

Ford firestone case study essay sample

[Experience](#), [Responsibility](#)



Ford/Firestone Case Study Essay Sample

1. Can a firm guarantee complete product safety? Discuss.

Although a firm can assure that a product is safe through design, a firm cannot guarantee complete product safety to the consumer. For example, Conair, a producer of electric hair dryers, includes illustrated tags warning the user not to use the product near water. However, it is possible that a product goes out the door with bad wiring and causes an electric shock to the user. A firm can and should take every precaution and effort to ensure product safety from design through production to consumer, and should be prepared to be liable for product malfunctions.

With large companies, like Ford and Firestone, it can be difficult to have complete visibility of production and monitor every product going out the door for safety issues. However, user error does not make product safety invalid. For example, a can of hairspray is safe to use as long as it is not near open flames and/or punctured. However, should a user disregard product safety warnings, the product can become unsafe and potentially deadly. Because of the always-present possibility for user error or a lack of quality or safety assurance on the assembly line, a firm cannot fully guarantee complete product safety.

2. Based on the information presented, which company do you think was the most to blame for the deaths and injuries? What led to your conclusion?

Although there is some shared blame, Ford should carry most of the weight for these deaths and injuries. It was Ford's responsibility to select a tire that

would be durable enough to withstand the purpose of the vehicle. Ford chose to select a Grade C Firestone tire that, in most cases, could not withstand the multiple factors that affected the tire due to the vehicle's use and environment. As the case stated, the Ford Explorer was widely used as a sports utility and travel vehicle, usually carrying a maximum capacity of weight and traveling at consistent high speeds.

Ford argued that it was Firestone's fault for the accidents because the threads failed causing blowouts. However, it was Ford's responsibility to alter the model based on the most common use of the vehicle. If Ford would have analyzed this, they could have noticed that the Grade C Firestone tires could not withstand the vehicle's user and should have opted for a better grade of tire, regardless of the effect to the bottom line.

3. " If an Explorer driver never checks the tire pressure and drives well above the speed limit, he has no one to blame but himself in an accident – not the vehicle and not the tires."

Discuss.

This statement seems harsh, but accurate. A driver should take a personal responsibility for the upkeep of his or her vehicle. Ford gave specific recommendations for the tire pressure of the Explorer based on the performance of the tire. Should a driver disregard this recommendation and fail to maintain the proper tire pressure, they driver would be responsible for the accident. There is a difference if the accident is caused by driver neglect or product failure. For example, if a tire gets punctured and the driver does

not notice until the tire fails, that is the driver's fault. In this case, there was more factoring into the accidents than driver neglect of tire pressure; the tires selected by Ford could not withstand the use of the vehicle.

4. Do you think the government should be blamed in the Explorer deaths and injuries? Why or why not?

I don't think that the government should be blamed in the Explorer deaths and injuries. The government lacked in toughening roof standards to prevent collapse during a crash, but moreover the accidents were caused by Ford's greater concern for the bottom line over a proper grade of tire to where the car would not have flipped in the first place. If the government would have required a more substantial roof, the deaths and injuries could have been decreased, but most likely not prevented.

5. Would you give credence to the "community champion" awards bestowed by a consumer advocacy group founded by the Association of Trial Lawyers, and given to Alan Hogan in 2001 for exposing careless tire production? Why or why not?

Yes. Alan Hogan brought forth substantial information about the careless tire production. As the case states, Hogan's testimony was responsible for the first tire recall. Hogan's testimony most likely saved thousands of lives because of the exposure of defective and carelessly made tires in the North Carolina plant.

6. "Admittedly the group think mindset may be responsible for a few unethical and bad decisions, but isn't this mindset more likely to consider

the consequences to the company of delivering unsafe products, and thus to support aggressive corrective action?” Evaluate this statement.

The group think mindset can, and in this case did, cause a very different decision, rather than if an individual had made the decision independent of other viewpoints and motives. The groupthink mindset pushed for a lesser regard for safety and a greater importance of the bottom line. Because of the differing cares and concerns of those that represent the organization, and the strong loyalty to the company over the public interest, the decision committee would support aggressive corrective action because their interests lie within the company and sustainable success. (I couldn't really read this section on the scan because of coloring)

7. Have you ever had an experience with a Ford Explorer? If so, what is your perception of its performance and safety? I have not had an experience with a Ford Explorer.

8. Have you had an experience with Firestone tires? What is your perspective of its performance and safety? I have not had an experience with Firestone tires.