



# 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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## Getting the Most out of your Tire Program for 2015

Best Wishes for a Happy and Prosperous



January is always a good time to review your current fleet tire program and to develop objectives to reduce costs for the coming year. What tires are you specifying for the new equipment? Tire companies continue to develop new tires for specific service vocations that maximize tire removal mileage, increase traction, improve fuel economy and increase retreadability. Your new equipment should be specified with the latest tire technology that will help achieve your tire cost reduction goals for 2015 on tractors, trailers, and dollies.

The same tire make/model can perform quite differently depending on the specific tractor and trailer. Establishing a baseline for target tire removal miles on the various equipment running in the fleet is an important part of the tire program process. These mileages will vary depending on the specific service vocation that the vehicle travels. If, for example, Freightliners, Navistars, and Volvos are all running in your line haul service operations, you will then want to establish how the same steer and drive tires are performing on each of these vehicle models. You may discover that tire model A is averaging over 175,000 to removal on the Freightliners and Navistars but is only getting 150,000 miles on the Volvos. This would indicate that tire model B might be a better choice to get you those extra miles on the Volvo tractors. This is the type of analysis required by gathering data over time. It is not necessary to track every tire in the fleet from birth to death over multiple retreads. If the size of your fleet supports it, choosing (30) tractors of each configuration will give you a solid statistical analysis. It is much easier to follow the tires on (30) vehicles versus 3,000. Certainly smaller fleets will need to adjust accordingly choosing a number of units that will establish a good sample for them.

It is also important to establish a consistent target tread depth target when removing tires from service. Since retreading is such an important part of any fleet tire program to reduce their tire costs, it is critical to protect the casing from cuts, stones, and damages. Running the tires down to the 4/32" legal limit for steers and 2/32" for all other tire positions is positive to maximize tire removal miles but will have a negative impact on retreading. Choosing a target tread depth in the 6 - 8/32" range will protect the tire casing. A retread is typically 1/3 to 1/2 the price of a new tire so it is in the fleet's best interest to protect this valuable asset from cuts and damages.

When tires come out of service they should be worn smooth and evenly down to your target tread depth. If tires develop uneven and irregular wear this will not only adversely reduce your fuel economy but tires will be removed prematurely. Identifying the issues which led to the irregular wear and then coming up with a plan to remedy the situation will help lower your tire costs for the future. Running tires underinflated is a major cause of both early removals due to uneven wear, and also the extra heat generated by the underinflated condition will lead to retreadability issues.

If you look at the fleets with successful tire programs they have one item in common - TRAINING. Technicians and drivers need to be educated regarding tires on a regular basis. Not just the first day they join the company. Drivers are the early warning for any tire issues. The morning vehicle walk-around can identify tires that are beginning to develop signs of uneven wear and low tire pressures. Running your hand across the tread of steer tires can determine if vehicle alignment is an issue. Being proactive is the best way to reduce tire costs and improve your tire program. Always work with your tire suppliers to insure that you are running the best tire for your fleet operations.

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### Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

- Q.** Do you recommend the "stick" air pressure gauges that have an adjustment screw for calibration?
- A.** Yes. Tire pressure gauges are only accurate to +/- 3 psi even when brand new regardless of brand. It is important to check gauges regularly versus a master gauge. Dropping a gauge even a few times on the hard concrete will change the pressure accuracy. Stick gauges that are adjustable will insure proper calibration.