



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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Get Your Tires Ready For Winter

Contact
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to setup your
Tires 101
Class for
Drivers/
Mechanics

Winter season is fast approaching and now is the perfect time to revisit your tire program. To maximize winter traction and minimize roadside service calls you should try to run tires with plenty of tread still remaining. Many fleets try to time their tire program so that October is the month when new drive tires (or retreads) replace those drive tires that are below 6/32" remaining tread depth. The Department of Transportation legal limit for tread depth is 4/32" for steer tires and 2/32" for drives and trailers. However, in order to protect your valuable casings for retreading and to maximize your traction and even to reduce punctures, most fleets do not take their tires down to the legal minimum.

You should also get in the habit of measuring tires consistently. One suggestion is to always measure in two (2) spots around the tire (close to 180 degrees apart) in each tread groove. If you are recording the information in your computer system, measure from the inside shoulder and go out. Why would this be important? For example, if you are recording higher tread depths on the inside shoulder versus the outside shoulder, this will give a clue as to what possible alignment changes may need to occur on the vehicle.

Another very important practice you should include when measuring tread depths is to make sure you have a tread depth gauge that is accurate (calibrated) and that you insert the gauge at the bottom of the groove. People forget that many tire designs have an intermittent "stone ejector" which is a raised surface at the bottom of many grooves. This will distort your tread depth readings by about 2/32".

A common mistake when checking tread depths is to check only one spot on the tire in only one groove. Tires do not always wear evenly around the tire or across the tread surface. It is worth the time and effort to check all the primary grooves across the entire tread surface. The legal limit is based on the "fastest wearing groove" or FWG. If you measure four (4) grooves of your trailer tire and your tread depth readings are 5, 4, 3, and 2/32", that tire must come out of service since the FWG groove is at 2/32". If you only measured the inside groove and found it to be 4/32, you would believe it was OK when, in fact, it clearly must come out of service.

When measuring tread depths it is a good time to make note of any indications of irregular wear that may be developing. Irregular wear not only leads to premature tire removals but can adversely affect your fuel economy. If that tire has shoulder cupping or high/low lug wear or just "ugly" wear, the tire will not be running smooth down the highway and will have a negative impact on your fuel usage. The reason why tires develop irregular wear is not always clear. Work with your tire professional to help identify potential issues that could be causing irregular wear on any wheel position.

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Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q: I always put 100 PSI in all my tires: steer, drive, and trailer. I checked all the pressures Monday morning and I made sure they were all exactly 100 PSI. One week later I checked the same tires with the same gauge, tires were 95 - 105 PSI. Why the differences?

A: There are several possible reasons for the variations:

- Ambient temperature was different
- If the sun was beating down on one side of the vehicle, those outside duals can be 5 to 10 PSI higher than the inside duals
- Possible slow leaking nail puncture in the tread
- Make sure that the tires were "cold" when checking the pressures