



# Consumer Reports Tire Testing: A Consumer's Perspective



# Consumer perceptions

- Sources of information on tires
  - Letters to Consumer Reports
    - Over 1250 letters in the last year alone
  - Forum, *Tire Talk* on [ConsumerReports.org](http://ConsumerReports.org)
    - Advice on fitment and tire care.
  - Internal Research: Readership Surveys / Focus Groups / Research Projects
    - Are people interested in tire reports?
    - Understanding how people purchase tires.

# Consumer Reports

## Market Research

- Where are tires researched
  - Tire retailer (50%)
  - Websites (43%)
  - Friends, Mechanic, Advertising, Magazines, Car Dealer

# Consumer Reports

## Market Research

- Who researches tires
  - CRO (ConsumerReports.org) subscribers (62%)
  - Those in pursuit of safer/higher performance tires (61%)
  - Luxury/sports car owners (58%)
  - Those spending more than \$500 (72%)

*Less than half (45%) of past purchasers did any research.*

# Consumer Reports

## Market Research

- What websites are researched
  - Manufacturer sites (50%)
  - Retailer sites (35%)
  - Also, 32% claim to visit CRO
  - *TireRack, Discount Tire, 1010Tires, etc.*

# Consumer Reports

## Market Research

- Considerations by buyers
  - Durability (i.e. quality, road hazard resistance, etc.)
  - Tread life – (long lasting tire)
  - Wet grip and handling
  - Stopping distance
  - Price
  - Focus groups suggest women do more research than men.
  - *Price and availability are ultimately key reasons why a specific tire model was purchased!*

Consumer Reports evaluates tires for all weather conditions including dry and wet braking, cornering grip, handling, winter traction, rolling resistance, ride and noise, tread wear.

- Government's San Angelo tread wear course



### **Why do tread wear testing?**

- Not all tires have tread wear warranties
- Reality check for Consumer Reports when recommending tire models
- Marketing drives available warranties and UTQG tread wear ratings...
- Consumer driven. A high priority in tire purchasing

# CR Tread Life Ratings of Performance H Speed Rated Tires.

Tire	UTQG Tread Wear Rating	Manufacturers Tread wear Warranty	CR Tread Life Rating
G	600	None	5
N	740	80000	5
P	440	60000	5
Q	400	None	5
J	340	None	4
O	400	60000	4
R	400	45000	4
V	500	60000	4
A	440	60000	3
C	460	50000	2
D	400	45000	2
E	400	50000	2
F	400	None	2
H	420	50000	2
I	400	40000	2
K	420	60000	2
L	400	40000	2
M	420	55000	2
S	400	45000	2
T	400	None	2
B	460	50000	1
U	400	50000	1

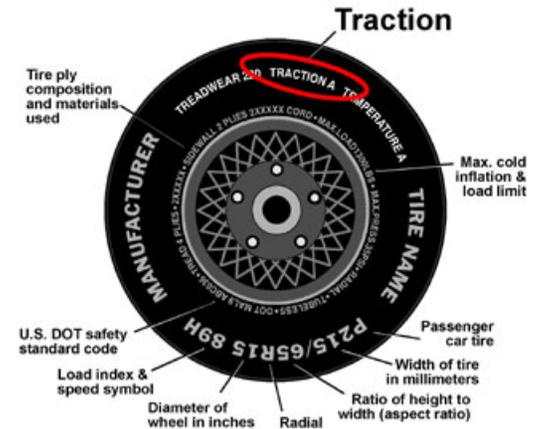
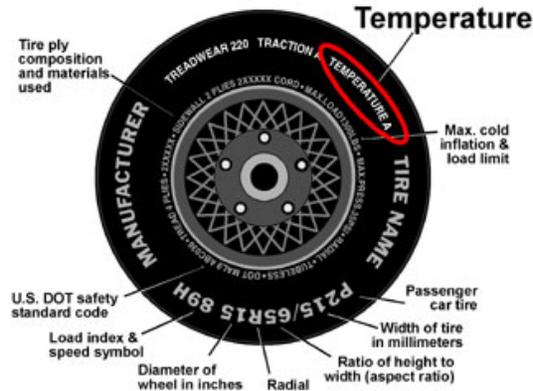
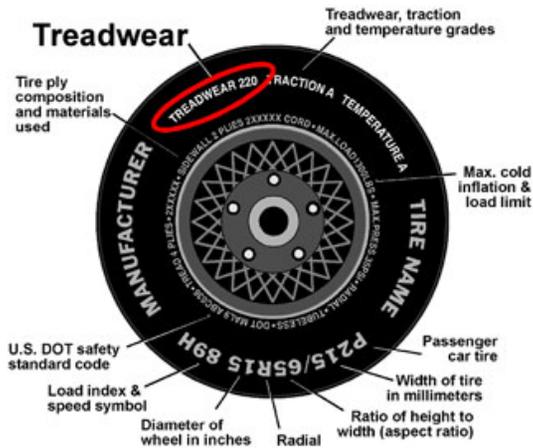
No Tread wear warranty, but impressive tread life.

Lowest UTQG Rating and no tread wear warranty, but very good tread life.

Above average UTQG Rating, but so-so tread life.

High UTQG Rating, tread wear warranty, and tread life rating.

# UTQG System



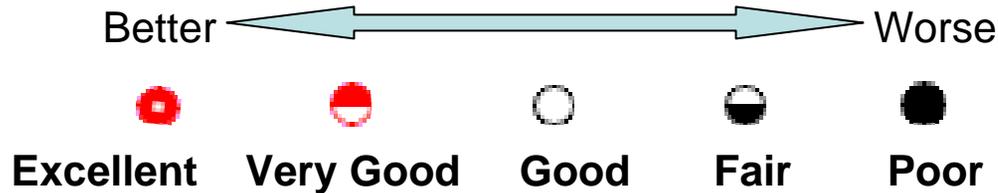
< 200: 15%  
 201-300: 25%  
 301-400: 32%  
 401-500: 20%  
 501-600: 6%  
 >600: 2%

A: 27%  
 B: 59%  
 C: 11%

AA: 3%  
 A: 75%  
 B: 22%  
 C: 1 Tire Model

Fixed Scales

# Consumer Reports Ratings



- CR rates all products on a five point system.
- It has limitations for tires.
  - Comparative ratings among tires in a category: i.e. all season, winter, performance, truck tires, etc.
    - Applicable ratings are grouped by statistical difference within the span of the tire category tested.
  - Ratings are used in a semi-global way across categories.
    - S, T speed rated all season tires and winter tires
    - Performance summer, all season tires and winter tires.
    - SUV all season, all terrain and winter tires.
  - Global use of ratings across all categories is not possible due to use of different vehicles, size tires, and period of time tested.

# Recent letter from a reader

“Your inclusion of rolling resistance in your tire ratings is helpful but insufficient-you need to use standardized testing to provide average mpg ratings. Highlighting this critical factor would doubtless improve competition and innovation as well.”

Your inclusion of “rolling resistance” in your tire ratings is helpful but insufficient – you need to use standardized testing to provide average mpg ratings. I recently replaced my OEM tires with ones rated as having “very good” rolling resistance, but nonetheless documented a greater than 5% decrease in mileage. A 5% improvement in passenger vehicle mileage would save the U.S. 19.5 million gallons of gasoline per day (according to the Energy Information Administration (<http://www.eia.doe.gov/basics/quickoil.html>) helping us to avoid abrupt climate change and saving consumers roughly \$120 per vehicle per year to boot (based on average of 13,500 vehicle miles per year, 20 mpg average mileage for passenger cars and light trucks on the road, U.S. DOT statistics at an average price of \$3.50). Highlighting this critical factor would doubtless improve competition and innovation as well.

