

Case study - Retread tyres

Use of retread tyres on specialist work vehicles

Specialist Fleet Services (SFS)



SFS refuse
collection vehicle

Key facts

- Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) is currently saving in the region of 30 per cent in costs through the use of retreads.
- SFS has supplied specialist vehicles to local authorities for over a decade, ranging from cars and light commercial vehicles to heavy duty refuse collection vehicles.
- In the late 1990s, SFS developed a retread tyre policy with Bandvulc Tyre Contracts, which has subsequently become the backbone of the company's tyre policy.
- To monitor tyre usage and damage, every tyre casing is serial numbered and the data stored electronically, so that it is fully traceable throughout its life cycle.

The Company

Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) has supplied specialist vehicles to local authorities for well over a decade. The Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the merchant bank, NM Rothschild, has over 1,700 vehicles in circulation, ranging from cars and light commercial vehicles to heavy duty refuse collection vehicles – making it one of the largest companies of its type in the sector.

Why does SFS use retreads?

SFS has a policy to use retread tyres on all of its commercial fleet where possible. SFS has a fleet of over 430 refuse vehicles which it supplies on contract hire to 29 local authorities throughout the UK, as well as cars and vehicles such as tippers and highway wagons, many of which are classed as Light Commercial. The contract hire periods have traditionally been for seven years although this has steadily fallen due to a desire to have more up to date vehicles and the increased wear and tear on the vehicles.

In the late 1990s, SFS developed a retread tyre policy with Bandvulc Tyre Contracts, which has subsequently become the backbone of the SFS company tyre policy. As part of the policy, tyres are checked fortnightly for wear. If applicable, the tyre is then sent for retreading or recycling. Double tyres on any axle are 'twinned' so that tread thicknesses are within 4mm of each other.

To ensure consistency, SFS specifies only Michelin or Bridgestone tyres on new vehicles. For retreading, the former are returned to Michelin and the latter to Bandvulc Tyre Contracts (although other companies are considered if they are listed by a local authority as a preferred supplier).

In addition, every tyre casing is serial numbered and the data stored electronically, so that it is fully traceable. This enables SFS with Bandvulc Tyre Contracts and Michelin to monitor any damage the tyre may incur throughout the tyre's remanufactured life.

What are the main benefits of using retreads for SFS?

SFS decided to use replacement retread tyres for a variety of reasons. The main one was the quality of the tyre management provided by Bandvulc Tyre Contract, which has installed confidence at all levels of the company on the use of retreads. The other is the savings on offer, which given the size of the SFS fleet, have proved to be very substantial, and are currently running at 30%.

What does SFS say?

"A number of years ago we took the decision to create a nationwide tyre management programme with Bandvulc Tyre Contracts. The service we received provided SFS with the confidence to make it company policy to use retreads at every possible opportunity. Not only that, but the cost benefits have been equally impressive, with savings in the region of 30% being made. I would recommend any company operating a commercial vehicle fleet to seriously consider a retread policy. It has been extremely beneficial to SFS over the years."

– Jim Morrison, Fleet Manager, SFS



Replacement retread tyres

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