TOOLBOX TALKS

Green Driving

Reducing our carbon footprint is a critical environmental concern for the Company and with a significant proportion of our CO2 emissions from fleet activities, business travel is an aspect of our activities where efficiencies may be made. Vehicles are also a major source of air pollution contributing to health and environmental problems such as urban smog, air toxins, and global warming.

Whilst the company is improving its fleet efficiency through ever more economical vehicle selection and has an aim for all its vehicles to be category A/B for CO2 emissions, changing our individual driving habits can make the greatest difference in the amount of pollution a vehicle produces.

Exhaust emissions are at best unhealthy, at worst they can be fatal. Both petrol and diesel engines produce carbon monoxide, soot and other contaminants in various types of smoke and there are certain warnings that vehicle drivers can watch out for:

- Blue smoke (mainly oil and unburnt fuel) which indicates a poorly serviced and/or tuned engine
- Black smoke (soot, oil and unburnt fuel) which indicates a mechanical fault with the engine
- White smoke (water droplets and unburnt fuel) which is produced when the engine is started from cold and disappears when the engine warms up.

Three easy things you can do to help keep emissions as low as possible are:

1. **Void unnecessary driving**
2. **Maintain your vehicle properly**
3. **Drive your vehicle wisely**

By combining these approaches, you can very effectively reduce the amount of pollutants your vehicle produces. And there are additional benefits — your vehicle will last longer and cost less to operate.

Avoid Unnecessary Driving

The most effective way to reduce emissions from your vehicle is to use it less. Several options are available to help you reduce the amount you drive. These include consolidating trips, teleconferencing, car-sharing, using public transport and choosing clean transportation alternatives such as biking or walking. By planning ahead, you will also get the most out of time you do spend behind the wheel. For example:

1. Call in advance to confirm that the meeting you have is still going ahead
2. Plan to do several tasks when you go somewhere (i.e. have more than one meeting arranged per site)
3. Plan the route in advance/ use SAT NAV to avoid unnecessary driving around looking for a location
4. Do not travel at busiest times of the day to avoid traffic congestion

Maintaining your car properly

Keeping your vehicle in good running order will reduce its emissions and enhance performance if you follow the manufacturer's recommended maintenance guidelines. By taking proper care of your vehicle, you will also extend its life, increase its resale value, and optimize its fuel economy. Every vehicle has some items that need to be checked on a regular basis and others that need to be replaced periodically, i.e. the air filter, vacuum and coolant hoses, oil, oil filter, fluids, belts, etc. It's also important to keep the tyres inflated to the recommended pressure; this will minimize tyre wear and help your vehicle get the best possible fuel economy.

Drive Wisely

Even a perfectly maintained vehicle will pollute more than necessary if it is driven carelessly. Emissions can be reduced if you apply common sense to your driving and follow basic rules of the road. Driving situations likely to increase pollution include:

IDLING: You will save fuel by turning the engine off and restarting it again if you expect to be stationary for more than 2 minutes. You will also prevent pollution by avoiding extended idling time. Often now available as an option on many new vehicles, this not only may lead to a reduction of CO2 emissions, but also can provide a saving in terms of fuel consumption.

STOP - GO DRIVING: Traffic congestion is a continual issue these days, so it will not always be avoidable. But whenever possible, plan trips outside rush hour and peak traffic periods. Try to "smooth" you're driving by accelerating and decelerating/breaking gradually, anticipating stops and starts for traffic lights, changing traffic speeds and anticipating other road users slowing by keeping an eye on the traffic flow two or three vehicles ahead.

AIR CONDITIONING: Use of a vehicle air conditioning system increases the load on an engine. This can influence emission rates and decrease fuel economy. Try opening the window or the fresh air vent to cool the inside of your vehicle. Also, park in the shade as it prevents the car from heating up in the sun.

HIGH ENGINE LOADS: Your vehicle burns more fuel and emits more pollution when the engine is operating under high load; that is, when it is working especially hard. Extra load is created by running the air conditioner, quick accelerations, high-speed driving, climbing gradients, revving the engine, and carrying additional excessive weight.

COLD TEMPERATURES: Emission control systems take longer to warm up and become fully operational in cold weather. However, idling will not help. Modern vehicles need little warm-up; they are most efficient when being driven. Idling for long periods in cold weather can cause excessive engine wear.

Linked to this aspect of driving wisely, when parking your vehicle remember to reverse park. This is not only safer for when you are leaving as the car is facing the correct direction, but also means the engine won't have to work so hard when cold, thus saving fuel and clutch wear.

Making adjustments in all these areas may well save you money and help to reduce vehicle emissions.

REFUELING: Fuel spillages pollute the air when it evaporates. Watch what you do at the filling station to prevent spills and overfills.

Remember, Safe Driving is also…. ECHO DRIVING

Green Driving – Questions

Q1. Give three examples of things to consider when 'Driving Wisely'?

A1 ……

A2 ……

A3 ……

Q2. Complete the following?

A Safe Driving is also ……

……

……

Q3. What do the following warning signs indicate?

A1 Blue Smoke ……

A2 Black Smoke ……

A3 White Smoke ……

Q4 When an engine is running what emissions are there from the exhaust?

A ……

Q5. What three easy things you can do to keep emissions as low as possible?

A1 ……

A2 ……

A3 ……

Employee Name: ……. Employee Number: ……

Manager's Name: ……. Date: ……