

# State FACE™ Fatality Narrative

## Technician Killed When Tire Explodes



# INCIDENT FACTS

**REPORT #:** 71-272-2025s REPORT

**REPORT DATE:** November 20, 2025

**INCIDENT DATE:** November 8, 2024

**WORKER:** 51 years old

**INDUSTRY:** Tire Dealers

**OCCUPATION:** Tire Technician

**SCENE:** Tire shop service bay

**EVENT TYPE:** Struck by object



**Image 1.** Ruptured sidewall on tire that exploded.

# 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.



# SUMMARY

- 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.





**Image 2.** Service bay in tire shop where incident occurred.



Image 3. Ruptured tire after explosion.



**Image 4.** Corrosion on tire rim and bead seat.



**Image 5.** Air compressor.

# 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](#)



# REQUIREMENTS

## Employers must:

- 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

- **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.



# FATALITY NARRATIVE

## Technician Killed When Tire Explodes

Download the fatality narrative:

[https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research//files/2025/71-272-2025\\_TireTechExplosionStruckBy.pdf](https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research//files/2025/71-272-2025_TireTechExplosionStruckBy.pdf)



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71-272-2025

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11/10/2025

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Ruptured sidewall on tire that exploded.

[View slides for this fatality narrative](#)

**SERVICES FATALITY NARRATIVE**

**Technician Killed When Tire Explodes**

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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.

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# RESOURCES

[Tire Mount/Demount and Rim Matching Charts Manual](#)

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)



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