.”

To ensure peak performance of the apparatus tires, make routine visual and physical inspections. As part of statute 1911, the NFPA instructs departments to:

- ✿ Inflate tires according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- ✿ Clean and lubricate wheel bearings and seals, and inspect regularly for deformation, wear, cracks or leakage.
- ✿ Torque wheel-attaching nuts to the manufacturer's recommendation.
- ✿ Inspect wheels and rims for cracks, deformation, structural integrity and corrosion.

A complete guide to establishing an inspection, maintenance and testing program for apparatus is available through the NFPA. For more information, visit www.nfpa.org. ✿



Tire replacement correlates to vehicle and responder safety.

VFIS Hits the Road

One of our priorities at VFIS is providing quality education and training for our clients. VFIS programs help clients expand their knowledge and skills in safety and risk management.

During 2007, our instructors conducted 500 programs in 43 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. More than 16,000 individuals participated. Our most popular class offering is Emergency Vehicle Driver Training (EVDT), followed by Highway Responder Safety and Operation Safe Arrival.

Our education and training staff finds itself answering more and more technical questions, as well as responding to your questions on standard operating guidelines, best practices for safe driving, and overall fire and EMS safety. These questions, along with your participation and evaluations of VFIS programs, help us define the types of education, training and consulting services we will be developing in the future. Your input counts!

We hope to see you at a program in your area in 2008. Many of our classes are held at local fire stations, and all training sites are chosen for their convenient locations. Now is a great time to start thinking about what education or training would help enhance your personnel's abilities while improving your risk management. ✿



For more details about VFIS Education and Training Programs, contact us at 800-233-1957 or www.vfis.com.