



A Green Fleet Is A Cost-Efficient Fleet

by Roger Smith, Director of Transportation Initiatives for the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance

Most would agree that any corporation that employs the latest technology and best practices in managing its vehicle fleet can help reduce emissions and become a more environmentally responsible organization. Perhaps not as common is the notion that as we reduce emissions we often also reduce costs.

Transportation is the cause of about 30% of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions. The Province of Ontario is taking an active role in addressing these issues and is supporting the Fleet Challenge Ontario program through the Ontario Ministry of Finance's Strengthening Our Partnerships Initiative. This is part of an overall solution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create a healthy environment.

The Fleet Challenge Ontario program is designed to help municipal fleet managers cut emissions and operational costs by applying fleet management tools and techniques shared through E3 (Energy Environment Excellence) Fleet Reviews, information sessions, and a Best Practices manual. Municipalities can then, optionally, take part in the E3 Fleet Rating, which uses a point-based Rating System Checklist for rating fleet performance, with points for fleet management practices and energy and emissions performance. Municipalities can also attend one of several information sessions or access the Best Practices manual in order to learn more about green fleet practices.

The associated cost-savings vary by fleet but some of the most common are:

- Converting vehicle fleets to clean burning or renewable fuels, and the use of high-efficiency vehicles like hybrids reduces emissions and can reduce costs.
- Thorough route-planning and load-sharing can reduce fleet mileage.
- Downsizing and right-sizing the fleet to meet the true needs of the corporation.
- Manufacturer's recommended vehicle maintenance is often easy and simple, as well as improves fuel efficiency and reduces excess emissions.
- Reducing vehicle idling can reduce fuel consumption and thereby decrease emissions.
- Driver-training can improve fuel efficiency, reduce emissions, prevent accidents and save on insurance costs.



- Encouraging travel by public transit, rather than company vehicles, can reduce mileage and fuel usage. Or better still, employing video conferencing removes the expense of travel.
- Relocation of staff and resources can allow for reduced vehicle use and cost.

Chris Hill, Fleet Manager of the City of Hamilton's Public Works Department and participant in the Fleet Challenge Ontario program has witnessed first-hand the cost savings of a green fleet.

"We use 10 million litres of fuel a year. That's just over \$10 million, so we are always looking at ways to cut that cost," said Mr. Hill. "In 2006, our fuel efficiency was five per cent better than 2005, mainly due to the use of hybrids, which consume 50 per cent less fuel than the vehicles they replaced." The City of Hamilton is continuing to look at ways to reduce their emissions and fleet management costs.

The tools and concepts from Fleet Challenge Ontario can be applied to both public and private sector fleets. By reducing the environmental impacts of their fleets, it is our hope that the private sector can realise that it is not only the responsible decision but also a wise financial investment.

For more information on Fleet Challenge Ontario visit www.fleetchallenge.ca.