

## Tire Responsibility



How do you dispose of old tires?"  
We like this creative example  
of a "green" way to do it!

Tire responsibility – whose is it anyway? Is it my technicians, my drivers, director of maintenance or is it my tire program manager? The answer is all of the above. The director of fleet maintenance typically oversees the program but requires input from his entire team. It may appear easy to create a successful tire program, but unfortunately it can be a complicated task. The initial step should be meeting with all individuals working directly or indirectly with new tires and retreads. In the very beginning of the process, it's also important to get your outside tire professionals involved. As you begin the process, many questions need to be asked and testing implemented if you cannot answer them. Some of those questions will be:

- Which tire design is best for each of my wheel positions? You need to define what is important to your fleet: Is it final removal mileage, is it traction in the wet & snow, is it maximizing retreadability, or is fuel economy #1. For instance, you can have a drive tire last over 300,000 miles in a long-haul operation. But what if you had a drive tire that lasted 20% less miles or 240,000 miles. However, those same tires have increased your fuel economy by 2%. You need to stop and put a pencil to the equation. It may work out that the increase in fuel economy offsets the low mileage by a fairly large percentage which can easily justify the loss in removal miles.
- How are the tires performing? Getting driver input about tire performance is a key piece of the puzzle. Only the driver can really know if the tire handles well and has great

traction in a variety of weather and road conditions.

- What about retreading? Retreading is really critical to a successful tire program. A retread is typically one third the price of a new tire, so it's very clear why 90% of fleets retread. To maximize retreading there are two keys to success: #1 is to have a tread depth pull point which is not so low that the casing can easily become damaged by stones and debris. Removing the tire at the legal limit of 2/32" for drives and trailer tires will reduce your retreadability of the tire casing. And #2 - you need to work with your retread professional to help analyze your tire casings to determine exactly the reasons why a particular casing could not be retreaded. Having this knowledge will help you mitigate whatever the situation was causing the problem allowing you to maximize retreadability of more casings in the future.
- How frequently do I need to visually check tires and do pressure checks? The more frequently tire inspections occur will give you an early warning system for identifying vehicle alignment issues, irregular tire wear, and puncturing objects. You should also determine the bottom-line advantage of keeping your tires running at the correct pressure all the time so you can maximize fuel economy, removal miles, and uneven tire wear. Running your trailers with automatic tire inflation systems will certainly insure that your tires are running at the correct operating pressure all the time.

It takes a total team approach to have a successful tire program.

Tires continue to be the #1 maintenance cost for fleets. With the average price of new tires and retreads continuing to rise at an alarming rate, creating a serious tire program is critical to the fleet bottom line.

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