



Ballinasloe Tyre Centre

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Summary

While we may be a small family run tyre outlet in the west of Ireland, it has always been our goal to operate to the highest industry and business standards. Having previously worked in the retail trade I knew the importance of having a customer focused business when setting up our tyre business 19 years ago.

We have achieved many milestones over the years by simply sticking to our goal of delivering the best service with a customer focused approach. I represented the retail sector on the council of the ITIA for many years and was there when they set up TRACS.

Ballinasloe tyres achieved a number of firsts in our quest to deliver high standards to our customers. We were the first outlet to have all staff IMI Accredited, the first licensed outlet in the country, the first in the West of Ireland to be a Michelin Certified Tyre Centre, an accolade we continue to build on annually.

Introduction

At Ballinasloe tyres we have always been conscious of looking after our waste properly. Tyre outlet waste is a daily occurrence and something we have to keep on top of in terms of managing at the outlet and in choosing a waste collector we can trust to take the waste away. We pride ourselves in giving excellent customer service and looking after the waste that comes off our customers cars is a key aspect of this customer is king approach to our business.

Certificate of compliance in the waiting room



Advocates

I have always been a public advocate for the introduction of a true Producer Responsibility compliance scheme for tyres. I have worked with Retailers in the establishment of the Association of Tyre Retail Standards (ATRS), I have met with local T.D.'s and the Minister himself (I am a constituent) to make sure the Retail voice is heard on tyres and that a fair scheme was introduced. I represented ATRS at the Oireachtas committee meeting on tyres and attended Tyre working group meetings and the relevant sub committees from this TWG.

For my own business personally I attended Repak ELT workshops and there spoke to the DCCA representative, Waste enforcement officers for my area and fellow Tyre Retailers to discuss how the scheme must be fair for retailers.

Reporting

Ballinasloe tyres first joined Repak ELT ahead of the initial scheme going live in 2015. We have kept up to date and were automatically a member of the full scheme when it came into operation last year.

We discussed our reporting obligations with Repak ELT ahead of the first reporting date and were able to complete all our reports on time.

While we don't import any tyres as such from out of the state, we do source tyres from Michelin and have joined the PRL to report these tyres and we are the producer for them. We report and pay for these tyres as we buy them, as this is simpler and we can keep a track of them on invoice. If Michelin were in the scheme we would be paying for them as we bought them as is the case with all our other tyres which are sourced from Repak ELT members.

We find the reporting process straight forward and report on time monthly to both Repak ELT and the PRI.



Sales

We use the EU tyre labels as a sales support to sell quality tyres to our customers. The Rolling resistant and noise are two of the environmentally important aspects of the labelling and we talk our customers through the best tyre for them, which will have environmental benefits as this leads the conversation towards a more quality product.

The vEMC is also something we talk to our customers about at the point of sale. We have always charged for tyre disposal and have always used reputable tyre collectors. We did not experience any negative feedback from our customers with the formal introduction of the vEMC. They are happy to know that we are looking after the waste tyres coming off their vehicles in the proper sustainable way.

Part worn tyres

Our business does not source and sell part worn tyres. We only fit new tyres for our customer's safety. Choosing not to sell part worn tyres is not just a safety decision, it is also an environmental one. Outlets who import containers of part worn tyres from Europe are importing waste and while some of these tyres are not useable and go straight to waste, the ones that are fitted to vehicles have an extremely short life and are very poor value. Ethically, part worn tyres do not fit with our customer based business model as they do not offer any of the warranty, safety, value or labelling evaluations that quality new tyres offer.

Waste collection

I have learned from experience that the best way to choose a waste tyre collector is to visit their premises. While first making sure that the relevant licenses are in place I like to visit my collector to see first-hand how they manage end of life tyres at their premises and talk to them about what happens the waste they collect from my outlet.

The new system of tyre collection at no cost at point of collection has worked well and the added benefit of paying the vEMC as we buy all our tyres (including as we import Michelin) is that our cash flow doesn't have to pay for waste collection in one chunk, as we had to do prior to the scheme.

Staff

I have always made sure our staff are well trained and accredited to the highest standard. On the labelling and the vEMC I have taken time to bring them up to speed on the new legislation and ensure they are well able to talk to our customers on all aspects of both during the sales process.

Customers



We received flyers from Repak ELT through our collector and we have these in our waiting room for our customers to have information on the scheme and why we have joined.

We have always enjoyed making and sourcing products made from waste tyres. Our swan has featured on our Facebook page and is a great source of conversation at our outlet. We also have the stove made from rims and the plant pots as examples for our customers to see and they always draw positive reactions from customers in our waiting room.



Our website continues the family tradition and was built by our 14 year old son Andrew, who helps greatly with our technical needs as a small business.

(<http://ballinasloetyres.wixsite.com/ballinasloetyres>)

Our Facebook page engages with our customers and is another area where we connect with the local community and highlight to them how we give the highest standards of service with both safety and the environment central to our business.

Conclusion

The scheme has worked well for us as retailers and the feedback from fellow tyre retailers is that the scheme is working beyond expectations. It is positive for the industry to have some regulation and for us all collectively to be proud of how we manage our waste. I am happy that Ballinasloe tyres have played our part in being compliant and looking after our customers to make sure their waste tyres are sustainably managed.