

Airtab

By Sue Dickens

The Airtab® Advantage is huge for such a tiny product.

Airtab's simple design belies the fact this product has a powerful impact on improving driver safety for those who choose to install these on their trucks and trailers.

Airtabs, known as Vortex Generators because of what they accomplish, have also been proven effective in saving fuel by reducing wind drag on semi-trailers. That is the second benefit.

Aero-Kit Industries Inc. of Burlington Ontario is one of two primary distributors of this product in North America and has been marketing them for the past 2 years.

"We are interested in marketing this product and cultivating this market because there are huge pressures these days on anyone in the transportation industry with regards to driver safety and fuel economy and that is really what this product is all about," said Angela Sterling, Marketing Director for Aero-Kit Industries Inc.

Driver safety is a priority for everyone in the trucking industry from an operational standpoint and Airtabs create that environment on the roadways. "Everybody including the MTO and DOT is concerned about drive safety, especially when we have expressways tied up with tractor-trailer rollovers and accidents," added Angela.

For him the product is not up for debate.

It does what it promises to deliver.

Airtabs tackle the problem of vehicle stability and handling by dramatically reducing the 'fish tailing' on trailers and have a positive impact on the handling of double trailers.

The Airtab® works by creating a controlled swirl of air, or vortex, which actually reduces wind resistance. When wind is displaced drag is created by the turbulence.

Traditionally without Airtabs the air circulates

around the truck and it swirls between the back of the tractor and the front of the trailer and gets caught there causing instability and of course reducing fuel economy.

Once that air escapes and swirls out it accelerates down the sides of the trailer faster than the speed of that unit. The next thing it does when it gets to the back of the trailer it wants to swirl and curl around from the top and sides and spiral around the back of the trailer, which creates all kinds of issues.

Besides promoting driver safety Airtabs increase steering tire life by 25% to 40%.

As well Airtabs helps reduce water spray for better visibility.

With winter approaching the swirling snow created by these big rigs can be a concern for not only the trucker but for the other vehicles on the road as well.

Driving on the TransCanada Highway or Hwy. 401 in Ontario on a snowy day or rainy day can be treacherous at the best of times because of the wall of swirling wind that limits the ability to see the roadways. Traffic congestion, infrastructure wear and tear, both worsening problems everywhere, only makes matters worse.

Airtabs offer a solution that works.

These small tabs go on the farings of trucks and go on the back of trailers. A van trailer predominantly is the best use of the product but it is worth installing on everything from a garbage truck to dump trailers, literally on any square box going down the road that is displacing wind.

The product is available in hard tab (self-adhesive stick-on) for trucks and trailers and as a weld-on tab for soft-sided trailers.

They can be installed by any fleet maintenance person.

A tractor and a trailer can be outfitted with Airtabs in about two hours, taking 160 to 180 Airtabs initially for the tractor and the van, in an even split.

Another benefit of Airtabs is their ability to help keep the rear doors of trailers a lot cleaner.

Many trucking companies now carry decals and advertising for groups and organizations such as Child Find on the back doors and Airtabs help reduce dirt and grime because it changes the air flow.

It is a maintenance issue and a public relations matter for the industry that is solved by the decision to install this product.

Introduced to the North American market about three years ago, this patented product has been heavily tested in Australia where it is widely used.

Airtab® has undergone NASA wind tunnel tests in the United States, track testing at the MIRA facility in the UK and extensive road trials in North America, Australia and Europe.

Aerodynamic drag has long been a concern for fuel economy on trucks so its ability to facilitate fuel savings anywhere from 2% to 12% is another reason to give the product a second look.

Road trials have delivered direct fuel savings of up to 2.8% with Airtab® installed on trailers only, and over 4% savings have been achieved in North American trials on tractor-trailer installations.

The fuel savings has been shown to be as high as 12%.

That can result in a big dollar savings for fleets that have hundreds of trucks and trailers on the road.

Large fleets can be spending upwards of \$20 million on fuel a year so the savings is substantial even at 4% or 5%.

One of the hurdles in promoting Airtabs has been that companies are not always able to do a lot of hard tests because in the industry there is a lot of dropping off of trailers and picking up of trailers so there are not always dedicated tractor trailer units making it difficult to get the stats.

The fact that the product

is being used extensively is proof of its value.

"Word of mouth among our customers is getting us out there and demonstrating the savings. This product has been operational in Australia and Asia and proven there on the roads for the last three years. The results are there," said an Aero-Kit spokesperson.

"We do have data but most data is proprietary and confidential to those private fleets. These fleets however are using Airtabs with success.

Aero-Kit wants truckers and fleets to consider this question: "If you have a square box being pulled down the road regardless if it is a semi-trailer, an RV, a tag-along trailer, bus, a horse trailer, whatever, can you afford to gamble on not equipping your units with Airtabs, a proven product?"

Aero-Kit Industries Inc. is soon going to be celebrating 27 years as a corporation. It has been well established in the Canadian market since 1979 designing and manufacturing specialized tarpaulin systems for all flatbeds, dumps, garbage trucks and open top trailers etc.

Airtabs only strengthens this corporation's position in the marketplace.

To learn more about the product there are videos illustrating how it works and testimonials about its abilities at www.airtab.ca. For more information call 1-800-465-8277 or email info@aero-kit.com.

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