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WHEEL DRAMAS A BIG INSURANCE EXPENSE FOR TOLL

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Date: 03.05.2016

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Senior Toll manager says wheel-offs and wheel failures are the company's biggest cost in terms of insurance claims

You might assume that accidents are trucking giant Toll's biggest expense when it comes to insurance.

But that dubious distinction goes to wheel-offs and the wheel failures which often cause trailer fires.

The surprising finding was shared with delegates at the most recent Technical and Maintenance Conference by Bob Lovf, Toll's former general manager of linehaul and fleet services, who is now involved with special projects.

The TMC is organised every year by the Australian Trucking Association, Paccar and the Australian Road Transport Suppliers Association (ARTSA).

"We've done a lot of research into wheel-offs and wheel end failures because they are by far our biggest (insurance) cost," Lovf told the conference.

"I think we have an extremely good record of lack of accidents for the distance we do, but there is a wheel off or trailer fire in the group every two weeks, so it is a significant issue."

Other Toll research has involved testing the metallurgy of brake drums.

"We are finding that it's about two hours at 600 degrees centigrade for a wheel end before combustion starts," Lovf said.

He said one of Toll's solutions is to make it mandatory for new trailers to have wheel end sensors, which are connected via Bluetooth to the TEBS – trailer electronic braking system.

The sensor alarms are set at 50 psi for a tyre and 100 degrees over ambient temperature for a wheel bearing.

If things go pear-shaped an alarm goes off in the cab to tell the driver to pull up, and via telematics the alert also goes directly to the monitoring centre."

Meanwhile the ATA has published an updated version of its technical advisory procedure on wheel end security, with a third version in the pipeline.

Check out the full feature on wheels and tyres in an upcoming issue of ATN.

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