



COMMERCIAL FLEET TIRE DIGEST

The authoritative guide to reducing commercial tire expenditures from Pressure Systems International, the global leader in Automatic Tire Inflation Systems

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Reducing Fuel Costs & Improving Fuel Economy

NACFE announces 'Run on Less', the first-of-its-kind cross-country roadshow to showcase advancements in fuel efficiency. The 3-week event in September will track fuel efficiencies of the participants, culminating at the NACV show in Atlanta. See RunOnLess.com for more information

During the recent National Private Truck Council (NPTC), annual meeting held in Cincinnati, we attended an informative session on reducing fuel costs and improving vehicle fuel economy. Private fleets discussed what they have implemented that helps with both fuel and fuel economy. Some of what we learned:

It is important to work with your fuel suppliers to work out the best agreements at the best pricing. The truck stop channel is of course the most logical supplier of fuel. However, drivers usually prefer certain truck stop locations over another for a variety of reasons. Shower is better at Truck Stop A; more healthy food options at Truck Stop B; better service at Truck Stop C. It is important to have agreements with many fuel suppliers for this reason. With the continued shortage of qualified drivers, keeping drivers happy is a priority.

Many fleets offer cash bonuses to drivers who frequent truck stops where the fuel taxes are lowest. Fuel taxes vary by municipality and by state. Integrating routing software and fueling software will point the driver to the recommended fuel supplier. Fleets spoke about saving as much as \$200/week per truck if drivers just used the suggested fuel supplier in their travels. One fleet stated if a driver reached a threshold of 90% of the recommended truck stops for fueling, the driver would receive a \$100 monthly cash bonus. This was a big incentive in their driver retention efforts.

Hauling light loads over straight roads will always generate the best vehicle fuel economy. Driving over the mountains with fully

loaded trailers is the worst scenario for fuel economy. Another consideration is the weight of fuel. A fully loaded trailer may not be able to take on a full load of fuel at the truck stop because that could put the truck/trailer combination over the vehicle and highway load limits.

A big topic of conversation was the use of automatic transmissions. Fleets reported automatic transmissions generated anywhere between .5 and 1.5 mpg improvement in fuel economy. Older drivers, who are reluctant to operate a truck outfitted with automatic transmissions, can be an issue. The best solution brought forth by the fleets was to inform the driver that his current vehicle is going out of service for two weeks. The driver would then be given a vehicle spec'd with automatic transmission. In every case, after the two-week period, the driver will ask dispatch if he can keep running the truck with automatic transmission. Everyone loves them once they have had a chance to experience them.

Paying a driver a bonus for exceeding his baseline miles/gallon was also reviewed as the best way to improve vehicle mpg. Many fleets have found that paying quarterly mpg bonuses goes a long way. If, for example, the driver can save the company \$500/month in fuel by increasing vehicle mpg from 6.5 to 7.0 mpg, then the \$500 savings is split between the company and the driver. Other fleets pay drivers a bonus for reducing idling time.

Low rolling resistance tires in combination with automatic tire inflation, where air is added automatically to any low tire, was also discussed as a simple and quick payback for fleets to increase vehicle mpg.

Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q. When does the new greenhouse gas regulations go into effect for trailers ?

A. Calendar year January 1, 2018 is when GHG-2 is effective on new trailers. GHG -2 is a 10 year regulation that becomes more stringent during the 10 year period.

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