

2020 EDUCATION REPORT

Electric Utility Fleet Managers Conference (EUFMC)

EUFMC is an annual educational event for utility fleet professionals. The conference format includes educational sessions on topics related to fleet management, presentations of the latest fleet products and technologies, roundtable discussions on common challenges and solutions, and networking opportunities with industry peers and the manufacturer/vendor community.

Due to concerns about the health and safety of attendees during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Electric Utility Fleet Managers Conference was cancelled. However, the EUFMC educational program, a highly regarded tradition dating back to 1953, was continued.

Beginning in April 2020, the [EUFMC Education Connection](#) began providing valuable information on current and pertinent fleet management topics. The following series of reports, questions and answers, were distributed electronically to EUFMC attendees and archived online.

COVID-19 Response

How do fleets prioritize work with operations scaled to essential work only for a significant period of time?

When we started the month of March I could not have imagined how my organization would completely reshape itself multiple times in just one week. However, in response to events evolving in Washington State we had to do just that.

For almost three weeks we have been working remotely, and our garage staff has been implementing a new schedule in response to the pandemic. Early on in this process we still didn't know how we were going to respond to this evolving event, but we knew it was going to be an iterative process.

First, we started by isolating our shifts and eliminating any overlap. As corporate and government directives became clear, we realized that our generation and energy delivery operations were going to see a massive slowdown as they instituted a system by which they ensured they would have a healthy cohort of workers able to respond to any trouble or critical work.

Based on those operations, we had to consider several new variables. In general, over half of our fleet would not be operating on any given day, our take

home vehicles would increase by almost 300%, and every vehicle is now a potential carrier of the coronavirus.

Today, we are operating with half of our garage staff. At our central maintenance locations we have two teams that are now on a weekly rotating schedule. We are asking rural technicians to work only when needed.

Our team has also scrubbed our preventative maintenance schedule and has determined what work must be completed for compliance reasons. Our analysis also looked at what units had lower utilization rates so we could push those out to a later date, with an exception for DOT inspections that were older than eight months. That analysis helped our team focus the scope of our work and instead of looking at performing in excess of 200 PMs we are able to reduce that by 40%.

Our next challenge is to continue to support our single mechanic centers where our operations group is trying to keep parts of the work group isolated. However, our fleet mechanics have the potential to cross all of those groups in one single day, and if they were to happen to get sick that could shut down our ability to support an essential and critical system.

Greg Loew
Fleet Manager-Avista Corp
EUFMC Director

“We started by defining essential work, such as safety and compliance related inspections associated with fleet assets. Then we worked with the business to learn their essential work plans and identified critical vehicles and equipment that will continue to need service and repair. All other work would be deemed discretionary for approximately 30 days. After 30 days, work will be re-evaluated with the potential that some discretionary work will be shifted to essential.”

Jason Broach
Fleet Operations Manager
Southern Company Services

“Fleet has reviewed all work and has furloughed non-regulatory, non-commercial scheduled work. We are currently reporting from home and responding to emergent requests submitted by Operations. We have communicated with the entire operational team to ensure they know we are here and ready to respond.”

Kyle P. Jones
Director of Fleet Services
Consumers Energy

How do leaders connect with shop employees when working remotely?

“For Ameren Illinois, we have 20 technician-supported shop locations spread across 44,000 square miles of Illinois. Normally, supervisors cover several shops and would be at each of their shops roughly once per week, so our technicians are used to a lot of self-directed work.

“All fleet management staff has been working from home since March 16th while technicians continue to report to their shops. We have stepped up the use of conference calls and FaceTime. Early on, the wireless carriers struggled with bandwidth but it seems to be getting better as of late.

“I have heard of some creative ways to use FaceTime to do safety observations and morning stretching with the technicians. Our quality assurance group is using FaceTime also for some preventive maintenance audits. The management groups utilize Skype and Teams for all meetings.

“In general, I think most fleet leaders have stepped up their game to check in via phone calls and make sure everyone is doing good personally. I try to take one day a week to personally call some of the technicians and office personnel to check on them. I get a sense that everyone enjoys the personal touch. I know we are getting the technical stuff done but want to make sure everyone knows we are in this together.”

Dan Remmert
Sr. Manager, Fleet Services
Ameren IL

“We are being asked by operations to provide each employee with their own company vehicle to get to and from the jobsite. The first request was for an additional 30 vehicles so we would have no employees riding together. A few days later I received a second request for 32 additional vehicles.

“Our process for fulfilling these requests was the following: 1] Check telematics reporting and work with the managers of the departments who have vehicles that are clearly not moving. Most of the managers had many reasons of why they needed to keep their vehicles so this resulted in very few vehicles we could reassign. 2] Reassign all of our internal fleet pool cars to the requesting departments. This was effective but we do not have enough vehicles in our fleet pool to meet the need. 3] Work with our fleet rental vendors to rent passenger cars and pickups to meet the need. This took a lot organizing but in the end was really effective.”

Terry Gutterman
Manager – Fleet Asset Team
Xcel Energy

“We have daily muster calls and local leaders check in with staff via phone on a regular basis.”

Jason Broach
Fleet Operations Manager
Southern Company Services

“We have instituted is a daily call with all supervisors in a two-state region. I review any information that is discussed on the senior management call. We use Skype when needed. I make sure to let everyone have a turn at the roundtable to discuss any concerns, possible cases and contamination issues. This seems to let everyone vent a little while sharing real information and easing some anxiety.”

Ron Henne
Fleet Manager
Eversource Energy
CT and Western Mass

“We routinely communicate within our organization and with vendors via phone calls, Zoom, WebEx, and email. To make sure our shop staff is not totally dependent on laptop and PC email communication, all Fleet shop staff also communicates via the Microsoft Outlook mobile phone application through secured processes.”

Mark O. Booker
Fleet Manager
Nashville Electric Service

“Our Fleet department has utilized the Teams app with video conferencing to stay connected. We have scheduled weekly calls above and beyond our daily operating reviews to hear how each employee is doing as well as to ask how their families are coping with the new normal. I have taken the time each week to reach out to individual members of the team to check in and listen to how this is impacting them. We are learning each day new and innovative ways of conducting business to help support bringing energy to our customers.”

Kyle P. Jones
Director of Fleet Services
Consumers Energy

Has your maintenance operation lost the services of any staff members due to COVID-19 exposure or illness? If so, how are you handling replacing those personnel on an interim basis?

“We’ve had a couple of our technicians self quarantine due to their own exposure or family members coming in contact with positive or presumed positive people. With only two of 63 technicians at 14 garages that has not caused a staffing issue, and we’re hoping for everyone’s sake that it stays that way. As soon as this issue became relevant we locked down our garages. Those facilities are now restricted areas whether they have one technician or the nearly 20 at our largest garage. If you don’t work there, even if you’re a company employee, you don’t belong in the building. That goes for our parts vendors, too, who are asked to leave deliveries at the door.”

Chuck Yoder

Manager - Nipsco Fleet Maintenance

“Fortunately, we have not lost anyone due to COVID-19 exposure. We took early steps to provide PPE and separate shifts. We are constantly honing a safe process through communication, protective equipment, scheduling, and engineered controls.”

Jeffrey Schneider

Fleet Contract Manager

Transportation Department

Louisville Gas & Electric-KU

“This has taken on a couple of different iterations since the beginning of the pandemic. Currently, we are quarantining any member of our team who has come into contact with someone who has tested positive with the COVID-19 virus. Several of our employees have been quarantined and have appreciated our approach to ensuring they remain healthy by not spreading any possible virus, and our other team members are also feeling protected. We have been able to overcome their absences by only performing regulatory required and/or critical work to ensure operations can be in a safe, regulatory compliant vehicle to service our customers.”

Kyle P. Jones

Director of Fleet Services

Consumers Energy

Have the authorities in your states of operation adopted the FMCSA notice allowing for the extension of CDL renewal deadlines? Are you losing drivers because they cannot get their licenses (or medicals) renewed at the state level?

"Some state licensing agencies have closed offices, and phone or online processing for renewals of CDLs, hazardous material endorsements, etc., if available, may be backlogged. California has closed DMV offices and does not allow renewals or testing online. It has also not yet adopted the FMCSA notice, while the California DMV also issued a memo asking the California Highway Patrol to exercise 'leniency in enforcement' which the CHP has rejected since they must enforce the law. That issue could be resolved at any time with a Governor's order, but until then it's important not to assume that the FMCSA renewal extension notice applies to California drivers even if it's in effect elsewhere in your operation."

Todd Carlson

Principal Manager – Fleet Asset Management

Operational Services – Transportation Services Department

Southern California Edison

"Indiana has adopted the FMCSA recommendation for CDL renewal and has implemented a 90-day extension. We have two mechanics with CDLs expiring at the end of March and April but that will not be an issue."

Chuck Yoder

Manager - Nipsco Fleet Maintenance

"NiSource operates in seven states and we haven't had a major impact by the inability to renew licenses or registrations. Going forward, we'll have to watch what happens as motor vehicle departments reopen."

Chuck Bunting

Manager, Fleet Operations

NiSource

How did you determine how to properly sanitize vehicles and what products were approved to do so?

“We worked with our Corporate Safety and Health department on our procedures. Our mechanics researched and found a product by Arcadio called Quatro San AC 41, which is a disinfectant that is advertised to kill the COVID-19 virus. Our policy is for our mechanics to spray the inside of the cab and any area an operator may touch prior to working on the unit. We have asked them to wait 10 minutes after spraying the disinfectant to ensure the virus is eliminated prior to working on the unit. We also require 6 feet of social distancing, wear nitrile gloves and wash hands regularly.”

Kyle P. Jones
Director of Fleet Services
Fleet Services
Consumers Energy

“Transportation has been asked to quarantine and clean any vehicle that may have been exposed to the virus. Human Resources distributes a report three times a day identifying employees who are off work due to symptoms or possible exposure. Transportation then reaches out to the supervisor of each employee to determine if they were driving or a passenger in any company vehicle. If they were, the vehicle is “Red Tagged” and taken out of service for 24 hours, and then cleaned and disinfected. We are following manufacturers’ recommendations as to the proper techniques and products used to safely clean vehicles. In addition, all drivers have been instructed to wipe the vehicle down after each use, and wipes and gloves have been provided to each operational group.”

Jeffrey Schneider
Fleet Contract Manager
Transportation Department
Louisville Gas & Electric-KU

“Our new work procedures mean that vehicles brought in for repairs are left outside and supervisors or lead mechanics are called to say they are ready for service. When a technician retrieves a vehicle, all high touch areas such as door handles, window controls, switches, steering wheels and shift knobs, are cleaned with sanitizing wipes that our central stores has been able to source, despite being hard to find. Once a vehicle is done it’s moved outside and the same cleaning procedures are used. In our garages, we now have only one person working on a vehicle whenever possible so multiple technicians are not touching the same surfaces, and at the beginning and end of every shift everything gets wiped down, including work surfaces and tools.”

Chuck Yoder
Manager - Nipsco Fleet Maintenance

Is your company running an incident command system to handle this situation? If so, how does fleet fit into that system? Has this system streamlined your efforts or added complexity?

“At NiSource many of us fill additional roles as part of an Incident Command program based on FEMA practices, which support companies across the NiSource footprint on a daily basis. The program elevates communications going between the states we operate in and our corporate management team. All of this is focused on common goals of employee safety and providing vehicles and equipment which are safe to use as we provide energy and services to our customers.”

Chuck Bunting
Manager, Fleet Operations
NiSource

“We have an incident command structure similar to a set up we’d use for any corporate level crisis. Unlike a storm response, however, its focus is on employee well being and unique logistics needs tailored to meeting social distancing protocols for crews and people in different parts of our operation, and it’s broken out by different regions. There are rotating day, night and weekly commanders who oversee emergency preparedness groups for employee wellness, IT, communications and logistics. There are daily meetings to discuss internal and external COVID related issues and stats and prepare messages to send to everyone. Transportation related issues are worked on alongside logistics, facilities and supply chain procurement areas. In our case, we have implemented ways to maintain a single occupant policy for distancing by accessing underutilized vehicles, renting assets and paying expenses for using personal vehicles.”

Fortunato Gulino
Chief Automotive Engineer
Con Edison

Is your company asking its workforce to adhere to a single driver per vehicle policy? If so, are you renting vehicles or reallocating assets from other business areas to meet front line needs? Have you been asked to reforecast your budget to address the new allocations?

“Our company has enforced a single occupancy policy. We were asked to do what we could to hold additional costs at a minimum so we started reallocating vehicles across our entire service territory. This is extremely challenging on many different levels. Just the complexity of selecting vehicles for reallocation and then physically moving them to fill needs was enormous. The second challenge was to make sure the new drivers were correctly tied to the vehicle so operating costs are being captured correctly in our Fleet/Financial software, and so we know who was driving the vehicle in case of exposure. We have not been asked to reforecast the budget since we’re reallocating vehicles and costs, although we have been given additional charge numbers to track incremental costs associated with this pandemic.”

Jeffrey Schneider
Fleet Contract Manager
Transportation Department
Louisville Gas & Electric-KU

“We are staggering shifts to separate crews and resolve the need for social distancing between drivers and passengers when crews travel together. We’re also limiting only one person per vehicle by using rentals and personal vehicle mileage.”

Fortunato Gulino
Chief Automotive Engineer
Con Edison

“As soon as our company began requiring that only person be assigned per vehicle we put the pool of about 20 units we had at our locations in service. We also stopped our monthly auction process so vehicles that had been designated for sale could be redeployed in the field. That covered our immediate needs, and if we get another request we have the ability to use GPS tracking technology to identify vehicles that haven’t been in use while our staff is working remotely.”

Chuck Yoder
Manager - Nipsco Fleet Maintenance

“Some of the NiSource affiliates started a single driver policy a number of weeks ago and the balance of operations have been addressing the need for separation of crews. We work together on that so our programs are aligned and people understand that this is good for everyone’s safety. We have the programs within our Fleet Management System to help identify under-utilized vehicles. We generally combine telematics and fuel consumption reports to determine if a

vehicle can be redeployed to support social distancing of a crew. Fortunately, our suppliers are still building and delivering new units and by delaying auction sales we are able to support operational needs without going after rentals. There has been no change to our 5-year replacement plan at this time.”

Chuck Bunting
Manager, Fleet Operations
NiSource

“We have moved to the single driver model. To accomplish this we have taken about 75 units out of the auction allocation and ran them back through the process to register, reinstall GPS and put into service. We have also assigned our storm fleet of about 40 units out in the field. We purchased some new light fleet units early and have taken delivery of some early 2020 orders. We have tried to do this without renting. We have also run GPS utilization numbers and moved vehicles that are underutilized to areas in need. We have been tasked with two scenarios for the budget: 1) What if a one-to-one lasts for two years, what will be the impact including labor? 2) If there is excess or deficiencies in capital for 2020, where would you adjust on short notice?”

Ron Henne
Fleet Manager
Eversource Energy
CT and Western Mass

“At Evergy we are instituting a one person per vehicle stance unless regulations such as NRC require differently. We have been able to accommodate any request with internal assets at this time. We are in contact with Enterprise, Altec and Custom Truck weekly. We have stopped all sales of replaced units until we see how far we will need to deploy assets. We have pool vehicles that can be checked out by anyone and are providing disinfectant wipes at the key stations and in the vehicle.”

Michael Coburn
Senior Manager Fleet Services
Evergy

What programs and procedures are necessary for returning fleet staff to work safely?

"We're just at the very beginning of that conversation, however it's important to start talking about what this means as everyone looks to open for business, even if that only takes root in certain operating areas. Under normal operations, many of our fleet management team members already work remotely and use communication technology regularly. Our garage staff is doing an excellent job of keeping up with inspections, PMs and repairs because our crews in the field rely on the tools to get their jobs done. There are new protocols in place for distancing when units are dropped off or picked up or for when parts needed are delivered. PPE, and spreading out work in our in-house garages is the new way for people working in the same facility. Everyone is adjusting well to new routines. At this point, as we do start looking to return to a "new normal" many new practices will continue. There are also next steps to work with our manufacturers and upfitters as we continue to implement new practices for specifications and performance reviews, as well as 2020 pre-delivery inspections."

Chuck Bunting
Manager, Fleet Operations
NiSource

"It's still a bit premature but we did start having that conversation already as part of our daily COVID strategy call. One thing we want to start thinking about is how we're going to handle the work that we've delayed while we're just focusing on PM continuity, regulatory compliance and emergency repairs. As we eventually bring people back to work we're expecting a lot of demand for service. If we had a target date for that to happen it would be easier to plan the work, and as much as we'd like to get back to what we do, we know this will take a strategic, tactical approach and can't be done too quickly."

Chuck Yoder
Manager - Nipsco Fleet Maintenance

"We've been tracking fuel use to measure vehicle utilization under the current conditions and get an idea of the maintenance work that will be needed. In the first 12 days of April we saw significantly less fuel use, so unlike a post storm response model we don't anticipate a large backlog of work immediately. Additionally, we've gone ahead and scheduled in June non-regulatory compliance work that we know will be needed. That way, we can spread out the workload and not increase our costs."

Kyle P. Jones
Director of Fleet Services
Consumers Energy

“We do not have a date or even a timeframe yet but we are preparing by thinking about how we will start coming back to a normal routine. Our plan will call for bringing people back in stages. For example, we can slowly bring essential shop staff back, but not at a level where they can’t maintain social distancing. That might include staggering shift start times and having 30-minute gaps between shifts so areas like locker rooms aren’t crowded. We’re also talking about new steps and precautions for things like drop boxes outside facilities so drivers don’t have to interact with mechanics.”

Fortunato Gulino
Chief Automotive Engineer
Con Edison

“We are just in the early stages of planning. For us, the first phase will begin June 1st but that will be very limited for non-essential workers, and we expect social distancing measures to stay in place long into the summer and fall. We will be fine-tuning our plan once Operations finishes theirs by working toward four phases with smart indicators that will signal when the next phase can begin. Things we are considering include when to allow frontline supervisors to travel to work at multiple locations, understanding how long trucks will be remote site domiciled, a phase in return of administrative staff, monitoring workforce temperature or other testing protocols, phasing out the extra equipment needed for a single occupancy requirement, and disinfectant use.”

Dan Remmert
Sr. Manager Fleet Services
Ameren IL

“We’ve been having discussions about procedures we’ll put in place when we return to work, but we’re waiting to find out what will happen with our line crews. If the single driver policy we have in place continues we will have to take one approach to shop and mechanic scheduling. That might include continuing the practices we have in our two shops in Missouri currently, such as assigning vehicles to technicians and scheduling them so they all don’t have to report to the same facility or location at the same time. We will also need to address pent-up demand for service. Many of the vehicles that would normally receive maintenance and minor repairs on the night shift are not being parked at the shops while they are being used by line crews from home to adhere to single driver practices.”

David Russell
Manager of Transportation
Liberty Utilities

“Our fleet staff, which is part of a larger population of office employees, will not return to work until we have a number of things in place. Those include a

sequestration plan, a mask wearing directive for all employees, and deep cleaning procedures should we have an outbreak.”

Daniel Fitzpatrick
Fleet Manager
NorthWestern Energy

“Our line departments have continued to work during the COVID-19 pandemic by supporting social distancing with a scaled back work schedule, limiting exposure to contamination by working in squads, and by using PPE and over 400 light-duty rental vehicles to ensure no one has to ride with another employee. We are currently developing a return to work plan based on social distancing becoming the norm. Some of the items that are part of that discussion are requiring every employee that rides in a vehicle to wear a mask, installing fixed or removal barriers in the cabs of vehicles that separate the employees, purchasing additional light-duty vehicles to replace vehicles on rent, and requiring technicians to continue the social distancing protocols we have in place, including wearing masks in the garage when the social distance guidelines of the CDC cannot be met.”

Joseph Moser III
Manager Fleet
ComEd

COVID-19 Legal Issues

Jamie Hood, Partner at The Hood Law Firm shares valuable advice on how the pandemic has impacted our legal system and what employers can expect moving forward:

Beyond the obvious social and economic implications, COVID-19 has impacted and will continue to impact the administration of justice for years to come. Employers face new exposure for contraction and spreading of a disease based on decisions to return to work and the conditions with which the work is done. Compliance with vague and overly broad government guidelines provides little comfort against the torrent of litigation that is likely to spawn in the wake of the pandemic.

Companies face exposure to third party claims as well when normal business operations bring employees in contact with third parties. In the utility sector, the cleaning of PPE, vehicles and tools that are shared becomes a daunting requirement.

From the perspective of a trial lawyer, the current environment will make companies that are “Made in America” heroes while those with outsourced supply chains in Asia will be subject to bias stemming from the pandemic. Collaboration among jurors will make the reality of a trial almost impossible through the calendar year. While some courts are operating on a remote basis and harnessing technology to move dockets, the jury trial system has come to a complete halt.

With some manufacturers shuttered, there is increasing pressure to put off legal work until the economy reopens. This means that the normal life cycle of claims will lengthen, and the costs will likely increase. Further delays are expected as the courts strive to clean up the criminal backlog before focusing on the civil jury trials.

History tells us periods of economic turmoil and high unemployment see upticks in litigation. Companies resort to litigation instead of negotiating with each other as cash reserves are depleted. To weather the storm, the prudent company is focusing on its employees and safe work practices, and investing in processes to best insulate itself from exposure. While most governments recognize the utility industry as essential, it is prudent to also stay focused on supply chain and on those customers that you interface with that are not essential.

Lawsuits are coming. If your new business is slow, use this time to get your house in order. It will save you time and money in the long run.

COVID-19 Regulatory Update

Pat O'Connor, Kent & O'Connor, Inc., Legislative Counsel, NAFA Fleet Management Association

COVID-19 CISA Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce Guidance

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security identified critical infrastructure sectors and essential workers. The advisory is intended as a reference for state and local jurisdictions during periods of stay-at-home orders.

The transportation and logistics section of the latest version includes: “Workers critical to the manufacturing, distribution, sales, rental, leasing, repair, and maintenance of vehicles and other transportation equipment (including electric vehicle charging stations) and the supply chains that enable these operations to facilitate continuity of travel-related operations for essential workers.”

COVID-19 FMCSA Regulatory Relief

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued a Notice of Enforcement Policy, effective from March 24, 2020, to June 30, 2020, providing relief from specified Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations for CLP (Commercial Learner’s Permit) holders, CDL (Commercial Driver’s License) and non-CDL drivers, and motor carriers using those drivers.

Hours of Service rules have been relaxed for carriers hauling certain goods, including:

- Medical supplies and equipment related to the testing, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19
- Supplies and equipment necessary for community safety, sanitation, and prevention of community transmission of COVID-19 such as masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap and disinfectants
- Food, paper products and other groceries for emergency restocking of distribution centers or stores
- Immediate precursor raw materials—such as paper, plastic or alcohol—that are required and to be used for the manufacture of essential items
- Fuel
- Equipment, supplies and persons necessary to establish and manage temporary housing, quarantine
- Persons designated by federal, state or local authorities for medical, isolation, or quarantine purposes
- Persons necessary to provide other medical or emergency services

COVID-19 EPA Enforcement Discretion

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a temporary policy regarding enforcement of environmental legal obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary policy makes it clear that EPA expects regulated facilities to comply with regulatory requirements, where reasonably practicable, and to return to compliance as quickly as possible. To be eligible for enforcement discretion, the policy also requires facilities to document decisions made to prevent or mitigate noncompliance and demonstrate how the noncompliance was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced that it understands employers may have difficulty complying with workplace safety standards due to the pandemic, and it will use discretion when considering employers' "good faith efforts."

COVID-19 Exposure Liability

Fleet managers could potentially be held liable in a wide range of exposure-related lawsuits that could be brought against businesses, especially once the economy is reopened. The core component of these claims is that a customer, employee, member of the public, etc. was exposed to COVID-19 in a business or as the result of a business' particular action, or failure to act, and then that claimant became sick.

Fleet Management

Regulatory Update: Fuel, Tax and Technology

Pat O'Connor, Kent & O'Connor, Inc., Legislative Counsel, NAFA Fleet Management Association

Gas Tax

Motor fuel taxes raise the majority of Highway Trust Fund revenue but the 18.3 cents per gallon federal tax on gasoline hasn't been increased since 1993. A limited road user fee test was proposed by both House Democrats and in a Senate bill for surface transportation reauthorization. House Democrats proposed a nationwide alternative revenue pilot and Senate Republicans have included funding for state tests and research on a nationwide alternative, and have discussed a truck-only Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) fee.

Alternative Fuel Tax Credits

Federal tax credits for alternative fuel (\$0.50/gallon) and alternative fuel infrastructure (30% of cost) expire at the end of 2020. The tax credits have proven to be a useful tool for many fleets looking to make the business case for alternative fuel vehicles and equipment. Work is underway to have them extended multiple years into the future through federal legislation, likely as part of a broad group of tax credits known as "extenders" on a larger must-pass piece of legislation.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Tax Credit

The electric vehicle (EV) tax credit provides up to \$7,500 to purchasers on the first 200,000 EVs sold by an individual automaker. The credit is a useful incentive for fleets looking to transition to EVs. Several manufacturers have reached or are nearing the limit. The Driving America Forward Act, a bill to expand the EV tax credit by adding 400,000 vehicles at a reduced rate to the per-manufacturer limit, is being considered in Congress.

Fuel Economy and GHG Standards

The Environmental Protection Agency and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) have finalized the rollback of vehicle fuel economy and GHG (greenhouse gas emissions) standards. MPG and GHG will now increase by 1.5% per year from Model Years 2021-2026 compared to MY 2020 levels, far less than the 5% annual increase under the Obama administration's rule. The change also reflects less than the 3.7% per year reduction in greenhouse gas emissions required under a 2018 voluntary agreement between California and four major automakers.

California – Advanced Clean Truck Rule

Manufacturers who certify Class 2B-8 chassis or complete vehicles with combustion engines would be required to sell zero-emission trucks as an increasing percentage of their annual California sales from 2024 to 2030. Fleets with 100 or more trucks would be required to report about their existing fleet operations. This information would help identify future strategies to ensure that fleets purchase available zero-emission trucks and place them in service where suitable to meet their needs. Engine and vehicle manufacturers are asking for a fleet purchase mandate prior to a production mandate.

Connected Vehicles

Vehicle-to-everything (V2X) communication technologies promise to deliver significant safety and societal benefits to the American public, including reducing automotive crashes and fatalities, and producing economic, environmental, and transportation efficiencies. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is considering a proposal to re-channel the 5.9 GHz spectrum to enable telecommunications providers to “share” it and help ease demand for Wi-Fi. The automotive industry is poised to continue deploying V2X technologies in the 5.9 GHz band if the FCC assures that all 75 MHz of spectrum will be maintained for transportation safety.

Autonomous Vehicles

Congressional aides from the House Energy and Commerce and Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation committees are working on a self-driving car bill. Draft sections have been circulated to stakeholders but have yet to tackle the most-debated autonomous vehicle issues, including whether a customer can sue in the event of a crash.

Regulatory Update: Data, Privacy and Legislation

Pat O’Connor, Kent & O’Connor, Inc., Legislative Counsel, NAFA Fleet Management Association

Data Access

There is a growing issue over ownership and control of vehicle generated data and there is no vehicle-generated data access standard currently in place. Fleets need access to the data in order to maintain equipment, optimize operations, and monitor driver behavior to ensure safe and proper use. NAFA participates in the U.S. Data Access Coalition and the Global Alliance for Vehicle Data Access, and is working to pass federal legislation that recognizes that the owner/lessee owns and controls vehicle-generated data.

Federal Data Privacy Framework

On January 1, 2020, the California Consumer Protection Act took effect, putting pressure on Congress to create a federal consumer data protection standard.

Legislative proposals released in late 2019 included a bipartisan proposal from the House Energy and Commerce Committee and drafts from the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee. NAFA is working to ensure federal privacy legislation that does not limit the ability of an employer to monitor driver behavior.

Privacy – Motor Vehicle Records

Pending legislation in California would prohibit the DMV from disclosing a driver's Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) because third parties are reselling information and there is unwarranted disclosure of personally identifiable information.

Legalization of Marijuana

To date, 33 states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for medical and/or recreational use but it is still designated as a Schedule I drug under the federal Controlled Substances Act, which criminalizes possession, manufacture, distribution and sale of marijuana. As a result, Department of Transportation rules clearly state that medical marijuana laws have no bearing on its regulated drug-testing program. A positive drug test for marijuana – whether used for medical purposes or for recreational use – will disqualify a driver from operating a commercial vehicle. 49 CFR Part 40 at 40.151 specifically prohibits Medical Review Officers from verifying a transportation employee's drug test as negative based on information that a physician recommended that the employee use medical marijuana.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization

The Highway Trust Fund is facing insolvency in 2021 and a funding source has not been addressed. Several House and Senate Committees are involved in the process. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee has advanced a bill and House Democrats have published a blueprint. While recent authorizations have relied on transfers from the general fund, funding sources might include a gas tax increase or indexing, an electric vehicle tax, or Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and other fees. There is a September 30th reauthorization deadline and short-term extensions are likely.

Tariffs & Trade

While the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is entering into force on July 1st, there is still uncertainty over automotive rules of origin implementation for automakers. The Department of Commerce has yet to release a report on the national security threat of foreign autos and auto parts, and Section 232 tariffs have been placed on U.S. imports of steel and aluminum, and potentially motor vehicles and parts, due to concerns that imports threaten to impair national security. Additionally, Section 301 tariffs on a various imported goods from China are in effect due to concerns over the country's intellectual property rights practices.

How You Can Use Telematics Data to Improve Your Fleet

Utilimarc CEO Chris Shaffer breaks down the value of telematics data used to optimize your fleet:

Whether you are managing a small, agile fleet or an enterprise-level organization with thousands of fleet assets, odds are, you'll be using various performance indicators to track the efficiency and safety of your fleet. To ensure that your fleet is well optimized and hitting the goals you set, you'll need to make calculated decisions based on accurate data, usually coming from multiple sources. Here's where telematics comes into play--

Safety Reporting

Nothing is more important than the safety of your drivers on the road, and telematics data is a valuable source of understanding your fleet's driving behavior. Driver Safety Reporting and Scorecarding allows you to track hard braking, cornering, harsh acceleration and speeding events to help monitor how your drivers get from A to B, and prevent accidents on vehicles before they happen.

Idle Percentage

One of the most common places that fleets look to reduce unnecessary costs is by reducing excessive idle time. There's a difference between working idle and a true idle, and telematics can help you to decipher which is which. Analyzing this data can help fleets minimize costs by wasting less fuel where possible and causing less wear and tear on their vehicles and equipment.

Daily Alerts and Real-Time Tracking Capabilities

Imagine if you could complete more jobs in fewer hours, or enhance productivity by reducing the amount of days your fleet spends driving? Real-time tracking gives you a look at where time is being spent on the road, a vehicle's last-known location or how many times they enter into a specific work-zone. Daily alerts can give you the insight you need to anticipate maintenance costs or potential communication issues from vehicle to fleet manager. These pieces of data can be directly utilized to optimize fleet performance and solve any potential challenges you may face.

Using telematics data to create specific solutions can help solve common challenges many fleets are facing today. Though historically known to be confusing or hard to manage, telematics data is a vital source of information that helps fleet managers make smarter, informed decisions.

ABOUT EUFMC

The objectives of this non-profit association are dissemination of educational and technical information pertaining to the design, procurement, application, operation and maintenance of equipment used by the Electric Utilities; provision of a forum where Utility Fleet Professionals can exchange information and discuss mutual problems, and promotion of close cooperation between Manufacturers, Suppliers, Services, and Fleet Professionals engaged in the development and design of vehicles and equipment associated with the Electric Utility Industry.

Held annually in June at the Williamsburg Lodge and Conference Center in Williamsburg, Virginia, the Electric Utility Fleet Managers Conference brings together fleet professionals from investor-owned electric utilities, electric cooperatives and electrical contractors from across the U.S., Canada and South America. EUFMC activities include educational presentations, a drive-through utility equipment demonstration and an exhibition of the latest equipment and services for utility fleets. In attendance are representatives from manufacturers and service providers. For more information, visit www.eufmc.com.

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