

## EDITORIAL

# Balancing Act

With effective specifications, proper loading practices and the help of on-board weighing technology, fleets can safely and legally carry maximum payloads—and benefit from enhanced equipment utilization and driver productivity as well as operating efficiencies.

If you're carrying freight that can easily reach maximum legal and rated weight limits, chances are you've at least considered some of the many lightweight specification options offered by OEMs and system and component manufacturers. In most cases, your choices are based on equations that compare added costs for these items to the additional revenue that can be earned by handling the extra freight.

Adding weight is not just a simple matter of loading more freight, though. Balancing axle carrying capacities is a complex task and one that can be streamlined and improved by some of the latest on-board weighing technology.

"Trying to legalize axle weight distribution without a scale is like trying to drive the exact speed limit without a speedometer," says Peter Powell, vice-president of Marketing at Air-Weigh. "It just can't be done. So the question becomes, do you take your own scale to every loading site or do you rent somebody else's scale down the road?"

"An on-board scale," Powell continues, "can save fleets thousands of dollars by eliminating the costs associated with weighing, including out-of-route miles, wasted time and scale fees. This technology provides an accurate indication to the operator that the vehicle is fully and properly loaded.

"Let's assume a fleet check-weighs just one or two loads per week," Powell explains further. "The driver goes one mile out of route to reach a certified truck scale and is delayed 30 minutes each time. That

costs money for out of route miles, wasted fuel and the scale fee. The total cost is at least \$20 to \$25 per trip. On just one load a week, that's more than a \$1,000 a year; so an investment in an on-board scale can easily pay for itself."

Powell is quick to sum up the benefits of on-board weighing, including enhanced equipment utilization and driver productivity, as well as operating efficiencies. There's also the potential for a missed delivery deadline and possible fines if the vehicle is overweight enroute. In addition, among the contributing factors to equipment breakdown is failure due to overloading.

The stress and strain placed on equipment by improperly loaded freight can be avoided by ensuring that the load has been properly distributed over the axles before it leaves the loading site.

"Lightweight specifications can be a very important aspect for many trucking companies," Powell concludes. "But specifying lightweight components without an on-board scale may make it next to impossible to get that much-hoped-for return on investment. On-board scales may not be needed for every trucking operation, but to maximize carrying capacity without adding scales may also mean equipment utilization and driver productivity will never be fully realized."

## Latest solution

During the recent Mid-America Trucking Show, Air-Weigh displayed its new AW5800 Self-Weighing Trailer Scale. The scale was on display at the company's



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booth as well as on over 60 trailers from various manufacturers. Currently, more than 65 trailer manufacturers are offering the new scale as a factory-installed option.

The AW5800 features a keypad and LCD display screen for operation without being connected to a truck-mounted unit. The scale also has pre-calibration menus for most popular trailer suspensions. Weighing less than three pounds, the sealed unit can be installed in less than 15 minutes on newer North American trailers equipped with a standard ABS wiring harness and can be retrofitted on older trailers in less than 30 minutes. It can be mounted directly to the frame rail or suspended from a side rail with optional mounting brackets.

While self contained, all Air-Weigh Self-Weighing Trailer Scales can also automatically communicate trailer weights to Air-Weigh equipped tractors for in-cab display of axle weights, GVW and payload. The scale communicates over existing vehicle wiring and immediately displays actual on-the-ground weight to within 300 lbs of a DOT scale. Weight receipt printers are optional and weight data can also be automatically downloaded to the vehicle's J-1708 data bus.

For more information, visit [www.Air-Weigh.com](http://www.Air-Weigh.com).