



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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Inspecting Your Tires

*PSI can
offer you a
Tires 101
Class by
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To be proactive with your tire program is always a good thing. As the average tire price has increased considerably over the last three years along with fuel in the \$4.00 per gallon range, maximizing fuel economy and tire removal miles is a goal of every fleet. A serious commercial fleet tire program includes a thorough education of Tires 101 for both technicians and drivers. A Tires 101 class is not a single event when a new tech or driver hires into the organization, but must be an on-going process.

Fuel economy improvement will have the largest impact on reducing your overall maintenance budget. If you can gain even a conservative 2% in vehicle fuel economy improvement through a combination of purchasing fuel-efficient tires and automatic tire inflation systems, the payback will be almost immediate. As you evaluate fuel efficient tires, keep in mind that depending on the specific make and model, some may have less non-skid or tread depth versus the tires you are comparing them against. Less initial tread will give better fuel efficiency but will also result in less tire removal miles. What you save in fuel costs is well worth the trade off.

Drivers and technicians must understand that tires are a significant fleet investment and must be taken seriously. Maintaining proper tire inflation pressure all the time will result in the "perfect" tire

footprint and lead to nice smooth even wear. If irregular tire wear develops because of alignment and/or underinflation, the result is that tires will be removed early from service reducing their useful life, and fuel economy also drops because the tires no longer have an even tread pattern as they rotate down the highway.

The morning walk-around by drivers is an important part of any tire program. Drivers are the early warning system to tire issues. Punctures, sidewall damage, leaking valve stems, and uneven tread patterns can be identified by trained drivers. However, simply thumping the tread with a club and kicking the tire sidewall is only going to identify a completely flat tire. By industry definition, a tire is considered flat and should be taken out of service if the tire is 20% lower than the fleet air pressure specification. There is a reason why a tire has lost 20% of its air. Just re-inflating the tire is not recommended because it will continue to lose air. Dismounting the tire from a wheel and doing a thorough inspection is the proper course of action.

The TMC of the American Trucking Association publishes the Radial Tire & Wear Conditions guidebook which explains the reason why you see specific tread patterns. This is an excellent source of information about what causes tires to develop irregular wear and how to rectify the problem.

Fleets need to be working closely with their tire professionals to help optimize their tire program.

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Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q. I have 3 different stick pressure gauges in the shop and I get 3 different answers when we check the same tire. What gauge is recommended?

A. Brand new stick gauges out of the box are only accurate to +/- 3 psi. When gauges are dropped on a concrete floor, the gauge will only become even less accurate. Checking your gauges versus a master gauge is the only way to determine if your gauge is accurate. Stick gauges are available in the market which are adjustable and can be calibrated.