



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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Drivers & Your Tires

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duce your fuel costs

Drivers can have an enormous impact on your tire expenses, before they leave on a trip and while they are on the road. During their morning walk-around, it is important for drivers to visually inspect tires for any sign of irregular wear, cuts, snags, and punctures; and report that information to the maintenance department either directly or through a log book entry.

But what about checking the tire air pressures during the walk-around? It does take time to check the air pressure on 18 tires (unless you use a Billy club...which is not recommended but still occurs); and how does the driver know that the pressure gauge he's using is even accurate? After checking the air pressure, it is also possible that a valve core can stick causing the tire to lose air. The driver, of course, would need to know what the recommended air pressure is for steer, drive, and trailer tires. Many fleets have different specs for air pressure depending on wheel position.

Even if the driver completes these checks, what if he (or she) finds that the inside dual drive tires are all 10 PSI too low. If he's on the road, will he actually take the vehicle to a truckstop to get air? The driver does not own the vehicle so why should he care if the tire is 10 PSI underinflated. This is exactly why it is so important to give your drivers a Tires 101 update on a regular basis. Most drivers have no idea that the tires on his 18 wheeler may have cost over \$6000. During a Tires 101 course, drivers

need to hear about tires and how they can influence:

- tire removal mileage
- fuel economy
- retreadability
- tire related roadside service calls

Drivers must fully understand that their jobs depend on helping their employer do everything in their power to get the most out of their \$6000 tire investment. If the driver understands that there is a direct correlation between running tires underinflated and fuel economy he could save the company close to \$1000 per year in fuel alone. There's more that the driver can do: If the driver, in a morning walk-around, can identify a possible vehicle alignment condition based on steer tire irregular wear, that tractor could be fixed and the tires saved from early removal. And his driving habits matter as well - if the driver does not accelerate aggressively and makes smooth turns, tires will last a lot longer as the tread rubber will not be scrubbed off as quickly.

Many fleets today recognize the role the driver can play in maximizing their tire budget. Most have some sort of incentive program for those drivers who can generate the most miles on their tires and can consistently get the best fuel economy by keeping their tires properly inflated ALL the time. Having a program to educate drivers on these issues can save your company in a very short time, especially with fuel close to \$5.00 per gallon.

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Q & A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q. If I overinflate my tires will that not be better for fuel economy?

A. Yes, fuel economy may improve slightly but there are many negatives to consider:

- You may exceed the PSI capacity of the wheel
- Tire tread wear mileage will drop because of fast centerline wear
- Drivers will be unhappy because they will be "bouncing" all over the highway
- Traction will significantly decrease