

Tyres and disinfectant wheel washes

From time to time disinfectant wheel washes are imposed as part of measures to control the spread of disease. The use of disinfectants in this way can have a detrimental effect on tyres. The information given below is intended to aid recognition of the possible effects and offer advice to those operating vehicles exposed to disinfectants.

Some chemicals used in disinfectants can cause premature ageing of the rubber and reinforcement materials used in the construction of tyres. Any symptoms of this ageing are likely to become evident in the medium to long term.

If the exterior surface of the tyre has been affected crazing will be visible. Where the tyre's internal components have been affected, detection will be more difficult. If tyres with cuts or other damage have been exposed to disinfectant it is recommended they should be replaced even if there are no external signs of degradation.

The effects of exposure will depend on variables such as those listed below. Unfortunately, it is impossible to predict the severity of the damage caused, if any.

- Duration, frequency and type of exposure (surface spray or immersion)
- Chemical type and concentration
- Ambient temperature and tyre temperatures
- Tyre condition such as age, surface cuts, cuts extending to the reinforcing structure of the tyre and other damage.

Where exposure to the disinfectant is unavoidable, it should be for the minimum possible time. The recommended treatment for contaminated tyres is to rinse them thoroughly with water as soon as practical after exposure. In cases where the disinfectant is not water soluble a small amount of detergent such as washing up liquid should be added to the rinse water.