

## TECHNICAL TIPS – “Wench With A Wrench”

By Gail Wagner – Midstate Miata Club of NY



### **ARE YOUR TIRES TIRED??**

Hello, Miata Club Folks,

Back in 2013, I wrote an extensive column in 2-parts about tire choice and maintenance. (It’s archived on our Miata Club webpage [www.Midstatemiata.net](http://www.Midstatemiata.net)) under TECH.) I hope you will peruse it again before driving season but in the meantime I wanted to once again stress the importance of having tires that are safe and roadworthy. After all, they’re what separate your bootie from the road surface and your driving safety is paramount.

So, is your Miata pretty much a summer weekender only? Yeah, the tires look great and they seem fine BUT the tire industry wisely suggests that you replace with **new tires every six to seven years no matter what their total mileage** and they’re not recommending that just to generate new tire sales, believe me!

If you can see fine “spider web” cracks forming in the sidewall, you’re wayyyy overdue. More importantly, **even if the tire appears to look great, the rubber breaks down inside the tire and can cause major issues**...can you say “blowouts” or disengaging from the rims?? Factors such as heat, storage, under-inflation and conditions of use can also dramatically reduce the life of a tire. Don’t believe me...go read up.

I personally heard the story recently of a Club member’s tire coming completely off the rim while turning a corner at speed because he didn’t check the tire manufacture date on the used Miata that he had just purchased. The tires were 7 years old. He was lucky; he gained control of the car and didn’t hit anything or anyone. Whew! Convinced? I sure was. Yes, I know four tires are expensive but what is your life or health worth? Something to think about.

### **HOW TO DETERMINE THE AGE OF YOUR TIRES**

Not sure how old your tires are and don't have the receipt from your last purchase? No worries -- this is how (see below). The good news is you can check your tire’s “date of birth” by the serial number on each one. Usually the “date code” is encased in a circle or square on the outside of

your tire. If you can't find it, drop in to your local tire store and ask them to find it for you. I'm sure they'll be thrilled. ☺



### **TIRES MANUFACTURED YEAR 2000 TO PRESENT**

The date of manufacturer is the last four digits of the DOT (U.S. Dept. of Transportation) code. The first two digits are the week of manufacturer and the last two digits are the year. As above, the code is 1612. That means the tire was manufactured during the 16<sup>th</sup> week of the year 2012. Pretty simple.

### **FOR TIRES MANUFACTURED BEFORE YEAR 2000**

I hope no one has any tires this old!!! but just for the record the DOT code was a bit different then, but who cares, right? I'm pretty certain you aren't traveling on 19+ year old tires.

### **HANG ON TO YOUR PROOF OF PURCHASE**

The next time you buy tires make sure you keep your purchase receipt. I keep a folder with all my Miata stuff - maintenance receipts, purchase receipts, vehicle title, window sticker, etc., speeding tickets (just kidding). Then you'll always know how old your tires are without having to check out your sidewalls -- and you'll be ready in case you ever need to make a warranty claim (read the fine print on your tire purchase receipt or ask the retailer).

It would also be smart to check the tire date on new tires that you purchase especially if you purchase tires over the Internet. Sometimes tire dealers will sell a tire at a really good discount because the tire is nearing its "retirement" (sorry for the pun) manufacture date. This can affect warranty too. I'm just sayin'....

### **TIRE WARRANTY**

Most tire manufacturers' warranties cover the tires for four years from the date of purchase or five years from the week that the tires were manufactured. Don't be afraid to ask about warranty coverage when you purchase a new tire. Bummer Alert: If you lose your sales receipt, you could actually limit your warranty coverage. Here's an example: If you purchased new tires today, but they were manufactured two years ago, your warranty would cover four years from today's date, since that is your date of purchase. But if you lost your proof of purchase, the tires would be covered for five years from the date of manufacture which was two years ago. So your warranty would end three years from today, not four, meaning you could lose a year of coverage. ☹

### **LETTING GO**

Of all of your Miata's components, tires have the greatest effect on the way it handles and brakes. So if the tire store or your annual inspection shop recommends new tires, bite the bullet and spend the money and don't put it off. Your life could depend on it.

**Bottom line: The better you take care of your Miata, the better it will take care of you AND the longer it will last.**

P.S. Remember to check out my previous archived tech and tip columns on our Club website under TECH: [www.mistatemiata.net](http://www.mistatemiata.net)

*See You on the Road and Zoom Zoom Safely!*

*Gail*

**DISCLAIMER**

*Please note these tips are not reviewed or approved by the Mazda Motor Corporation or any other corporation or entity other than the originator. The Midstate Miata Club of NY does not accept any liability for damage or injury as a result of utilizing these tips and pointers. Please use common sense and always remember safety first!*