

Urgent need for a comprehensive waste tyre management plan to guide dealers

Issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

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The second-hand tyre industry in South Africa presents enormous challenges, with an estimated 63% of second-hand tyres sold in the country being illegal and unfit for road use. The local industry estimates the second-hand tyre market to comprise between 1,5 to 2 million tyres, with 750,000 to 900,000 of these being illegal and posing a threat to road safety.



Lubin Ozoux, CEO of tyre manufacturer Sumitomo Rubber South Africa (SRSA), which distributes the Dunlop, Sumitomo and Falken brands, stresses the detrimental impact of this issue on the entire tyre retail value chain, both financially and in terms of reputation.

“Waste tyres present environmental hazards due to their large volume and slow decomposition rate, leading to visual pollution and potential health risks when they accumulate in landfills or are illegally dumped. In South Africa, waste tyres have also been misused during protests and riots,” he said.

“As a tyre manufacturer and member of the [South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference](#) (SATMC), we have a responsibility to ensure that the practice of selling unsafe, ill-suited and illicit second-hand tyres to unsuspecting and uninformed customers, is stopped. There needs to be a solid protocol for all tyre dealers to ensure that once second-hand waste tyres are correctly mutilated and have been assigned for waste pick up from their stores, they do not resurface in the market,” he added.

However, concerns persist regarding the lack of a comprehensive Tyre Waste Management Plan in South Africa, with the draft section 29 Integrated Industry Waste Management Plan for Tyres (IndWTMP) still pending finalisation.

Lack of transparency

Shaun Radbone, owner of Dunlop franchise, Orion Auto & Tyre, echoed the need for urgent attention and resolution of waste tyre management issues. "It's unclear if a plan is in place to address this critical environmental challenge. There is a significant lack of transparency from the relevant authorities on whether these products are being transformed into new products or used as a source of energy," he commented. This lack of information hampers efforts to establish sustainable waste management practices in the tyre industry.

Radbone said Orion Auto & Tyre's waste tyres are collected regularly, either weekly or every second week. However, he noted occasional disruptions in collection due to storage facility constraints. He also raised concerns about waste tyre fees, which are typically included in invoiced pricing from suppliers, and called for more transparency regarding the utilisation of these levies.

Drawing from international best practices, Radbone points out the successful use of rubber crumb from scrap tyres as an additive in tar roads in European countries.

He stressed the importance of sharing information about the dangers associated with second-hand tyres. "If it's a second-hand tyre that someone is looking to purchase, they must ask themselves, why is it second-hand? Usually, it's because the original owner had issues with the tyre, that's why they changed it."

Better-informed consumers would result in a decline in the sale of such tyres, ultimately saving lives and improving road safety – a key goal of the [Road Safety Partnership South Africa](#) which Sumitomo Rubber SA is a member of.

The unregulated nature of backyard dealers and non-franchised stores also raises concerns about inconsistent industry standards.

Ozoux called upon industry stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and the government to bridge information gaps, enhance regulation and raise public awareness.

"Recycling and proper disposal methods are crucial to minimise the adverse consequences of waste tyres. Additionally, ensuring that retreaded and part-worn tyres meet safety standards is vital for preventing accidents and maintaining roadworthiness," he said.

The SATMC has been collaborating with the Tyre Importers Association of South Africa (TIASA), the Tyre Equipment Parts Association (TEPA) and the government to ensure that steps are taken to drive improvements and sustainability in both collection and processing of tyre waste. Some pressure has been released by identifying additional municipal landfill sites to serve as temporary storage facilities in Limpopo Province, one in the Lepelle-Nkumpi Municipality and two under Polokwane Municipality. However, a longer-term solution is needed.

According to Regulation 1 of the Waste Tyre Regulations, 2017 (GN 1064 of 29 September 2017), waste tyres encompass various categories, including new, used, retreaded, and unroadworthy tyres unsuitable for retreading, repair, or sale as part worn tyres. Part-worn tyres refer to used tyres that can safely return to their original intended use after undergoing retreading, complying with the National Road Traffic Act, 1996 (Act No. 93 of 1996) and its associated regulations.

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