

Why Fleet Management Is Important

Proper [fleet management](#) saves not only time, but money, particularly since vehicle acquisition and maintenance costs are among the top expenses for most companies. By properly managing your fleet, you can dramatically improve your bottom line. Now that you're running your vehicles regularly again, it's vital that you've updated your maintenance schedule and documentation to match current use.

Step 1: Choose a Tracking Method

The first step in creating a fleet management program is choosing how you will track when maintenance is due, what has been done, and what it cost. The three most common methods are paper, spreadsheets, or [fleet management software](#). Next, we'll explore the pros and cons of each of these methods.

Paper

Pros: Cheap, easy to use

Cons: Not searchable, preventative and reported maintenance items must be written down, difficult to track warranty claims and repeat issues, no reporting

Spreadsheets

Pros: Cheap, easy to use, searchable

Cons: Issues must be reported to the fleet manager to enter; warranty claims and repeat issues must be checked manually, no reporting

[Fleet Management Software](#)

Pros: Track issues reported by drivers, notifications when preventative maintenance is due, searchable. Reports allow cost, utilization, and fleet efficiency tracking

Cons: Cost, implementation

Step 2: Determine How Issues Will Be Found and Reported

The method of tracking you chose in Step 1 largely will decide how issues are reported for Step 2. The three most common methods for reporting issues are: paper form, text message, and driver app. Ask drivers to include pictures, date/time, and more to quickly identify reported issues.

Relying on drivers to report issues is not enough. Many drivers either lack the knowledge or desire to conduct proper vehicle inspections. It is a good idea to assign someone more experienced to handle and document regular vehicle checks. Always keep a record of the inspections in case of a later issue.

Step 3: Set Preventative Maintenance (PM)

Once you've selected a method of tracking and reporting, create your maintenance schedule. Most maintenance schedules are based on either hour ran, mileage, or time. Many companies choose to follow manufacturer maintenance schedules. Depending on how your vehicles operate, you may need to do maintenance more or less often. Use GPS or driver reports to track mileage or engine hours.

Step 4: Use Your Data Make decisions based on data.

A great example is cost per mile, or cost per hour. Add your maintenance cost to fuel cost and driver wages and you can figure out what it costs you to run each vehicle. Break your repairs into categories and you know which vendors you should focus on negotiating with. Compare

downtime and cost per mile between vehicle types and you can add more profitable vehicles in each category.

A health fleet starts with a solid management schedule so that you aren't missing any regular maintenance or issues that pop up when you're busy. As staff returns, make sure you're all on the same page by clearly defining roles and expectations with your [fleet management](#) program.