



# 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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## Tire Refresher Course for Drivers & Technicians

Happy New Year 2014!  
from PSI and Commercial Fleet Tire Digest.

For most commercial fleets tires continue to be their number one maintenance cost and follow only fuel in the hierarchy of overall vehicle operation costs. Commercial tire prices never go down, only up. In the last few years pricing for both new tires and retreads has been on a positive cost increasing slope. Depending on specific tire make/model and tread depth, pricing for eighteen linehaul tires can easily be in the \$7K - \$8K range. Even if you are specifying retreads on the drive and trailer position, you are still looking at a minimum of \$5K. So it is clear that tires are a major investment for every fleet and developing a serious and successful tire program is a priority for them. One of the keys to a winning tire program is the educational program established for every driver and technician in your operation.

It is quite common for fleets to talk about their tires and tire program with their new associates during the first day they hire into the organization but it is clearly not enough. It should not be a single time event. Drivers and technicians are the early warning system to maximizing tire removal miles. Everyone needs to understand the impact tires have on a fleet's bottom line. Increasing mileage and maximizing the number of retreads per casing can easily be improved through tire education. For instance they should know that maintaining the proper tire pressure will insure the tire footprint is optimal. Underinflation leads to a longer tire footprint (more rubber on the road) increasing tire rolling

resistance which has a significant negative impact on vehicle fuel economy. Underinflation also leads to irregular wear and premature tire removal miles. Retreadability will also be negatively affected because of the increased heat and flexing when running tires underinflated. On the flip side, too much overinflation is also a negative since the footprint becomes small and the shoulders will not be touching the ground as the tire was designed. However, fuel economy is a little better with tires slightly overinflated versus underinflated.

Drivers & technicians also need to understand that tire pressure gauges must be calibrated on a routine basis. Even a brand new stick gauge is only accurate to +/- 3 psi; and a few drops on the hard concrete floor and the gauge accuracy will continue to decrease.

Another way drivers can assist in maximizing their fleet's tire budget is to notify maintenance immediately if they notice tires developing uneven and irregular wear. There is a reason why a tire is not wearing smoothly and evenly. It may be vehicle alignment, over or underinflation, too much wheel end play, mismatched duals, or even driver abuse. The best source of information regarding why tires develop uneven wear is the TMC Radial Tire Wear & Conditions Analysis Guide. Every shop can use this bible of the tire world for training and reference purposes. If you don't have your own copy, order through the American Trucking Association at [www.truckline.com](http://www.truckline.com).

Your tire dealers should also be working with you to help train your team about tires and wheels.

### Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

- Q.** In my beverage fleet the tires running on the rear tandem drive axles have a much faster removal miles versus the same tires running on the front drive axle. Is that typical?
- A.** Yes. When a vehicle turns the pivot point is the first drive axle. The result is the rear drive tires tend to scrub tread off at a much higher rate. The more turning, the bigger the differential in removal miles between the 2 drive axles. Tires run on a linehaul vehicles show a much smaller difference in removal miles between the 2 axles.

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