



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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Are Widebase Tires Right for You?

Initial S.7 Task
Force Meeting
on widebase tires
is being held at
TMC Fall
Meeting in
Raleigh NC on
9/14 at
2:00 PM
www.truckline.com/IndEvents/TMCFall2009

There is no question, the market continues to grow for the widebase tires and the 445/50R22.5 is the most popular size. While some refer to these tires as "Super Singles", the correct generic term for one tire replacing two (2) duals is widebase tires. "SuperSingle" is a trademarked name associated with widebase tires produced by The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company.

This tire is not for every fleet but does have significant benefits under the right set of fleet operations. Benefits include a weight savings since there is only one (1) tire and one (1) aluminum wheel. This compares to a dual tire assembly with two (2) tires and two (2) wheels. There is nearly a 1000 pound weight savings for a tractor/trailer changing from dual tires and steel wheels to widebase tires with aluminum wheels on both the drive/trailer positions.

It's important to note that a widebase tire is NOT double the width of two (2) duals. A 295/75R22.5 dual tire is approximately 11" wide. The tread width of a 445/50R22.5 widebase tire is about 17" or 70% of the combined 22" width of the two (2) duals. Why is this important? It means that the one widebase tire is doing more "work" than two (2) duals making proper air pressure especially critical to successful performance.

Widebase tire advantages include:

- Drivers report that they really like the way the widebase tires handle going down the highway. This is possibly because the tires are so wide that typical road rutting found on today's highways actually becomes a non-issue with these tires.
- Fuel economy is another advantage to running widebase tires. Less weight is the most significant reason for this fuel economy advantage.
- Many fleets spec widebase tires be-

cause the weight savings allows them to carry extra payload. This is especially true for vehicles carrying bulk loads. For a truck operator, payback on the cost of adding widebase tires can be very quick if they can add 1000 pounds of load per run.

- When widebase tires were initially introduced, there was a limited supply of replacement tires available which caused concern for those fleets considering switching. This is no longer an issue as the tire manufacturers have increased their production of widebase tires; now if you do have a tire downtime, most dealers stock this tire.

A few disadvantages include:

- Since there is only one (1), if you do have a problem with a widebase tire, there is no limp-home capability. We certainly do not recommend limping home on any bad tire, even with duals, but it does happen in the real world. For this reason, automatic tire inflation systems are very popular with fleets that run widebase tires on their trailers. If you do have a puncture, air will automatically be added allowing you to get back to base without being delayed by an emergency roadside service call.
- Since widebase tires are significantly heavier and larger than a dual tire, they are not popular with your typical tire changer. He (or she) can't just pick up the tire and throw it on the pickup!

Something unique to widebase is the type of wear pattern that develops when tires are running over or underinflated. With dual tires, if the tire is overinflated, fast centerline wear will develop. If you are underinflated, then fast shoulder wear is the result. But widebase tire wear characteristics are just the opposite. Underinflated widebase tires will lead to fast centerline wear and overinflation will result in fast shoulder wear. This is because widebase tires have a steel wraparound ply to insure that the wide tread will lay flat and not "grow".

We suggest that you work with your tire professional to determine if widebase tires are the solution for your fleet.

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