

REPORT #:
71-272-2025

REPORT DATE:
11/20/2025

INCIDENT DATE:
11/8/2024

WORKER:
51 years old

INDUSTRY:
Tire Dealers

OCCUPATION:
Tire Technician

SCENE:
Tire shop service bay

EVENT TYPE:
Struck by object



Ruptured sidewall on tire
that exploded.

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narrative](#)

SERVICES FATALITY NARRATIVE

Technician Killed When Tire Explodes

SUMMARY

A 51-year-old technician was struck by a tire that exploded as he was mounting it on a rim. He had worked for his employer, a small independent tire shop, for 10 years.

The technician was mounting a used automotive tire on a single-piece spare trailer rim for a customer. He helped the customer select the tire and gave him a price for it. The tires sold at the shop were bought by the employer from an auto salvage yard.

The customer left the shop to get money and returned 10 minutes later. He went to the service bay where the technician was and saw him trying to put the tire on the steel rim. He placed the tire on the concrete floor and connected an air compressor line to it.

He leaned over the tire and began striking it with a mallet to seat the bead on the rim. The tire exploded, bursting from the bottom side. The explosion shot the tire and rim straight up into the technician's face, neck, and chest. It hit the ceiling 20 feet above the floor.

The customer was also knocked on the floor by the explosion. When he looked up, he saw the technician lying on the floor badly injured and yelled for someone to call 911.

Paramedics arrived in five minutes, but the technician stopped breathing when they began medical aid. The paramedics were unable to intubate or give him oxygen due to severe injuries to his face, neck, and throat.

He was taken by ambulance to the hospital and stabilized there. He was later flown by helicopter to a trauma hospital, where he died the next day.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The technician did not use a [tire restraining device](#), such as an OSHA-compliant [inflation safety cage](#), or secure the tire before inflating it. He inflated the tire above the manufacturer's maximum air pressure of 40 psi. The air compressor tank was at 130 psi and did not have a pressure regulator.
- The 14-inch tire and 14.5-inch rim were incompatible. The tire was 19 years old, and the bead seat of the rim was corroded.
- The employer did not have a written [accident prevention program](#) (APP) nor documented [training](#).

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Protect workers from hazards associated with the exploding separation of split (multi-piece) rim and single-piece rim components for Trucks, Tractors, Trailers, Buses, and Off-road machines. See [WAC 296-864](#)
- Make sure workers follow these procedures for inflating single-piece rim wheels: **1)** Inflate tires only when contained within a restraining device or bolted on the vehicle with the lug nuts fully tightened; **2)** Make sure tires are not inflated when any flat, solid surface is in the trajectory and within one foot of the sidewall; **3)** Stay out of the trajectory when inflating a tire; **4)** Make sure, when inflating tires, that the inflation pressure stamped in the sidewall isn't exceeded unless the manufacturer recommends a higher pressure; and **5)** Make sure tires aren't inflated above the maximum pressure recommended by the manufacturer to seat the tire bead firmly against the rim flange. See [WAC 296-864-50020](#)
- Develop a formal, written APP that is effective in practice and develop, supervise, implement, and enforce safety and health training. See [WAC 296-800-14005](#), [WAC 296-800-14020](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded, that to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- **Provide training and certification.** Have new and experienced technicians attend reputable, hands-on comprehensive tire service and safety certification training. Keep training documented and current.
- **Demonstrate safety leadership.** Show technicians how to use the proper equipment and procedures. Proactive leadership inspires workers to uphold positive safety beliefs and practices.

RESOURCES

OSHA [2014]. [Tire Mount/Demount and Rim Matching Charts Manual](#). (OSHA 3421-10R 2014). Washington D.C.: Occupational Safety and Health Administration, United States Department of Labor.

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