

THE TIRE SIDEWALL STORY

Your tires have useful information moulded into the sidewall. This information not only includes the name of the tire, but also the actual tire size, construction information, the maximum load and inflation pressure, plus traction, tread wear and temperature grades. Take a look at the diagram below and you'll see just how much information you can find on your tire sidewall, as specified by the Department of Transportation (DOT).



Passenger Tires

The tire sidewall shown above is an example of a popular “P-metric,” speed-rated tire. “P” indicates that it’s a passenger tire; 215 represents the width of the tire in millimeters; “65” is the height to width ratio; “R” indicates radial construction; “15” is the rim diameter code; and “95H” is the optional service description that consists of the load index (95) and the “H” speed rating.

Some older speed-rated tires may include the speed symbol immediately before the “R” instead of providing a service description. A “B” in place of the “R” would indicate diagonal bias construction. “M+S” with the mountain/snowflake symbol indicates that the tire meets the RMA (Rubber Manufacturers Association) specifications for use in severe snow conditions.

The maximum load recommendation is shown in kg (kilograms) and in lbs (pounds), and the maximum air pressure is shown in kPa (kilopascals) and PSI (pounds per square inch). **Safety Note:** These are the maximum air pressure levels, not the recommended pressure for the tire when mounted on rims for your vehicle. The vehicle manufacturer’s pressure recommendations (found on a decal on the doorjamb or in the glove compartment) must always be used when inflating your tires.

DOT Code: The “DOT” letters indicate manufacturing compliance with all applicable safety standards established by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Next to the DOT letters is an alpha/numeric serial number, commonly referred to as the DOT Code, with up to 12 digits. This code provides manufacturer detail and the last 5 numbers indicate the week and year that the tire was made. For example, “1501” indicates that the tire was manufactured during the 15th week of year 2001. This information is critical should there ever be evidence of a manufacturing problem and a tire recall.

Additional Tire Size and Capacity Information – There are other codes on some tires that provide you with additional information, some of which are specific to light truck tire applications. Some of the other codes that you might find on your tires include:

LT = Stands for light truck application. Example: LT235/85R16

C, D or E = Load range indication for light truck applications

REIN = Reinforced

OWL = Outlined White Letters

RWL = Raised White Letters

ORWL = Outlined Raised White Letters

B, BLK, BW, BSW = Blackwall or Black Sidewall

W, WW, WSE – Whitewall or White Sidewall

XNW = Extra Narrow White Width

XL = Extra Load Capacity

As you can see, the tire sidewall provides you with a lot of valuable information. For additional tire manufacturer and safety information visit www.rma.org.