

Creating awareness of damaged part-worn tyres key to road safety

By [Riaz Haffjee](#), issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

28 Oct 2019

Chief executive officer of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, better known as Sumitomo Dunlop (manufacturer of the iconic Dunlop, Sumitomo and Falken tyre brands), talks heritage, investment and safety, addressing the impact of the unregulated second-hand tyre industry on the safety of road users.



Riaz Haffjee

The Dunlop brand's heritage of quality and reliability has stood the test of time, dating back to the invention, by John Boyd Dunlop in 1888, of the first practical pneumatic tyre. Dunlop is still positioned as a household name, with consumers yet again expressing their confidence, loyalty and love for our tyres by voting Dunlop the #1 Tyre Brand in the 2019/2020 Ask Africa Icon Brands Survey, for the seventh time since 2011.¹

This is a great affirmation as we continue our efforts to become the largest tyre company in Africa and to create journeys to better people's lives, including our customers, our consumers, our staff and their families and the communities we work with. Safety is central to these plans and pivotal to our success as a business, weaved into our very DNA and culture. As a regulatory compliant tyre manufacturer, we are well aware that we are responsible for the lives of many daily, because the products we put out into the market are the only part of a vehicle that touches the road surface and could mean the difference between a safe journey and an unsafe one, or life and death. For us, it's therefore a non-negotiable that tyres are a priority focus for road safety, hence our #SaferthanSafe concept was born. This is a vehicle that Sumitomo Dunlop uses to lobby its strong concerns about safe tyres.

Safe, quality tyres are what we set out to produce every day using a combination of the highest quality materials and adhering to demanding technical and safety standards. Our products are developed with an emphasis on customer safety, quality and comfort, with stringent manufacturing processes both meeting and exceeding global standards.

We've pioneered multiple groundbreaking safety and performance innovations, and invested extensively into upgrading our world-class Ladysmith manufacturing facility to meet the continent's needs for safe, quality passenger car and SUV tyres as well as truck and bus radial (TBR) tyres.

One of our key focus areas has been to develop and expand our channel and to make our products accessible to all our customers and consumers through initiatives such as our Enterprise Development Programme (Dunlop Container Programme), which now boasts over 120 branded Dunlop Containers across the country. We are also working closely with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs to develop young entrepreneurs through our franchised programmes into several municipalities in the province. We have a strong focus on supplier development initiatives driving local procurement of goods and services.

Unfortunately, unsafe and unregulated part-worn and second-hand tyres threaten to undermine such efforts to uphold consumer and tyre safety and accessibility. This is why we are dedicated to improving and promoting consumer protection, product safety, responsible trade and environmental management of part-worn and second-hand passenger tyres.

Second-hand tyres are often seen as a more cost-effective alternative to purchasing brand new tyres. However, the lack of prescriptive regulation in this industry could lead to far greater cost, exposing consumers and road users to a potential hazard. A part-worn tyre shows reduced performance over brand new tyres, especially with regard to wet-braking, and as much as a 33% reduction in handling ability according to testing by the Automobile Association and the AAA.³

Regulation of this sector remains a priority, considering the importance of tyres and taking cognisance of the fact that economics play a role in the purchase of vehicle tyres. In terms Regulation 1 of the Waste Tyre Regulation, a “part worn tyre” means a used tyre, which can be safely returned to its original intended use, and which, after being retreaded, is not of such nature and condition that it is not suitable to be fitted on a vehicle that operates on a public road.²

The onus lies not only with the consumer who must make a wise and safe purchase but also with the second-hand tyre reseller who must ensure that the tyre sold as “good for use” is in fact that – a tyre that is in a safe and road-worthy condition, suitable for its intended use. Recognising what constitutes a safe-for-use second-hand or part-worn tyre, is essential.

Checks on tyre tread wear can be undertaken visually but are best performed, using a tyre wear indicator gauge, by a professionally trained tyre fitment specialist. Various other visual inspections should be conducted on a part-worn tyre to ensure that it is in a good state of repair. Factors to look out for include lumps, bulges or cuts in the tyre, which could indicate a separation of, or a partial break, in the structure of the tyre. This failure could lead to a tyre blow-out, resulting in loss of control of the vehicle, risking the safety of the vehicle’s occupants as well as other road users. The rubber covering of the tyre should also not be worn or damaged, exposing the fabric or cord used in the construction of the tyre.

Sumitomo Dunlop has an extensive Dunlop Dealer Network, currently boasting over 500 retail stores across Africa. A priority in the establishment of this network is to get #SaferthanSafe tyres onto the road. Dunlop dealers are equipped and trained to identify a safe part-worn tyre and one that should be scrapped as waste. Taking this network into the rural and township areas as part of the Dunlop Container programme has given access to safer tyres and professional fitment services more of the continent’s road users, including the vast minibuss taxi transport industry.

These custom designed tyre fitment centres are equipped to satisfy the needs of every sector of the market. The Dunlop Zone and Dunlop Express cater for the suburban consumer, the Dunlop Container programme to the township consumer and entrepreneur, and the Dunlop Commercial Channel to the fleet, truck and bus owner.

Why do we do all of this? The statistics clearly show that part-worn tyres reduce vehicle handling and braking, which could be a leading cause of accidents, injuries and death.

The Global status report on road safety 2018, released by WHO in December 2018, states that worldwide road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for people aged 5-29 years, with annual road traffic deaths reaching 1.35 million. In South Africa, the primary strategic target of The National Road Safety Strategy 2016 – 2030 is to reduce fatal crashes by 50% by the year 2030.

The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) reported in 2016 that 14071 people died on South African roads in 2017, with the cost to the economy calculated at around R142 billion annually.

Sumitomo Dunlop is thus committed to continuing to strive to ensure that vehicles on the roads are fitted with safe and well-maintained tyres, which we believe will go a long way towards saving lives and reducing the burden on the economy. As part of our passionate pursuit of safety and as custodians of #SaferthanSafe, we will continue to invest in research, development and innovation, bringing consumers the freedom to take any road, safely and with confidence.

For further information please visit: <https://www.dunloptyres.co.za/> or www.srigroup.co.za.

Reference:

¹The Ask Afrika Icon Brands Survey, run by Target Group Index Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd, surveyed over 23000 consumers representing nearly 27 million adult South African consumers.

²Regulation 1 of the Waste Tyre Regulations, 2017 (GN 1064 of 29 September 2017) under the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, No. 59 of 2008

³ <https://www.aa.co.za/insights/car-tyre-safety-remains-a-problem-in-sa>
<https://www.aaa.com/AAA/common/AAR/files/Tire-Study-Report.pdf>

⁴ https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/road_safety_status/2018/en/

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Riaz Haffeejee is the CEO of Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (Pty) Ltd. With a BSC Mech Eng, a PG Dip Business Management and an MBA amongst other qualifications, Haffeejee has headed up the tyre manufacturer for the past six years. As a leading tyre manufacturer, Sumitomo Dunlop considers safety to be a key priority, in all operational and manufacturing facilities, and for consumers on the road. Under Haffeejee's leadership, Sumitomo Dunlop has instilled this focus on safety as part of the company's DNA, with all employees embracing this pivotal aspect of good governance and corporate citizenship.

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