

Recycled Plastic Bottles Increase the Share of Sustainable Materials in Continental Tires



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Polyester fabric made from recycled PET bottles introduced in further tire plants

- Proportion of recycled materials in car tires is increasing by an average of three percent

- By 2030: complete switch to polyester from sustainable PET

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Reduce, reuse, recycle – this trio is key to more sustainable tires

, says Jorge Almeida, Head of Sustainability at Continental Tires

Hanover, Germany, November 28, 2024. Continental is increasing the proportion of recycled materials in its tires. More plants have recently been converted to use polyester fabric made from recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles. This increases the recycled content of many tire lines by an average of three percent. Depending on the tire size, up to 15 PET bottles are used per tire. By replacing the material with recycled polyester fabric, Continental saves valuable resources. Continental presented its own ContiRe.Tex technology for the first time at the end of 2021. It is based on PET bottles that would otherwise not be recycled. These are spun into a polyester yarn without any intermediate chemical steps and can withstand the special stresses in a tire.

Reduce, reuse, recycle – this trio is key to more sustainable tires. Wherever possible, we use recycled materials while maintaining our highest quality standards,

says Jorge Almeida, Head of Sustainability at Continental Tires. "Our

polyester yarn made from recycled PET bottles is just as strong as conventional polyester yarn. This shows that sustainability, performance, and safety go hand in hand at Continental.

The innovative ContiRe.Tex technology has been used on a small scale since 2022 at the tire plants in Lousado, Portugal, and Otrokovice, Czech Republic. The plants in Korbach, Germany, and Sarreguemines, France, have also recently started using recycled PET bottles in series production. The switch to more sustainable materials is an important part of the sustainability strategy of Continental Tires. The tire manufacturer has set itself the ambition of gradually increasing the proportion of renewable and recycled materials, in a first step to more than 40 percent until 2030. By then, all new car and light truck tires will contain only high-performance polyester fibers made from sustainable PET. A conventional passenger tire today contains about 15 to 20 percent recycled and renewable materials.

Perfectly matched materials for maximum safety

Textile fabrics made from different types of polyester are used in Continental's tire production. Their targeted use gives the tires the desired strength, flexibility and durability. Recycled or renewable PET, with its tensile strength, toughness and temperature stability, is just as stable and suitable for tire construction as conventional fabric made directly from crude oil. Continental is working intensively on various technologies to ensure that all types of polyester used in tire production can be converted to sustainable PET by 2030. In addition to recycled PET, the tire manufacturer is also investigating the use of bio-based or chemically recycled PET.

Ambition for 2050 at the latest: tires made entirely from sustainable materials

Continental is working hard to replace as many raw materials as possible with sustainable alternatives in production. By 2030, the tire manufacturer wants to use more than 40 percent renewable and recycled materials in its tires. By 2050 at the latest, all new Continental tires will be made from 100 percent sustainable materials. Step by step, it is already becoming apparent which raw materials will find their way into tire construction in the future. These include waste products from agriculture – such as the ash from rice husks – rubber from dandelions, recycled rubber or PET bottles.

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