



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Motor Carrier
Safety Administration**

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Washington, D.C. 20590

Motorcoach Safety Advisory Bulletin: Exceeding Tire Load Ratings

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is issuing this bulletin because with the coming of summer, motorcoaches and other passenger carrying commercial motor vehicles are expected to be operating in extremely hot temperatures across the Nation. The FMCSA has identified a critical safety concern related to the safe operation of motorcoaches and other passenger carrying commercial vehicles. In these days of increased travel on motorcoaches, some motorcoaches are being loaded with high numbers of passengers and their associated baggage, potentially resulting in loads that are near the tire load carrying capacity of the motorcoach tires. FMCSA is publishing this advisory bulletin to raise awareness on this issue, and to increase the safety of motorcoach operations and potentially save lives.

Motorcoach operators should consider the manufacturer's recommended tire pressure, maximum tire load carrying capacity and tire speed rating, and allow an adequate safety margin when carrying maximum passenger and luggage loads. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, at 49 C.F.R. § 393.75, prohibit motorcoaches from carrying a weight greater than that marked on the tire and prohibit operating a motorcoach with damaged or dangerously worn tires. While this regulatory prohibition applies to all commercial motor vehicle operations, recent investigations suggest that motorcoaches may be susceptible to overloading. A motorcoach at or near the maximum number of passengers and a heavy luggage load could exceed the manufacturer's rated gross vehicle weight rating, one or more gross axle weight limits, or the tire load carrying capacity.

Safety demands that operators of these motorcoaches have policies and procedures in place to monitor the loading of their vehicles, and take appropriate action (such as reducing passenger/cargo load or increasing tire pressure) to ensure that they remain within the allowable tire load carrying capacity and State vehicle weight limits. FMCSA is working with State officials to increase enforcement of these important safety regulations..

A tire on a motorcoach loaded beyond its tire load carrying capacity, operated at highway speeds for a significant period of time, is more likely to overheat and fail, possibly placing the lives of passengers and other motorists at risk. Due to this serious safety concern, motor carriers that violate applicable tire loading restrictions may face enforcement action including, but not limited to, a declaration that those carriers and/or their vehicles are an imminent hazard, placing them immediately out-of-service pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 521.

If you have questions concerning this issue, please contact the FMCSA Commercial Passenger Carrier Safety Division via email at MC-ECP@dot.gov.