

FLEET LOSS CONTROL MANAGEMENT VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

There are three basic types of vehicle maintenance programs in use today. There is “Demand Maintenance” where repairs and service are given when a problem arises. There is “Crisis Maintenance” that is applied when a vehicle has “broken down” while in service, thus requiring management to act swiftly (the most costly version) and there is “Preventive Maintenance” where services and repairs are provided before operational problems interfere with daily business.

Motor vehicle fleets require regular maintenance to keep equipment operating safely and efficiently. Most successful fleet owners follow a preventive maintenance program that consists of daily vehicle checks by drivers and regular inspections scheduled on a time or mileage basis by mechanics and management.

BENEFITS OF PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

Fleet owners agree that regular vehicle maintenance provides many benefits including:

- ✚ **Reduced Accidents** – Proper vehicle maintenance can substantially reduce accidents caused by brake, tire, steering, and other mechanical failures.
- ✚ **Reduced Downtime** – Preventive maintenance minimizes work schedule interruption. Fleet owners want their trucks on the road as much as possible.
- ✚ **Reduced Maintenance** – Regularly scheduled inspections provide opportunities to make minor repairs and adjustments that will help prevent unnecessary and costly repairs.
- ✚ **Improved Driver Morale** – Commercial vehicle drivers take pride in equipment that is kept in top operating condition. They are also more likely to drive safely and handle the equipment with care.
- ✚ **Good Sales and Public Relations** – Important sales and public relations value result from clean, well-maintained equipment. Trucks are traveling billboards and can reflect a safety-minded company image.

MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

Three possible ways to organize a maintenance program are:

- ✚ Maintenance work can be done in a fleet’s own facilities. This requires a large capital investment in shop facilities, equipment, tools, parts, inventory, and personnel.
- ✚ Preventive maintenance and minor repairs can be handled in house while major repairs are sent out. This results in smaller outlays for equipment, tools, parts, and personnel.
- ✚ All vehicle maintenance including preventive maintenance can be done outside. Someone is usually responsible for administering the program and making sure maintenance schedules are followed.

When a maintenance program is established, all vehicles must be put in top operating condition. The program should keep them that way. Maintenance procedures should conform to manufacturers’ recommended specifications and any applicable regulations.

RECORDKEEPING

The purpose of a recordkeeping system in a motor fleet is to implement effective control and proper analysis. The records must be accurate, up-to-date, and describe the problems and costs encountered fully for each vehicle. This applies to all sizes and types of fleets from cars to heavy trucks.

Maintenance records should show what work was done, when it was done, who did it, and the cost. There are many ready-made record systems available or the fleet management can develop their own. Either way, this useful information can be helpful in scheduling future maintenance and determining the effectiveness of the maintenance program. Management may, from time-to-time, erroneously believe that a reduction of operating costs may be achieved by cutting maintenance expense. A good recordkeeping system can assist the fleet manager or administrator in counteracting this shortsighted approach. It has been proven countless times that preventive maintenance results in more efficient and cost effective operations with less down time and reduced overall repair costs.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

The motor fleet or company driver must be responsible for the mechanical condition of the vehicle they operate. Drivers should follow established company procedures and check their vehicles regularly to determine conditions.

A completed vehicle condition report should be submitted whether or not a defect is noted. Besides revealing defects, these condition reports provide information needed to evaluate the maintenance program's effectiveness.

The driver is the key to reporting defects. The driver needs to be instructed on how to complete an effective vehicle inspection and they must be taught how to report defects in writing and orally so that the maintenance personnel can locate and repair the defects accurately and quickly.

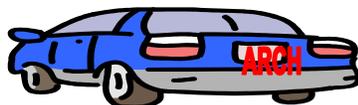
The commercial driver is responsible for the mechanical condition of the vehicle assigned. Drivers should follow established company procedures and check their vehicles prior to, during and after each run.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

To be effective, a maintenance program must have the full support of the fleet owner or operator. Management must be convinced that an orderly system of inspection, tune-up and vehicle overhaul is necessary. Vehicles must be made available to the shop for regular and preventive maintenance as scheduled. Failure to do so can quickly destroy the program. Additional information about vehicle maintenance programs and maintenance record forms is available from these sources:

- ✚ Motor vehicle manufacturers.
- ✚ Oil companies.
- ✚ Motor vehicle trade publications.
- ✚ State trucking associations.

The material contained in this bulletin was developed by the original Alliance of American Insurers (now Property Casualty Insurers Association of America – PCI) and the National Committee for Fleet Supervision Training.



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