



# 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™*

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2011

## What are my tire retread options?

Contact  
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to setup your  
Tires 101  
Class for  
Drivers/  
Mechanics

Almost 90% of commercial trucking fleets retread their drive and trailer tires at least one time. Most retreads cost anywhere from a third to half the cost of a new tire so it is an obvious and significant cost advantage for fleets to be running retreads. The most successful long haul tire programs typically can reach up to two retreads assuming they have a serious comprehensive tire maintenance program in place. In pickup and delivery operations where the tread is scrubbed away at a very high rate, three, four and more retreads are possible.

There are basically three types of retread technologies that are available in the marketplace:

- Mold Cure
- Pre-Cure
- Spliceless Pre-Cure

In Mold Cure systems, the tread is buffed away down to the casing where unvulcanized tread rubber (no tread pattern) is applied. The tire is then placed in a mold and a combination of heat, pressure and time is applied with the new tread design in the rigid mold. The process of heat, pressure, and time is known as curing a tire.

In Pre-Cure retread systems, after the tread is buffed down to the casing, a thin layer of rubber called cushion gum is applied around the casing. Tread rubber that has already been vulcanized and has a tread pattern (pre-cured) is now applied

around the tire. The cushion gum helps keep the tread in place and creates the bond between the casing and the new tread. The two ends of the pre-cured tread are spliced together then the tire is placed in a curing chamber vulcanizing the new tread onto the tire casing.

Spliceless Pre-Cure is the most recent innovation in the retread process. Spliceless pre-cured treads are not extruded in flat pieces (pre-cure retread process), but rather are molded in one piece circular molds. The circular tread is stretched over the buffed casing followed by a curing process similar to the pre-cure retread curing operation.

In all three retread processes, there are many tread compounds, designs, and tread depths available to the fleets. There are going to be differences in performance between and among the final retreaded tires with the various retread manufacturers.

Fleets should run their own internal evaluation to determine which retreads show better bottom-line tire performance than the others. It is very important to visit your local retreader and review their entire process including how they inspect tire casings, how they make casing repairs and how they train their workforce. The specific retreader can have a greater impact than the specific retread tire process. And of course there are price differences between each retread process which will affect your tire cost/mile analysis. A good recommendation is to work closely with your tire professional and talk with other similar fleets to get their perspective.

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## Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

**Q:** I just purchased a brand new stick type air pressure gauge at my local truck stop. I paid \$20 but it is giving pressure readings 5 psi higher when compared with other gauges in our shop. Is this normal?

**A:** Pressure gauge accuracy is typically +/- 3 psi brand new out of the box. So if you are checking a tire with 100 psi, you could find that the gauge may read anywhere from 97 to 103 psi. The only way to verify accuracy is to use a "master air gauge station".

(Please refer to the April and May 2010 issues of The Tire Digest discussing Tire Gauges )