

Environmental fleet management

Whether or not you are concerned about the impact of human activity on the environment, green issues are becoming an increasingly important part of fleet management.

The Budgets in recent years have made it clear that fleets must choose less polluting vehicles, or pay a high price. High polluting fleets incur increased taxation and higher running costs.

Implementing a 'green fleet' policy doesn't have to be difficult. Not only will it reduce the environmental impact of your fleet, it can also be an effective way to reduce your fleet costs and address your company's Corporate Social Responsibility issues.

Before you can monitor you need to measure

Before you can monitor or take steps to reduce your fleet's carbon footprint, you need to measure it. To accurately calculate your fleet's carbon footprint you will require access to information on the annual fuel consumption of each vehicle in your fleet.

There are many ways in which you can calculate the carbon emissions of your fleet vehicles.

We suggest:

For diesel vehicles:

Take the number of litres of diesel used, multiply by 2.63 and divide by 1000.

For petrol vehicles:

Take the number of litres of petrol used, multiply by 2.32 and divide by 1000.

Alternatively, if you don't know the amount of fuel used, the following calculation can be used:

Take the CO₂ grams per kilometre of the vehicle and multiply it by the mileage, then multiply by 1.85 and divide the total by 1 million.

Combine the annual carbon emissions of each vehicle to give you the total annual carbon footprint of your fleet in tonnes.

When you know the carbon footprint of your fleet you can set a target for the emissions reduction you would like to achieve, and a timescale in which you would like to achieve it. You may want to set targets for the average grams of carbon per kilometre (g/km) emitted by the vehicles on your fleet. Alternatively you may wish to reduce emissions by a set percentage each year.

Reducing your carbon footprint

There are a number of ways in which you can reduce the CO₂ emissions of your fleet. To implement a successful environmental fleet-management strategy you will need the support of senior management. Ideally, you should identify a senior member of staff to champion CO₂ reduction within your business.

- **Review the vehicles available to your staff**

Do you restrict vehicles to those under a set CO₂ limit? If not, you may wish to consider implementing a restricted scheme as vehicles are replaced. Your fleet provider will be able to help you choose the vehicles that would most suit your needs, taking into account the vehicle's use, CO₂ emissions and tax implications

Fuel-efficient vehicles benefit the environment, but also bring cost savings for the driver and your business as they offer lower Benefit-in-Kind taxation and lower road fund licence charges. You may wish to offer staff incentives for choosing low-emission vehicles, or offer disincentives for those choosing high-emission vehicles

- **Consider your grey fleet**

Grey fleet drivers are those who use personal vehicles to drive on company business. Typically, grey fleet vehicles are older than fleet cars and older cars tend to produce higher CO₂ emissions

For journeys over 80 miles, it is often more cost effective to offer a daily rental vehicle than to pay an employee 40 pence per mile for fuel. Using a daily rental car will also mean you can choose a new, fuel-efficient vehicle and so reduce CO₂ emissions. Daily rental can also be used to help mitigate your duty-of-care risks

- **Encourage alternative methods of travel**

If your business doesn't already have one, implement a travel plan

A robust travel plan will offer incentives for employees who choose not to drive to work, encourage car sharing and promote alternatives to travel, such as telephone or video conferencing and home working

A successful travel plan can reduce an organisation's car use by up to 20% (source: Highways Agency). It can also alleviate parking issues, reduce your costs and improve your employees' health

- **Educate your drivers**

Your employees' driving style can have a big impact on their individual carbon footprint

Request a copy of our Green Tips for Drivers guide, for some simple measures your drivers can take, via the email address shown below

Alternatively, we can help you to implement training suitable for the types of journeys your drivers make

- **Consider carbon offsetting**

When you have taken steps to limit your carbon footprint as far as possible, you can consider offsetting the remainder. Our quoting system allows individual drivers to choose to include carbon offsetting in their vehicle quote, or we can work with you to offset your total carbon footprint

Environmental management checklist for commercial vehicles

- Involve senior staff to get support and buy-in at all levels
- Measure and monitor fuel use for each vehicle
- Calculate your carbon footprint
- Set a target for the CO₂ reduction you wish to achieve
- Implement a robust travel plan
- Introduce driver training
- Redesign your car scheme to favour low-carbon vehicles
- Consider introducing hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles where appropriate
- Consider carbon offsetting when you have reduced your emissions as far as possible

Environmental Fleet Management advice

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions can help you to monitor and manage your fleet's carbon emissions.

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