

DATE CODE MANIA - GOODYEAR TIRE DECODING

Date coding... we can't seem to get enough of it. Years ago, it wasn't considered important. We only looked at whether we had the right engine block and maybe the transmission. Today, many people base their restoration on using proper date coded parts. In fact, just about everything on your car has a date code.

One area that has been long overlooked is tires. For those of you who are going the concours route, there is a way to tell when the tire was manufactured. You can be armed with this knowledge when shopping at the swap meets to put together the perfect set of matched tires. Obviously, this is not easy, but it has been done. This could be your "unfair advantage" in a close concours judging battle.

The information we'll present here relates to wing car era Goodyear tires. To date, I have no information on Firestone codes. As you'll see, eventually, the tire serial number system was standardized. At the time the Daytonas, 500s, Superbirds, Talladegas, etc were built, we do not believe there was a standard system between tire companies.

Getting started, in all of our examples, the tire serial number is located on the back side of the tire sidewall.

We'll deal with three types of serial numbers...

1969 and part of 1970 used a seven digit serial number. Example: J P 0 1 D 2 8

We are only concerned with the first two digits. Looking at the seven digit serial number chart, we see if the first digit is a J or U, the tire was made in 1969. The second digit being the letter P indicates the tire was made in the seventh month (July). The fourth digit is the assembly plant. This is the numbering system you will find on Daytonas and most Superbirds.

Sometime in 1970, a different numbering system called "TIC" (pronounced "tick") appeared. In this case, we'll use an example of... A 6 N B J B D L.

Again, we are concerned with the first two digits. Again, consult the chart and you will see that A6 indicates the 27th week (July) of 1970. Too late for a Superbird. The third and fourth digits indicate plant.

Later on, around 1972, the current DOT system came into use. These may be either nine or ten digits long. Example... M B U F D L A 0 4 2.

Here, we look at the last three digits. The 042 indicates the fourth week of 1972. 04 meaning fourth week, the number 2 meaning 1972. Obviously, this was a replacement tire.

The DOT system remains in use. When looking at tires keep in mind the relative age of the tire. If you are looking at Goodyear GT radials for your Little Red Express Truck, the code "042" on the end of this tire would mean 1982. What I am saying is the decade is not spelled out for you.

If you bought a replacement Polyglas tire over the counter from your Goodyear dealer, say in 1973, it's possible that your tire differed from the OEM tire installed by Chrysler or Ford. Identical sized replacement tires have been found up to half an inch different in tread width under close examination. Also, not only is the date code important, but different tire plants did different things. Red stripe tires for instance have variables in the location of the red stripe on the sidewall. Some are further up or down than others. Was there a specification here? We don't know. But ideally, you want date codes prior to the build date, and preferably from the same tire plant.

Seriously, are we getting a little carried away here? I'll let you be the judge. We are really splitting hairs when we get this picky. But for the super clean low milage car, or totally correct restoration, this is a area that some people will pursue. At the very least, I hope you've found it interesting.

Our thanks to Greg Kwiatkowski for contributing materials for this article.

Top Chart: Non-DOT Tire Codes Prior to 1970

Bottom Chart: DOT Tire codes for 1970 and 1971

TIRE S/N PRIOR TO 1970

FIRST LTR		SECOND LTR		FOURTH NO.	
YR.	CODE	MO.	CODE	PLT.	CODE
66	M-Z	1	T	AKR.	1
67	K-Y	2	U	CAL	2
68	L-T	3	F	JAC	3
69	J-U	4	S	GAD	5
70	E-W	5	Y	DAN	6
71	H-X	6	N	TOP	7
72	G-S	7	P	UC	4
		8	A	CUM	Y
		9	C	TYL	A
		10	K	FRE	F
		11	E		
		12	R		

DOT		TIC		DOT		TIC	
WK.	'70'	'71'	WK.	'70'	'71'	WK.	'70'
JAN	1	AA	27	A6	CX	JULY	27
	2	AB	28	A7	CY		28
	3	AC	29	A8	CO		29
	4	AD	30	A9	C1		30
	5	AE	31	BA	C2		31
FEB	6	AF	32	BB	C3	AUG	32
	7	AH	33	BC	C4		33
	8	AJ	34	BD	C5		34
	9	AK	35	BE	C6		35
	10	AL	36	BF	C7		36
MAR	11	AM	37	BH	C8	SEPT	37
	12	AN	38	BJ	C9		38
	13	AP	39	BK	DA		39
	14	AS	40	BL	DB		40
	15	AT	41	BM	DC		41
APR	16	AU	42	BN	DD	OCT	42
	17	AV	43	BP	DE		43
	18	AW	44	BS	DF		44
	19	AX	45	BT	DH		45
	20	AY	46	BU	DJ		46
MAY	21	AO	47	BV	DK	NOV	47
	22	AI	48	BW	DL		48
	23	A2	49	BX	DM		49
	24	A3	50	BY	DN		50
	25	A4	51	BO	DP		51
JUNE	26	AS	52	B1	DS	52	

TIC S/N	WK. MFG	PLT.	SIZE	TYPE
XX	XX	XX	XX	XX

DOT S/N	MFG	SIZE	TYPE	WK. YR.
XX	XX	XX	XX	XX

TIC	PLANT	DOT
NK	AKRON I	MA
NB	AKRON II	MB
NJ	DANVILLE	MC
NF	GADSDEN	MD
NC	JACKSON	ME
NE	LOS ANGELES	MF
ND	TOPEKA	MJ
NH	UNION CITY	MK
NL	TORONTO	PF
NN	MEDICINE HAT	PC
NM	VALLEYFIELD	PD
AM	KELLY CUMBERLAND	ML
AP	FREEMONT	MN
AS	FAYETTEVILLE	MM
AN	TYLER	MP
AK	NEW BEDFORD	MH
AL	LEE	MT
NP	SEJBERLING	PE