



Tyre developments

Latest tyre arrivals from Continental are its Hybrid HT3 435/50 and 445/45, both R19.5s designed for mega cube trailers. They enable the 4-metre overall height limit in Europe to be met while still achieving an internal load height of 3 metres. Rolling resistance has also been cut by 15%, says Continental, which means diesel consumption is down too – as long as pressures are maintained.

The tyres feature Continental's Plus Volume pattern, characterised by plenty of rubber on the tread, and inner tread grooves designed to prevent stone trapping. The AirKeep inner liner should also prevent creeping pressure loss, although these are not fit-and-forget products. Both tyres have been awarded a B rating for fuel efficiency under the EU's tyre labelling system.

Premium tyre manufacturers have invested heavily in TPMS (tyre pressure monitoring systems). Steve Banner visits Continental's Hannover HQ to sort the fact from the fiction

It is odd that TPMSs (tyre pressure monitoring systems) are now mandatory on new cars but not on new trucks. So says Continental's ContiPressureCheck TPMS global manager Hartwig Kuehn, who believes that road safety logic suggests it should be the other way around. And he regrets that nothing is likely to change anytime soon. "If discussions about making it a requirement on trucks were to start in the European Parliament today, it would take five years before it became law," he observes.

So what should you do? Unsurprisingly, Kuehn suggests that opting for TPMS is money well spent. "Operate tyres at the wrong pressure and you drive up fuel costs as well as affecting the truck's braking and handling," he insists. And he points to research indicating that 20% under-inflation is all it takes to add 3% to fuel

consumption and reduced tyre life.

"And don't forget that, while tyres account for just 5% of the price of a truck, they influence 40% of its operating costs," adds Constantin Batsch, Continental's vice president for truck tyres in EMEA. That calculation is based not only on potential diesel savings, but also tyre life extensions afforded not only through TPMS, but also proper tyre management, as well as safety and hence accident avoidance.

AUGMENTED TELEMATICS

Just to recap, Continental introduced ContiPressureCheck almost two years ago, as a set of sensors, a data processor and a communication device all housed in a rubber unit glued to the inner surface of the tyre's tread. Pressure data on each tyre is fed to a central control unit and can be displayed on: an in-cab screen; a technician's hand-held

reader; a depot-based screen, with data access via a LAN (local area network); and via telematics. Verilocation has become the first telematics provider in Britain to offer this service with ContiPressureCheck.

"The system can monitor up to 24 tyres on six axles, and sensors last for 600,000km or six years," states Kuehn. "They can operate at temperatures of from - 40°C to + 120°C." And he adds that the system can also be linked to the TIS-Web online data analysis and archiving service by VDO, while the associated ATL (automatic trailer learning) package, added a few months ago, also detects and monitors sensors on newly-coupled trailers – ideal for fleets that swap trailers frequently.

Continental's TPMS is available as a retrofit option at a cost of several hundred pounds. In the UK, the firm has delegated fitting to Market Harborough specialist Mobilevalley. Installing the electronics takes about two hours and hauliers will also need the services of a fitter to remove tyres and glue the sensor packs in position. [TE](#)