



# 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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## Tire and Fuel Prices Continue to Rise

PSI can offer you a Tires 101 Class by contacting Al Cohn [acohnpsi@aol.com](mailto:acohnpsi@aol.com)

**"Tire prices continue to rise" "Diesel fuel exceeds \$3.50 a gallon"** Fleet managers read these headlines on a routine basis and know that their company's profits will be affected quite dramatically.

Let's analyze costs associated with a typical 500 truck linehaul fleet that averages 6.5 miles/gallon with each vehicle traveling an average of 120,000 miles per year. At \$3.50 per gallon for diesel, this fleet will pay \$64,615 (18,462 gallons @ 3.50/gal) for fuel for just one tractor for the year. For their 500 trucks, the annual fuel bill will be \$32.3 million. And, what if fuel prices increase 5% during 2008? That would tack on an additional \$1.6 million for the year.

The cost of a new commercial radial truck tire typically exceeds \$300, but can vary depending on specific wheel position, initial tread depth, tire compound, and manufacture. Of course, the more tires you purchase, the better (or lower) the buying price. Tires are compounded and designed to meet the needs of the various service vocations out in the real world. Some tires are designed to maximize fuel economy, others are designed to maximize removal mileage, and still others are designed to minimize chip/chunk when a tire goes off the road. And there are also tires which are designed to run well in a plethora of operating conditions. Most fleets calculate their bottom line tire costs by using cost

per mile.....not the initial buying price. A tire may have a high purchase price but performs better for fuel economy and removal mileage versus a lower price tire. The true measure of a tire's success is cost per mile when it comes to removal mileage. So let's assume that our 500 truck linehaul fleet uses steer tires that average 120,000 miles to removal and cost \$325 each. With this fleet averaging 120,000 miles a year, the steer tires will last for one (1) year and the cost per mile calculates to \$0.0027 (\$325.00/120000 = .0027) for each tire. Fuel efficient tires are becoming more and more popular as fuel prices continue to escalate. Even by being very conservative, if using fuel efficient tires will allow our 500 linehaul fleet to cut just 1% from their annual fuel bill, yearly savings would be \$323,000.

To insure a fleet maximizes tire mileage and has the best fuel economy, maintaining proper tire inflation pressure is critical. Tire costs increase significantly when tires are run under-inflated because irregular wear will develop leading to premature tire removal. And on the fuel side, running underinflated will cause greater sidewall flexing leading to excess heat and heat is a tire's worst enemy. Tires running under-inflated by 20% will lead to a minimum reduction in fuel economy of at least 2%. Implementing a serious tire inflation program and utilizing automatic tire inflation systems which adds air whenever the tire is below specification is the best way to mitigate the increased tire and fuel costs facing commercial fleets.

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## Q & A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

**Q.** How often should I be inspecting my tires?

**A.** During the driver morning walk-around, tires should be checked for any sidewall damage, tread punctures, and irregular wear patterns. Tire inflation pressures should be checked at least once per week with a calibrated air pressure gauge. If your trailer tires are equipped with an automatic tire inflation system, tire air pressures should be checked when the light that is illuminated on the front of the trailer stays on for greater than 10 minutes.