



COMMERCIAL FLEET TIRE DIGEST

*The authoritative guide to reducing commercial tire expenditures from
Pressure Systems International,
the manufacturer of the Meritor Tire Inflation System by PSI™*

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**P.S.I. By the
Numbers**
In the U.S.
92% of fleets
that use
automatic tire
inflation
systems
choose MTIS

Commercial Tire Pricing & Performance

Commercial tire pricing for both new tires and retreads has been fairly stable since 2012. We all recall 2011 when tire prices experienced a 50% average increase in prices. The tire manufacturers announced multiple price increases throughout 2011. Today, an owner-operator is paying approximately \$500 for a Tier 2 steer or drive tire. New over-the-road Tier 2 trailer tires are running about \$425. A trailer retread cap/casing for line-haul service comes in at \$190; when you supply the casing, the cap is about \$95.

Adding up all these costs, an owner-operator running all new tires on his line-haul 18-wheel tractor-trailer will spend \$1000 for two steer tires, \$4000 for eight drives, and \$3400 for eight new trailer tires. An \$8400 investment in tires is significant. Bigger fleets that buy in large quantities will obviously receive a better deal on tires, but it is still a substantial expense. Fuel efficient tires are now the latest trend and they typically have a 5-15% price premium.

The bottom line is that fleets and owner-operators all take tires very seriously and have similar objectives when it comes to getting the most from them by .. maximizing tire removal miles, reducing & eliminating tire irregular wear, maximizing miles/32", reducing cost/mile, and maximizing fuel economy/retreadability. Tire maintenance personnel understand that the least expensive tire may not be the best long term decision to the fleet's financial bottom line. Measuring tire performance in miles/32" is the best way to compare different tires. A less expensive drive tire may start out with 26/32" of rubber while the higher priced drive tire may have 30/32". Sometimes too deep a tread can cause tread lug squirm & excessive heat buildup which may lead to a faster overall wear rate. Tire design and

compounds play a major role in how the tire is going to perform.

Tire companies offer a wide range of tire products. It is always a good idea to dedicate X number of vehicles to evaluating various tire models. Some tire designs may work great on one specific vehicle make/model run in pure line-haul service while another may be the answer for the same vehicles running in more regional service. The Technology Maintenance Council of the American Trucking Association recommends thirty vehicles to do a statistically sound tire evaluation. Of course this is not always possible in the real world and really depends on your fleet size.

Loads, speeds, routes, and vehicle specifics all contribute to how a tire is going to perform. If you run an evaluation, keep in mind that tires mounted new during the summer months usually have a faster wear rate when compared to tires mounted in the middle of winter. There can be as much as a 10% difference in miles/32" between summer and winter.

The other key variable to tire performance is the driver. Studies over the years have shown that the driver can affect tire performance up to 35%. An aggressive driver that drives fast, makes hard turns, and is aggressive with the braking can make a significantly negative impact on tire wear. This is one of the reasons why owner-operators tend to generate higher removal miles and better miles/32" versus the fleet driver. Owner-operators purchase their own tires and understand how important it is to be easy on your vehicle and your tires.

Working with your tire professional is always a good idea before investing in commercial tires for your fleets.

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