

RB-4

OFFICE OF PRICE ADMINISTRATION

Consumer Division

The Consumer and the War

TIRE RATIONING

Participants: Local Consumer Division Field Representative
Member of the Local Tire Rationing Board
or of the Local Defense Council
Local Woman Driver

WOMAN DRIVER: Why can't I get a new tire?

CONSUMER REPR.: Can I still get a recapping job done?

TIRE RATIONING
BOARD MEMBER: Who can get new tires? Or a retread?

WOMAN DRIVER: What about drivers who need cars in their work?

ANNOUNCER: These, and many more questions are being asked all over our country as the tire rationing program gets under way. Will we have to stop using our cars? How can we manage, When our homes are in suburbs miles from our work? What will the salesman do, whose living depends on his car? Must we return to horse and buggy days before long? The answers to some of these problems ought to be on the tips of the tongues of a couple of our guests here in the studio today. Mr. _____ (NAME OF MEMBER OF LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD) is a member of the _____ (NAME OF TOWN OR LOCALITY) Tire Rationing Board, and Mr. _____ (NAME OF CONSUMER DIVISION FIELD REPRESENTATIVE) is the local field representative of the Consumer Division of the Office of Price Administration. The OPA, as we usually call it,

ANNOUNCER
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has the big job of making the tire rationing program work, both for new tires and recapped ones, too, ---Isn't that right, Mr. _____ (NAME OF CONSUMER DIVISION FIELD REPRESENTATIVE)?

CONSUMER REPR.: I'm afraid your order is a little too big, Mr. Announcer. It's true that OPA is responsible for the administration of the whole program, but the local tire rationing boards are the ones who will really make it work in each community.

ANNOUNCER: So it will be up to Mr. _____ (NAME OF MEMBER OF LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD) to give us the whys and wherefores of the whole thing.

TIRE BOARD
MEMBER:

I've been studying a lot of rules lately, but I don't know that I have all the answers yet.

ANNOUNCER: Well, between the two of you, I hope you will be able to tell Mrs. _____ (NAME OF LOCAL WOMAN DRIVER) what she wants to know. Her only connection with tire rationing is that she drives her car quite a bit every day. That ought to qualify her to be chief questioner, to ask about all those things the rest of us drivers have been wondering about **ever** since the rationing of new tires began, and now that recapped tires are to be rationed, too, my guess is that there are quite a few things more we'd like to know about.

WOMAN DRIVER: If asking questions is to be my job, I'll be right at home. There are plenty of things I want to know, starting with why we have to ration any kind of tires, and going on down the line.

ANNOUNCER: Well, suppose we start right there. Why do we have to ration tires, Mr. _____ (NAME OF MEMBER OF LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD)?

TIRE BOARD MEMBER: Because we've got to have rubber to win the war. If we put all the crude rubber we have in the country into new automobile tires and recapping jobs for old ones, what are we going to use on the tanks and planes and battleships we're building?

WOMAN DRIVER: But I thought we had a lot of rubber stored up in the country. Seems to me I heard someplace that we had a tremendous supply of rubber in the country when war was declared. Why can't a little of that be used for automobile tires?

CONSUMER REPR.: Well, maybe if I explain a little about the whole rubber situation, you will see why we shouldn't touch our rubber stockpile, except for war needs. It's true that we do have a stock of crude rubber in this country, and it's true, too, that we had been deliberately piling it up for quite a while, so that when war was declared, it was the biggest pile of crude rubber that had ever been stocked in this country. But don't forget that every bit of it had to be imported, and 98% of it came from the far eastern countries that are now either occupied or under attack by Japan.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: And it looks like we aren't going to get any more for a while.

CONSUMER REPR.: That's right, Mr. _____ (NAME OF MEMBER OF LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD), so we'll have to get along with what we have. And when you stop to consider that we've been

CONSUMER REPR.
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using crude rubber in this country at the rate of 600,000 tons in a normal peace-time year, and that our new war needs would add greatly to that, the stockpile doesn't look very big.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: The fact is, it has only about a year's normal supply in it, doesn't it?

CONSUMER REPR.: Just about that.

WOMAN DRIVER: So it's not so big, after all.

CONSUMER REPR.: No, it isn't. And it would be smaller still if we went on making automobile tires at the rate of four million a month and retreading many others on top of that. Why, we've actually been using more than three-quarters of the rubber we brought into this country every year for making new tires alone.

WOMAN DRIVER: Heavens! No wonder they had to stop making them!

TIRE BD. MEMBER: That's the answer, all right. If we can't import any more rubber, we don't dare put what we have into tires--the war need is too important.

WOMAN DRIVER: But will the Army use up that much rubber? What do they use it for?

CONSUMER REPR.: The Army needs rubber in everything from erasers to pontoon bridges. Rubber goes into gun carriages, bulletproof gas masks, tanks, scout cars, medical equipment, boots, rain-coats, shoes--and a thousand and one other things. Why, just the adhesive plaster the Army plans to buy will probably use enough rubber to make several thousand tires.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: And don't forget the Navy ---

CONSUMER REPR.: No, when we're talking about using rubber, we can't forget the Navy, There's enough rubber in a modern battleship to make 17,000 average sized automobile tires.

WOMAN DRIVER: It begins to look as if my question should have been, will there be enough rubber for the war, even if we don't get any at all for tires?

CONSUMER REPR.: As a matter of fact, that is a most important question. And the answer will probably depend on how long the war blocks off the far eastern countries.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: Or how long it takes this new synthetic rubber program to get going.

CONSUMER REPR.: Yes, that holds out some hope. It is expected that by the middle of 1943 we will be ready to begin producing about four hundred thousand tons of synthetic rubber a year.

WOMAN DRIVER: But that stuff won't be any good for tires, will it?

CONSUMER REPR.: They think now that it will be--provided there is any left over after war needs are filled.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: The way I figure, the war supplies will have used up all the stockpile of rubber by about the time those new synthetic rubber plants are ready to start, and so everything they can produce will probably be turned over to fill war needs.

CONSUMER REPR.: That may be so--it's too bad we can't see that far ahead, so we'd know for sure. But one thing's certain--just in case things do turn out that way, we can't afford to keep on making and using up automobile tires until we know we're in the clear on the war program. That's why we've got to ration the tires and the recapping we can have, so the people

CONSUMER REPR.:
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and the work that have to go on won't be stopped by lack of tires.

WOMAN DRIVER: Who is going to get the new tires that are rationed out?

CONSUMER REPR.: What's the rule on that, Mr. _____ (NAME OF TIRE BOARD MEMBER)?

TIRE BD. MEMBER: The rule on that says that the only people who can get new tires or tubes are those who operate vehicles needed for public health and safety, public transportation, or essential truck operations.

CONSUMER REPR.: That means that if it would hurt the public or the community to have your car taken off the street, you can get a new tire --- otherwise not.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: For instance, if you are a doctor, a visiting nurse, or a veterinary, you are eligible to get new tires for a car you have to use in your work. But if you are a salesman or a taxicab driver, you can't, even though you are earning your living with your car.

WOMAN DRIVER: That seems hard.

✓ TIRE BD. MEMBER: It is, but this is war time, and the only way we can look at it now is, where can we put these tires so they will do the most good in keeping our people safe and healthy? Medical people and ambulances must get around rapidly to save lives. Fire departments must be able to move to save property. Police departments must keep order. Garbage collection and Sanitation departments must continue to prevent epidemics. Mail services must go on. Bus companies must be able to get people to their work and home again.

TIRE BD. MEMBER
(cont.)

Food, ice and fuel must be where people can get them.
Electric lights and pure water must be kept in our homes--
and every one of these operations require tires.

WOMAN DRIVER: But how about recapping? Are these same people the only ones who can get their tires recapped?

TIRE BD. MEMBER: Well, the list of eligibles for recapping is a little broader. But the principle behind it is the same. You can't have your tires recapped, or buy a recapped tire, unless your car is in some way essential to the welfare of the community. And, what's more, you will have to convince the Tire Board that it is.

WOMAN DRIVER: Isn't that the same as for getting a new tire?

TIRE BD. MEMBER: In the main, yes. But there's this difference. In the case of new tires, there's a clear-cut list, and you simply have to be one of the people named on the list or you don't get a new tire. The recapping list leaves more to the judgment of the local tire boards in order to take care of the special needs in different areas.

WOMAN DRIVER: Do you mean there isn't a list named for recapping?

TIRE BD. MEMBER: Oh, yes---there's a list, all right. All those who are eligible to receive new tires are also eligible to get recapped tires and to get a recapping job done on their old tires. Besides, there's another group who weren't named on the new-tire list who can get recaps, if they can persuade their local tire boards that their cars are used exclusively on service essential to the community and to the Nation.

TIRE BD. MEMBER
(cont.)

Taxicab drivers, for instance, in places where other transportation is absent or limited. And defense workers who are carrying themselves and several companions back and forth to work.

WOMAN DRIVER: That begins to sound a little more hopeful.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: I'm afraid it isn't quite as bright as it looks on the surface. You see, supplies of camelback--the rubber used for recapping--are so limited that only a few of those who can actually qualify are likely to get retreaded tires. Furthermore, only a comparatively few owners in each community will be able to prove that their cars are essential to the Nation, as well as to themselves.

WOMAN DRIVER: That's true, I guess. Our passenger cars apparently haven't much chance to get any kind of a tire, have they?

TIRE BD. MEMBER: It's possible--and even probable--that there will be no crude rubber available for retreading passenger car tires, except for those that are already eligible to buy new tires.

WOMAN DRIVER: Boiled down, all that means most of us will just have to stop driving our cars when the tires wear out.

CONSUMER REPR.: Oh, it isn't as bad as all that. No doubt some cars will be taken off the road in time, but I suspect most of us can keep going for quite a while, if we take care of the tires we have.

WOMAN DRIVER: You mean, use our cars only when we have to and cut down on the amount of driving we do?

CONSUMER REPR.: Exactly. The best way to make tires last is to use our autos less. But we can add a lot of mileage to our tires

CONSUMER REPR.
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if we just go easy on the gas pedal. Tires wear out a lot faster at sixty miles an hour than they do at thirty-five--- twice as fast, according to the experts.

WOMAN DRIVER: I wonder why that is?

CONSUMER REPR.: High speeds cause more heat and slippage, and so, of course, more of the rubber gets rubbed off on the road. And then, if you should suddenly want to stop while you're driving at sixty---

WOMAN DRIVER: I know---you've practically got to stand on the brakes.

CONSUMER REPR.: And there's nothing quite like it for scraping off the tread!

TIRE BD. MEMBER: Unless maybe it's having brakes that grab only one wheel. I heard of a test that was made one time on a light car with brand new tires. They fixed the brakes so that only one wheel would lock. Then they drove the car at eighty miles per hour, and jammed on the brakes. The brakes held, all right, until the car stopped, but when the tires were examined, the tread on the locked wheel was worn right down to the breaker strip.

CONSUMER REPR.: I wish every driver in the country had seen that test. I'll bet there'd be a lot more attention paid to brake adjustment.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: And, of course, you ought to have the wheel alignment checked every half year, or so. A garage man told me the other day that when a wheel is only half an inch out of alignment, the tire is dragged sideways eighty-seven feet in every mile.

CONSUMER REPR.: That probably does plenty of things to the tread, too.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: And keeping enough air in the tires is supposed to be important.

CONSUMER REPR.: It is---you should have heard the lecture I got at the gas station this morning on that subject. If you always keep a tire one pound under what it should be, it will give you about 600 miles less use than you should get from it. If you keep it over-inflated, wear will be concentrated on a narrow strip in the center of the tread, and the tire won't last long. Cords might be pulled loose if you drive on a very soft tire, and they might be broken if you run over a sharp-cornered chuck hole when there's too much air. So you'd better play safe and get the pressure checked every week.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: Especially since a tire loses about two pounds of air a week with average driving.

WOMAN DRIVER: The thing I'm wondering about is why we weren't told all these things before now.

CONSUMER REPR.: Well, we were--but we didn't give them much thought. But if we want to keep tires on our cars now we've got to start paying attention to them. We've got to start doing things we never did before, like shifting the tires around from wheel to wheel to equalize wear, avoiding rough roads, and repairing every little break or bruise or leak at once, to prevent serious damage later on. We've got to make our tires last as long as we can, because when they're gone, there aren't going to be new -- or even retreaded -- ones

CONSUMER REPR.:
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for any of us who can't get a certificate from the Tire Rationing Board.

TIRE BD. MEMBER: And not very many can get those certificates, I can tell you. We're only allowed _____ (NUMBER OF TIRES ALLOWED LOCAL TIRE BOARD UNDER LATEST MONTHLY QUOTA) tires and recaps a month in _____ (NAME OF REGION SERVICED BY LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD), at the present time. And those aren't going to be handed out to anybody unless he can prove he should get it.

WOMAN DRIVER: How does a person who is eligible to get a new tire or a recap go about it?

TIRE BD. MEMBER: Well, if a person is really eligible to get a tire or a recapping job, he'd better get in touch with the Tire Rationing Board when he needs one. They'll give him all the instructions and all the forms he needs, and will try to save him a lot of time and red tape. Let me give the Board's address and telephone number again --- _____ (ADDRESS OF LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD), telephone _____ (TELEPHONE NUMBER OF TIRE RATIONING BOARD).

WOMAN DRIVER: Well, this is all very interesting, but it's only shown me that I'm just one of the drivers of the twenty-nine million cars in this country that won't get either new or recapped tires when the old ones wear out. So I guess I'd better begin memorizing the rules for making my old ones last for a long, long time.

CONSUMER REPR.: To start you off on the right path, Mrs. _____ (NAME OF WOMAN DRIVER), let me go over them for you again

CONSUMER REPR.:
(cont.)

briefly. Boiled down, these are the rules for getting all the wear possible out of our tires. Drive less. Don't speed. Don't jam on the brakes, and don't make jackrabbit starts. Take your time on curves, look out for bumps, and stay off rough roads. See that there's always enough air in the tires, keep the brakes equalized and the wheels aligned. Shift the tires around once in a while so they'll wear evenly, and repair every cut, leak, break and bruise as soon as it happens. And last--but not least--leave your car in the garage and take the bus or streetcar whenever you can, and double up with neighbors when driving to work, shopping, or taking the children to school.

ANNOUNCER:

Thank you, Mr. _____ (NAME OF CONSUMER DIVISION FIELD REPRESENTATIVE), Mrs. _____ (NAME OF WOMAN DRIVER), and Mr. _____ (NAME OF MEMBER OF LOCAL TIRE RATIONING BOARD), for coming here today to explain our tire rationing plan. This program was prepared by the Consumer Division of the Office of Price Administration. If you have any questions regarding the material covered in it, the Consumer Division will be glad to hear from you. Address them --- Consumer (C-O-N-S-U-M-E-R) Consumer Division, Office of Price Administration, Washington, D. C.