



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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Spec'ing the Right Tires

Determining the proper steer, drive, and trailer tire to run in your fleet is not always as straight forward as one may think. Most fleets have vehicles that see a variety of specific service vocations and their tire specifications generally reflect that. For instance, spec'ing a fuel efficient steer tire is probably the correct choice for those vehicles running in line-haul applications going from coast to coast; but other vehicles, which are running more regional service with a high percentage of city driving with a lot more turning, will want to spec a deeper tread regional steer tire. Additionally many fleets have multiple tire makes/models for each wheel position on the same vehicle based on the application. This will of course make life much more complicated since you will probably be working with multiple tire vendors. In many cases based on your own independent testing, you may discover that tire manufacturer A has a wonderful trailer tire that is really fuel efficient plus gives long miles. Tire manufacturer B may have a drive design that yields the longest removal miles and is not sensitive to heavy and light loads. The list can go on and on. Many fleets today are working with multiple tire companies because of the diverse product offerings.

budget in line. Not only do your tractors and trailers change based on your current equipment purchase plans, but tire companies come out with new and improved products on a regular basis. The more vehicle models you have running in your fleet in combination with the various service vocations will determine the number of testing variables and what tires to spec on the specific wheel positions.

Whenever you do run a tire evaluation you will want to choose a sample size which is large enough so that at the completion of the test (which may last a year or longer) you have enough data to make it statistically valid. It is not worth the time and the considerable effort to run only a couple of vehicles on an evaluation as the driver effect will certainly outweigh anything you were hoping to learn about a specific tire make/model. A serious tire evaluation involves getting your whole team on board to understand that a test is underway and what variables you are recording. Vehicle make and model, ID, mileage, tread depth, pressure, and wear conditions all need to be recorded on a regular basis. If a tire gets damaged during the test it is important that you at least have the last inspection data to use in your analysis.

The bottom line is to take the time up front to determine what vehicles and tires you wish to evaluate prior to initiating a serious field test. Then you will be able to run a data analysis to determine which tire works best on which vehicle model in what service vocation and on which wheel position.

It becomes very important to evaluate various tire products, both new tires and retreads on a regular basis to optimize tire performance and keep your tire

Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q. What is the most accurate type of truck tire tread depth gauge?

A. The most accurate gauge is a digital readout type however it really is only required for tire engineers who are looking to decimal point accuracy when evaluating various prototype tire designs. The standard probe type gauge is just fine for fleets to measure tread depth as long as it shows a zero value when measuring on a flat surface. Trick is not to measure at the top of a stone ejector located at various spots around the bottom of a groove.

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