



# 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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## Reducing Tire Issues

Have a Happy  
and Safe  
Memorial Day.  
Please  
remember all  
men and women  
who have died  
in military  
service to the  
United States.

This is the season for trucking industry conferences and expositions. It seems that every niche of trucking hosts their own annual convention. A common theme discussed at these events was tires and since they are still the highest maintenance cost for fleets, it's top of mind for many. A good, well thought through new tire and retread tire program can make a trucking company very successful.

During roadside inspections, tires are still in the top three of all violations found. Lights, brakes, and tires are consistently the biggest violators.

There are an estimated 4.5 million active drivers with a CDL. There has been and will continue to be a driver shortage so more and more fleets are hiring younger and less experienced drivers. Drivers have a major impact on tire performance. Industry studies have shown that drivers can adversely affect tire treadwear by up to 35%. Drivers that are aggressive in their driving skills tend to scrub the tread much more quickly off the tire. Quick acceleration and aggressive turning all lead to tire issues. Brake skids and tire flat spots are trending higher. Most of the time this is caused by the drivers. It is an education issue.

Less experienced drivers love to run into every curb with their right side trailer tires. The number one issue with the right outside dual tires are shoulder and sidewall impact breaks.

During the daily driver vehicle walk-around, the driver should be the early warning system when it comes to tires. Identifying tires with early onset of irregular wear, punctures, sidewall damage, low tread depth and underinflated tires can all be identified by the driver. At that point maintenance should be alerted and the problems corrected. With the CSA (Compliance, Safety, and Accountability) program run by FMCSA, drivers want nothing to do with vehicles that have tire issues because when they are pulled over for a roadside inspection and the inspectors find tire problems, then the driver also has a problem.

CSA assigns tires either eight or three points for a violation depending on the specific tire condition. The eight point violations will result in the vehicle put out-of-service. A good example of that is a flat tire. By definition of the CVSA (Commercial Vehicle Safety Administration), a tire is considered flat when the maximum tire pressure listed on the sidewall drops below 50%. So if a tire says the maximum pressure is 120 psi, when that tire drops to 60 psi or below, you would be assigned eight points plus the vehicle is put out of service. You cannot even drive to the next truck stop to find air. An expensive emergency roadside service call would be required. In addition, those eight points go on the fleet's CSA score and the driver's personal CSA score.

Bottom line is that tire problems lead to even bigger problems for both the fleet and the driver.

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## Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

**Q.** What is the minimum legal limit for tread depth?

**A.** Steer tires have a legal tread depth limit of 4/32" while all other wheel positions (drive, trailer, and dolly) have a 2/32" target. If even one tire is measured during a roadside inspection to be less than the legal tread depth limit, the vehicle is considered out-of-service and requires an emergency roadside service call to replace the tire.