



Don't get
Tricked by
Underinflation,
Treat Your Fleet
to Automatic
Tire Inflation
Systems

Tire Cost Control Program

New commercial tire prices have not been rising this year nearly as precipitously as during 2011 and early 2012. This is a good thing for fleets as they can now concentrate on keeping their overall tire program costs in check. Having said this, *The Rubber Economist Ltd* as recently as October 2nd stated that consumption of two major raw materials that go into producing truck tires, natural rubber and many oil based materials such as carbon black and various oils/resins, is poised to increase. According to *The Rubber Economist Ltd* this will diminish the current surplus of these materials and boost prices. Case in point, China had a six-month slowdown in natural rubber use but now that use is starting to climb. China uses 35% of the world's supply of natural rubber so when China's and the rest of Asia's economies kick into high gear that is when rubber pricing will start to climb and we will likely see the next jump in tire prices.

So what is important to consider when reviewing your tire program? Keeping track of the most important parameters which include both new and retread tire removal miles is an obvious key metric. Tracking removal miles on a regular basis will help identify any possible action items. If the removal miles start trending down, is it because of maintenance issues such as vehicle alignment or running tires underinflated. Or is it due to a new routes

or different loads? If the mileage trend is moving up in the positive direction then you need to make sure you identify exactly what changes created this good news. It is possible that a recent change in tire model in combination with more frequent pressure checks was the key to success.

Often fleets identify that Tires 101 training for both their mechanics and drivers can have a significantly positive effect on their tire program. This training should not occur for just a few minutes on the first day the technicians and drivers hire into your company. Training needs to be ongoing. Being able to identify specific tire wear patterns and their cause is really important to fully comprehend because there are so many various types of irregular wear conditions that can develop during a tire life. Drivers can be an early warning call when it comes to alignment and underinflation conditions. A good example is identifying steer tires that have either inside or outside shoulder wear, which is clearly an alignment issue that can be easily corrected. Another example is a tire with 360 degree erratic irregular wear that happens when a tire is run underinflated for an extended time. This is when you need to be looking more closely at your tire inflation program.

Our team at PSI is always available to present a Tires 101 class for your drivers, technicians, and maintenance team. Contact al.cohn@psi-atis.com to schedule a session for your fleet.

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answered here, go to

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Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

Q. I downloaded the tire load/inflation table for the 295/75R22.5 size. Should I use the average load/tire to determine the recommended pressure?

A. NO. The recommended tire pressure is always based on the worst case which is the highest tire load scenario. Air is what supports and carries the load for a tire.