

Bald tyres on the rise on US roads; bad news for SBR demand

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The Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) on Thursday released the results of a survey that shows that more than one in eight US vehicles has bald tyres - underlining the challenging conditions in a demand segment that accounts for 75% of US styrene butadiene rubber (SBR). The RMA study revealed that more than 13% of US vehicles have at least one bald tyre, an increase from 10.4% recorded in a 2010 RMA survey. The increase backs up the notion that US drivers are driving longer between tyre replacements, which has been felt by the tyre industry. In August, the RMA said tyre shipments in 2012 were projected to increase by about 1.2%, and attributed the modest growth to the increase in new vehicle sales. Replacement tyre shipments, however, are expected to drop by about 2%. About 75-80% of the tyre market is replacement tyres. The RMA's next tyre shipment projection is expected to be released after the US Thanksgiving holiday next week. The RMA, in addition to being a trade organization for US tyre manufacturers, has an educational outreach program, aimed at informing the public how to better take care of their tyres. "Tyre care is critical to keeping your vehicle road-ready," said Dan Zielinski, RMA senior vice president. "Bald tyres are dangerous and may lead to loss of vehicle control, particularly on wet roads. Checking tyre tread is easy and inexpensive to do. All you need is a penny." SBR manufacturers in North America include American Synthetic Rubber, Ashland, Firestone Polymers, Goodyear Tire & Rubber, LANXESS, Lion Copolymer and Negromex.

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