THE INFLATION SYSTEM™

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™

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 7 JULY 2009

How Your Drivers Can Help Your Tire Budget

Drivers can play a significant role in a fleet's tire program. Simply giving new drivers a one time "Tires 101" fifteen minute class is just not enough. With the proper training, drivers can be the fleet's early warning system for potential tire issues. The morning driver walk-around needs to include a serious look at the tires. So what should the driver be looking for during this walk-around?

- Tires should wear smooth and even. If the driver sees evidence of shoulder cupping, depressed rib wear, alternate lug wear, diagonal wear, one sided wear, fast centerline wear, or erratic wear, he or she needs to write this up and get the mechanics involved. It may be a simple misalignment (toe in or toe out) or it may be an issue with the suspension system. It could also be due to underinflation or mismatched dual tires. Sometimes it could be related to tire manufacturing itself such as a missed nail hole during the retreading process.
- Measuring tread depths is another task that a driver can easily be trained to perform. Every fleet has a target removal tread depth based on wheel position. It's important to try to hit this target in order to maximize tire mileage while protecting the casing prior to retreading. As an example, if the target tread depth removal point is 4/32" for your trailer tires & the tires come out of service with 2/32" because nobody was checking….the result may negatively affect the casing because of stone drilling. Low tread depth makes the casing more susceptible to puncture damage.
- Checking the tire sidewalls for any signs of distortion is another easy check that drivers can perform. Curb damage may lead to tire sidewall issues that show up as cuts and/or rubber chunking. Sometimes you can even see a sidewall bubble develop.
- One of the most important checks a driver can do is to check his tire pressures with a calibrated air pressure gage. These gages need to be checked for accuracy on a regular basis, because they are notorious for going bad very quickly. Most drivers check their steer tire air pressures but drives and trailers are typically very neglected, especially the inside duals. Heat is a tires worst enemy, so keeping ALL your tires properly inflated will go a long way in maximizing tire mileage, reducing uneven wear, and increasing your fuel economy.

Drivers are not experts in tires, but being able to identify potential tire issues early on can go a long way in reducing a fleets annual tire budget. Keeping your drivers involved with your tire program will significantly reduce your tire costs.

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Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q: I have a 2003 Kenworth and run over 125,000 miles/year. I have 175,000 miles on my current steer tires but they are now developing outside shoulder wear on the outer edge of the outside shoulder rib. Is this normal or should I pull the tires? Tread depth is still 6/32.

A: Based on your average miles driven per year, you are in a line-haul service vocation. The wear condition you describe on your steer tires is very normal for slow wear rate applications. If you were doing city driving with lots of turning, you would not see fast outside shoulder wear but the tread rubber would just be scrubbing off very rapidly. This leads to mileages well under 100,000 before the tires have to be removed. Removal mileages for steer tires in the 175 - 200,000 range is excellent for line haul operations. Legal pull point for steer tires is 4/32.