

TIPS FOR FLEET MANAGEMENT

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Currently a public and urban mass transport professional M. K. Soni has more than 21 years of global experience. His experience includes setting up of fleet operations (depot planning, recruitment, SOP's, security procedures etc.) from scratch, fleet maintenance and electric busses.

Record Transactions:

First & foremost thing is to record all transactions/incidence. Many do not maintain records. Record of fuel filled at which Kms/miles, maintenance record, preventive maintenance etc.

Analyse your fleet maintenance records:

Are you tracking enough of the right information to make informed maintenance decisions? For example, simply recording that 'front end work' was completed on a vehicle does not give you enough information to detect failure trends for individual front end components. Your records should indicate at least the make and model of vehicle, date and mileage at time of service, and services performed to specific components. But remember, all the records in the world won't do a thing for you if you don't analyse the data. Analysis of your recorded data will also show driver/vehicle behaviour, and necessary action should be taken based on this analysis.



Coach Driver Habits: Good driving habits are one of the biggest ways that a company can save on fuel costs. When a driver speeds to his next location or has a lengthy idle at a job site, fuel consumption rises and takes more money out of your pocket. Fleet management system should provide reports on driver's speed and performance and allow you to compare driver actions to the posted speed limits. Personalized alarms can be configured (if fleet has a tracking device) to notify you if a driver surpasses the speed limit so you can take corrective action. When a vehicle keeps RPMs at a consistent rate, versus continually revving the engine to keep up speed, less fuel is burned. Driver should have light foot on accelerator. How gears should be changed. Lastly, small things like making sure the gas cap is on tight and the tires are full can go a long way. Having full tires

can improve mileage by over 3%. (By implementing regular driver training modules we were successful in saving 4.5% on fuel cost)

Better Routing:

The majority of long-haul, over-the-road trucks get between 8 to 10 miles per gallon and if your drivers aren't taking the best possible route than you could be spending thousands in unnecessary fuel costs each trip. Use of a good fleet management software to dispatch and route drivers can create a more efficient and productive operation. With this technology, you can map out a driver's trip, giving them the most efficient route possible to a job or delivery site while ensuring clearance heights and weight limits are met. From there, drivers can utilize in-cab devices that provide turn-by-turn directions, reducing any unnecessary miles taken. If you need to update a stop, then you can simply send drivers a safe, simple message directly on their device.



Maintenance of Vehicle:

Keeping vehicles in good condition should be a top priority of all fleet managers. Not only will it ensure their staff/customers/goods are safe and comfortable in their vehicles, but also the image portrayed to the wider world is that of a company offering a clean, reliable and well-kept fleet (This is important if you are running taxi's or city buses). These aspects can have a surprising effect on how the company is perceived and make an impact on the volume of business won in the future. Well-kept vehicles also offer savings for those who take the time to ensure everything is in good working order. Keeping an eye on tyre pressure, for example, can result in huge financial savings when it comes to fuel efficiency. Under-inflated tyres require more energy to turn than those at their optimum psi, meaning more fuel is used just for the sake of some air. Considering that fuel efficiency can drop by around five per cent just on under-inflated tyres alone, this can quickly become a real cause for concern. Likewise, keeping oil filters and spark plugs clean will ensure maximum fuel efficiency, not to mention guarantee better running of the vehicle. So too will repairing faulty thermostats, which otherwise cause the vehicle to run too hot or too cold, which - just like the others - not only affects fuel economy, but also reliability of the engine.