



# COMMERCIAL FLEET TIRE DIGEST

*An authoritative guide from Pressure Systems International to help reduce costs, increase safety and improve operational efficiencies associated with tires.*

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## Tire and Tire Related Product Testing Considerations

### Did You Know?

Similar to OPEC, there is the Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries (ANRPC). They represent approximately 90% of the global demand for rubber.

At some point, most fleets regardless of size, are in a position to run a tire evaluation. This could be to evaluate if Tire A has better ROI compared with Tire B. It may be to prove that vehicle fuel economy is significantly improved with a particular tire. Maybe you need to determine if the tire casing from tire manufacture ABC can be retreaded more times versus a tire casing from a different tire manufacturer. Many fleets want to optimize their recommended tire pressure for specific wheel positions and will run an evaluation at two or even three different tire pressure settings. When fleets are determining if automatic tire inflation is the correct solution for their trailers, a typical test would be to run half of the test trailers with ATIS and the other half without any pressure system and measure tire related roadside service call reductions.

It may sound easy to run an evaluation, but in the real world it is always a challenge because there are so many variables to take into account. Vehicle make and model, routes, loads, speeds, terrain, weather and, of course, drivers will impact the results. There is nothing worse than running a tire evaluation for two years to conclude that there is no statistical conclusion.

The fact is that when it comes to tires, stuff happens. Tires get punctured and damaged. Tires get retreaded. When a tire does get punctured and repaired, it may or may not be put back on the same vehicle. It may take weeks or months or it may just disappear from the test program. A damaged tire on the road can be replaced at a truck stop and never be seen again. The TMC of the American Trucking Association's recommended practice for tires states that, if your fleet is large enough, you need at least 30 pieces in each test group at the end of the evaluation to make it statistical-

ly significant. You may need to begin with 50 tires of model A and 50 of model B to ensure that 30 tires of each survive the test.

Once the fleet manager decides exactly what he wants to evaluate or learn from the specific test, it's now time to brainstorm the details of capturing the data and getting buy-in. Drivers have the largest impact on a tire evaluation. Aggressive drivers can negatively impact tire wear by up to 35% depending on their braking and turning. A driver meeting on day one is always a good idea. Explain why you are doing the tire evaluation and how important it is to the fleet. Make the drivers feel special for being chosen to participate. A gift card and hats can go a long way to a successful test. Ask for driver feedback about feel on the road and traction. Welcome their input.

Once the test is ready to begin, try to get all the tires mounted within a couple of weeks. Time of year, for example winter vs. summer, can impact treadwear by as much as 10%. Remember, minimize test variables.

Since we know that tires will disappear over time, determine at what frequency tires should be inspected for tread depth, irregular wear, and tire pressure. If three months is the magic number, then the vehicles in questions should be flagged for inspection wherever they may be physically located. At the end of the test, let's say 24 months, tires should be removed and sent to a specific location for a final and thorough inspection.

The last piece of the puzzle is data analysis. Take the time to use your favorite XLS or database program to review the data and determine the direction your company should be taking regarding tires in the future. Always work with your local tire professional who are experts in running tire and tire related evaluations.

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