
INDUSTRY UPDATE

Consumer Guide to the Tyre Warranty Complaint Process

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Purpose of this update: This document sets out the BTMA's guidance on how tyre warranty complaints are handled across the industry, for reference and circulation by fellow industry bodies.

Modern day tyre production is a high-tech process, and leading tyre manufacturers place significant emphasis on quality control throughout the manufacturing process. The likelihood that a defective product appears in the marketplace is therefore extremely low.

Experience within the industry over many years shows that tyre complaints are most commonly the result of road hazards or poor tyre care. Any dissatisfaction with a tyre is rarely due to manufacturing defects.

If a consumer has a complaint, the tyre should be returned to the retailer from whom it was originally purchased. The dealer has a legal responsibility to handle any complaint the consumer may have relating to the purchase.

If at the time of returning the tyre to the retailer, the cause of a fault or deficiency is unclear, the retailer may advise that the product should be returned to the manufacturer (or sole agent) for detailed examination. If this course of action is accepted, the consumer will be asked to complete the relevant sections of an industry "Standard Application Form" and then return it to their tyre dealer.

It is important that all relevant sections of the form are completed, and the consumer reads the conditions of examination and the declaration statements before signing. Please note the product is still the consumer's property, and the manufacturer may need to render the product unsuitable for further use to fully examine it. Consequently, the consumer's prior consent is necessary. Some manufacturers and tyre wholesalers may have their own internet claim process which should be completed instead of the "Standard Application Form". The dealer can assist in completing these processes.

Whilst the retailer is under the obligation to deal fairly with the consumer's complaint, it is a matter of negotiation as to whether a replacement product is offered by the retailer and at what price. Most retailers will offer to sell another tyre to the consumer and subsequently refund an amount if the manufacturer makes an allowance.

The value of an allowance is based upon the residual life of the tyre (i.e. the unworn portion of the usable tread pattern depth). Any allowance offered is a gesture of goodwill and does not constitute any admission of liability or fault with the product.

Tyres Bought Over the Internet Without Fitting

A consumer's rights when buying over the internet are the same as when buying from a high street dealer. There are some additional rights under the Consumer Contracts Regulations. However, if the tyre is bought from abroad and problems occur with it there may be difficulties in resolving the complaint. Moreover, if the consumer's tyre is fitted independently of the supply of the tyre it may be more difficult to establish responsibility for any defect identified in the tyre.

Tyres Supplied as Original Equipment on a New Vehicle

If a consumer has a problem with a tyre that was fitted as original equipment on a new vehicle, it should be returned to the dealer from whom the vehicle was purchased. The vehicle dealer will follow the same process as a normal tyre dealer. If they do not trade directly with the tyre manufacturer, they can submit the tyre to their aftermarket tyre supplier.

Reporting Process

The manufacturer will endeavour to complete the examination and issue warranty advice within three weeks of receipt of the tyre. However, the manufacturer cannot be held responsible for delays incurred by the retailer in returning the tyre. There may be exceptional circumstances associated with certain types of complaints where the investigation may take longer than three weeks. Any allowance offered will be passed onto the consumer via the tyre (or vehicle) dealer.

For further information, please contact the British Tyre Manufacturers' Association at www.btmuk.com.