

# Tire Tags Conform to EPCglobal

The Automotive Industry Action Group's Tire and Wheel Label and Radio Frequency Identification Standard will now include the EPCglobal data format for RFID tags used to identify tires and other auto products.

By Jonathan Collins

Oct. 7, 2004—In a move that paves the way for automotive manufacturers, suppliers and retailers to deploy the same RFID technology, the latest version of the Automotive Industry Action Group (AIAG)'s Tire and Wheel Label and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Standard (also known as AIAG B-11) will include the EPCglobal data format for RFID tags and other labels used to track and identify products and inventory. "This is a big step. Currently tire manufactures such as Michelin have to produce up to 12 different labels and identification marks for each tire to meet disparate customer requirements. Any move to RFID by tire manufactures would require one tag per tire," says Morris Brown, materials management product manager of AIAG. Headquartered in Southfield, Mich., the AIAG is a nonprofit association of automotive manufacturers and suppliers.

Although tags based on the new standard are expected to be used on a range of items in the automotive market, tagging tires was the key driver behind bringing the AIAG B-11 standard into line with the EPCglobal numbering system. "Eighty percent of tires produced are sold in the aftermarket with the Department of Defense and Wal-Mart among those customers," says Brown.

Nearly 323 million tires are expected to be sold this year in the U.S. market alone, with annual sales set to grow to 356 million units by 2009, according to the U.S. Rubber Manufacturers Association.

AIAG's Tire and Wheel Label and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Standard was the first item-level RFID standard in the world when it was released in 2001 as a guide to suppliers on the printing and placement of two-dimensional bar code labels and passive read-write RFID tags on tires, wheels as well as other component parts. However, until the agreement with EPCglobal, the part of the specification dealing with data format for the retail market had not been detailed.

Following the agreement with EPCglobal, the AIAG revised the standard so that OEMs and tire suppliers could include retail information, such as the manufacturer, product and serial number, on the RFID tag.

A data identifier in the AIAG B-11 standard will now support a 96-bit number in the EPCglobal format. That means that the EPCglobal number could be used in bar codes and other data carriers as well as RFID tags deployed in the automotive industry.

A publication entitled "AIAG B-11: Tire and Wheel Label and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Standard" details the specification and what is required to adhere to it. Available online at [www.aiag.org](http://www.aiag.org), the guide costs \$10 for AIAG members and \$50 for nonmembers.

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