



# 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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## Optimizing Your Tire Program

PSI has chosen FedEx as their MTIS by PSI Customer of the Year for the second consecutive time. The 2009 Award was presented to Dan Umphress of FedEx Freight in August.

Because tire prices continue to climb (primarily because of the price increases in the plethora of raw materials used to produce a single commercial radial truck tire), optimizing your tire program will affect your fleet's bottom line in a dramatic fashion. The type of questions you need to address to determine what makes sense for your own tire program include:

- Are weekly tire inspections and air pressure checks helpful?
- Is measuring tread depths and recording tire mileages useful?
- Can I learn anything from recording final removal tread depths and recording tire removal reason conditions?
- What about tire evaluations of tire brand A versus tire brand B in my fleet? Is it worth the time and the effort?
- What about adding materials into my tires that may reduce punctures?

Every fleet has the same goal which is to maximize tire removal mileages while maximizing fuel economy, minimizing roadside service calls and, of course, (if you're so disposed) to get the most retreads out of your casings. Sounds pretty straightforward until you have to put the whole program together and then be able to quantify & analyze the results.

Recording lots and lots of data on every tire in a fleet is not very practical and is certainly labor intensive. For example, it can

be overwhelming if you are trying to record tread depths, wheel position, vehicle ID and removal reasons for only the tires that have been removed due to roadside service calls. How can you minimize very expensive roadside service calls if you don't have serious data on why tires are failing on the road? Were the tires worn too low and picked up a nail? Did the tire run with little or no air for a long time which eventually led to a failure? If you are going to have a successful tire program you must generate enough data on your tires to help you.

A good option is to closely track and record data on a statistically relevant number of specific vehicles in your fleet in order to extrapolate likely results for the entire fleet. All the important tire information such as pressures, tread depths, removal reasons, and roadside service call information is recorded for your control group of vehicles. This is much more manageable than trying to record every event associated with every tire running in your fleet. The Technology Maintenance Council (TMC) of the American Trucking Association (ATA) recommends that tire data on 30 vehicles would be a statistically valid number; however, if you are operating a small number of vehicles, a lesser number would suffice just as long as it's a significant percent of your total fleet.

Every fleet has a different vision of the definition of the perfect tire program. It all depends on what works for your vehicles, at your facilities, and with your mechanics and of course your drivers. We always recommend that working with your tire professional and your service providers will help optimize your tire program.

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### Q&A PSI ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

**Q.** I have been running retreads on both my steer and drive tire positions (my fleet is pickup and delivery). Is there any laws prohibiting the use of retreads on steer?

**A.** Retreads can be used on all wheel positions including steer. The only exception is that there is a federal regulation that does NOT allow retreads to be run on the steer position of busses. A good source of information about retreads can be found at [www.retread.org](http://www.retread.org)