



Department of Justice

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BRIDGESTONE CORP. EXECUTIVE AGREES TO PLEAD GUILTY FOR FIXING PRICES AND RIGGING BIDS ON AUTO PARTS INSTALLED IN U.S. CARS

Executive Agrees to Serve 18 months in a U.S. Prison

WASHINGTON – A former Bridgestone Corp. executive has agreed to plead guilty and to serve 18 months in a U.S. prison for his role in an international conspiracy to fix prices and rig bids of automotive anti-vibration rubber parts sold in the United States and elsewhere, the Department of Justice announced today.

According to the one-count felony charge filed today in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio in Toledo, Yusuke Shimasaki, along with co-conspirators, engaged in a conspiracy to allocate sales of, to rig bids for, and to fix, raise and maintain the prices of automotive anti-vibration rubber parts sold to Toyota Motor Corp., Nissan Motor Co. Ltd., Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. – more commonly known by its brand name, Subaru – and certain of their subsidiaries, affiliates and suppliers, in the United States and elsewhere.

According to the charge, Shimasaki participated in the anti-vibration rubber conspiracy from at least as early as January 2001 until at least December 2008. During that time period, he was employed by Bridgestone as a sales manager, an executive vice president at Bridgestone APM Co., in Findlay, Ohio, and as a general sales manager. According to the plea agreement, in addition to serving time in prison, Shimasaki has also agreed to pay a \$20,000 criminal fine and to cooperate in the department's investigation. The plea agreement is subject to court approval.

“The charge today once again demonstrates the Antitrust Division's vigorous commitment to hold individuals accountable for engaging in anticompetitive conduct,” said Brent Snyder, Deputy Assistant Attorney General for the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement program. “The division's ongoing investigation has resulted in more than two dozen executives serving prison time for their participation in illegal conspiracies involving auto parts.”

Bridgestone manufactures and sells a variety of automotive parts, including anti-vibration rubber parts, which are comprised primarily of rubber and metal, and are installed in suspension systems and engine mounts as well as other parts of an automobile. They are installed in automobiles for the purpose of reducing road and engine vibration. On Feb. 13, 2014, the Department of Justice announced that Bridgestone had agreed to plead guilty and to pay a \$425 million criminal fine for its role in the conspiracy. On April 15, 2014, Yasuo Ryuto, Isao

Yoshida, two former executives of Bridgestone Corp., and Yoshiyuki Tanaka, a current executive, were indicted their roles in a conspiracy to fix prices of automotive anti-vibration rubber parts.

To date, 33 individuals have been charged in the government's ongoing investigation into price fixing and bid rigging in the auto parts industry. Additionally, 26 companies have pleaded guilty or agreed to plead guilty and have agreed to pay a total of more than \$2.29 billion in fines.

Shimasaki is charged with price fixing and bid rigging in violation of the Sherman Act, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$1 million criminal fine for individuals. The maximum fine for an individual may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

Today's charge is the result of an ongoing federal antitrust investigation into price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct in the automotive parts industry, which is being conducted by each of the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement sections and the FBI. Today's charge was brought by the Antitrust Division's Chicago Office and the FBI's Cleveland Field Office, with the assistance of the FBI headquarters' International Corruption Unit and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct related to other products in the automotive parts industry should contact the Antitrust Division's Citizen Complaint Center at (888) 647-3258, visit www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html or call the FBI's Cleveland Field Office at (216) 522-1400.

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