



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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Widebase Tires - What's the Verdict?



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troops serving
around the
world for
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independence
and freedom !*

Believe it or not widebase tires (two dual tires replaced by one tire) have been on the market for more than ten years with sales doubling each year since their introduction. If industry sales growth is any indication then widebase tires have been a clear innovative winner.

Michelin, Bridgestone, Goodyear, Continental all currently offer a wide array of both drive and trailer widebase designs in both the 445/50R22.5 and 455/55R22.5 sizes. The 445/50R22.5 is the most popular size with over 70% of the widebase market. The larger size widebase (455/55R22.5) has 800 pounds per tire higher load capacity versus the 445/50R22.5. The 455/50R22.5 is rated at 11,000 pounds with 120 psi inflation pressure.

Approximately 70% of the widebase tires sold today are for the drive axle position with 30% of the tires purchased for trailers. Widebase tires are being used more and more on dollies because these tires allow one individual to manually move a dolly into position in the yard much more easily than he can when the dolly is equipped with duals.

So what makes these widebase tires so attractive to fleets? Significantly reducing the number of tires in inventory is a nice advantage because it reduces inventory carrying costs. And of course you only require half the number of wheels, so you reduce that inventory as well. If you are a fleet that grosses out your loads, then widebase tires on both drive and trailer positions will allow you to gain between 800 – 1000 pounds of load capacity assuming you are now running aluminum in place of steel wheels. The next big advantage is vehicle fuel economy. One wide-

base tire is NOT double the size or weight of two duals. A widebase tire equals approximately 70% of the footprint width of two duals. Running one widebase in place of two duals will produce a significant reduction in rolling resistance resulting in better fuel economy.

Another advantage to fleets is that drivers just like the way a vehicle equipped with widebase tires runs down the highway because these tires are NOT affected by road rutting in the same way that duals are. Ask any driver and they will tell you they prefer to drive a vehicle equipped with widebase tires. With driver shortages expected to worsen, this may make a world of difference to your fleet.

While there are many advantages, there are also a few considerations when specing a vehicle with widebase tires. Mechanics and tire busters are dealing with a much heavier tire assembly (versus one dual) that requires special handling equipment and a good handling technique. Maintaining the required air pressure is really critical for these tires. A widebase tire underinflated even 10% will cause excessive sidewall flexing and high heat generation. One widebase tire is doing the work of two duals and is working very hard which is why maintaining proper air pressure is so important. If a widebase tire goes flat there is no limp-home capability to the next truck stop which is why the use of automatic tire inflation systems is pretty much standard for those fleets that are running widebase tires on their trailers.

Now that you know some of the advantages and disadvantages of running widebase tires, you'll be able to decide which is best for your particular application. Contact your tire vendor to get additional information on their widebase tire offerings.

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