




7 ways to create a **sustainable** fleet

By MiX Telematics



The transport sector is the largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions, producing 27% of the UK's total emissions in 2019 ([Department for Transport](#)). Greenhouse gas emissions, in turn, are one of the main causes of climate change. Governments worldwide are urging both individuals and companies to lower the harmful emissions they produce in an effort to collectively reduce environmental damage.

Fleet sustainability is all about making sure that the activities your fleet participate in are aimed at reducing your company's carbon footprint and ensuring that you're complying with applicable emissions regulations.

Not only is fleet sustainability altruistic and vital to ensuring a better future for all but it also offers other benefits for fleets including reduced operational costs, better efficiency, improved service delivery, and customer trust.


Let's take a look at 7 easy ways you can make your fleet more sustainable.





TIP 1:

Train fleet drivers on fuel-efficient driving



Provide your drivers with coaching on which driving behaviours contribute to increased fuel consumption. Then equip them with the tools and knowledge to alter those behaviours without sacrificing their overall efficiency.

Some things to mention and look out for when teaching drivers fuel-efficient driving include:



Gentle acceleration

- ▶ In city driving, nearly 50% of the energy needed to power a vehicle goes to acceleration. The harder or faster a vehicle is accelerated, the more fuel is used. To counteract this, drivers need to ease on the accelerator pedal gently, taking about 5 seconds to go up to 20 kilometres per hour from a stop instead of immediately going full force.



Less harsh braking

- ▶ Drivers need to learn the habit of taking one's foot slowly off the accelerator and coasting to a stop instead of punching the brakes every time (except for emergency stops). To make this even more achievable, drivers need to increase the following distance between their vehicle and the one in front of them so there's no need to brake suddenly when approaching a stop light or traffic. Also, create the habit among drivers of them looking ahead to how traffic is behaving to anticipate how far in advance they need to start slowing down.




Reduced speed

- ▶ Vehicles burn more fuel when they're driven at high speeds. Driving at, for example, 80 kilometres per hour can double fuel consumption in comparison to driving at 40 kilometres per hour. However, it's good to note that even driving too slow can increase fuel usage. It's optimal to keep the speed range between 45 and 75 kilometres per hour.



TIP 2:

Reduce idling time to
minimise carbon
emissions



Idling is when one leaves a vehicle engine running while stationary or parked. Idling can use up to 2 litres of fuel per hour, which emits over 5.26 kilograms of carbon dioxide (CO₂). What's more, it's simply not productive – fuel is being consumed to do nothing!

You can reduce idling time by having drivers avoid routes that have too many stop lights or heavy traffic by combining careful route planning with real-time traffic data. In addition, keep up-to-date on routes that are undergoing maintenance so drivers don't get stuck on roads where they have waiting periods or stop-and-go traffic.

Drivers might also be leaving their vehicles idling while, for example, loading or unloading cargo because they may feel it's an inconvenience to restart the engine when they can just leave it running.


The rule of thumb is that if the vehicle's going to be idling for longer than 30 seconds, it's best to just turn off the ignition. Also, remind your drivers that it's no longer necessary to warm up an engine before starting to drive.

This was more the case with older vehicles.





Cut down on
kilometres driven



Implement strategies to reduce the number of kilometres your fleet travels or needs to travel. Avoid unnecessary journeys as they not only contribute to harmful carbon emissions by consuming fuel but also increase vehicle wear-and-tear which leads to high maintenance costs.



Plan routes to be more direct.



Group deliveries or tasks that are in the same area together so that one vehicle can complete them all without travelling too far from one location to the other.



Use tracking technology to know where your drivers are at all times. When assigning jobs, send the driver closest to the job location to minimise drive time.




Monitor and limit personal usage of company vehicles. This is, once again, where tracking technology can be useful as drivers can be tracked in real-time to see which locations they've visited and they're less likely to travel for personal errands if they know they're being tracked.



TIP 4:

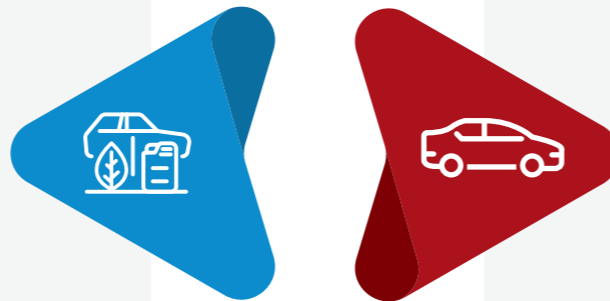
Choose sustainable
vehicles



Worldwide, companies are looking for ways to be more sustainable in an effort to reduce their environmental impact. Vehicle manufacturers know this so they're developing vehicles that aim to assist in achieving that goal. Of course, electric vehicles top the list of the most eco-friendly choice but having an entire fleet of them is not always a viable option due to, for example, lack of infrastructure.

But, there are ways you can choose vehicles that are sustainable:

Monitor lists of the cleanest, most fuel-efficient vehicles on the market and choose from that list when you're acquiring vehicles.



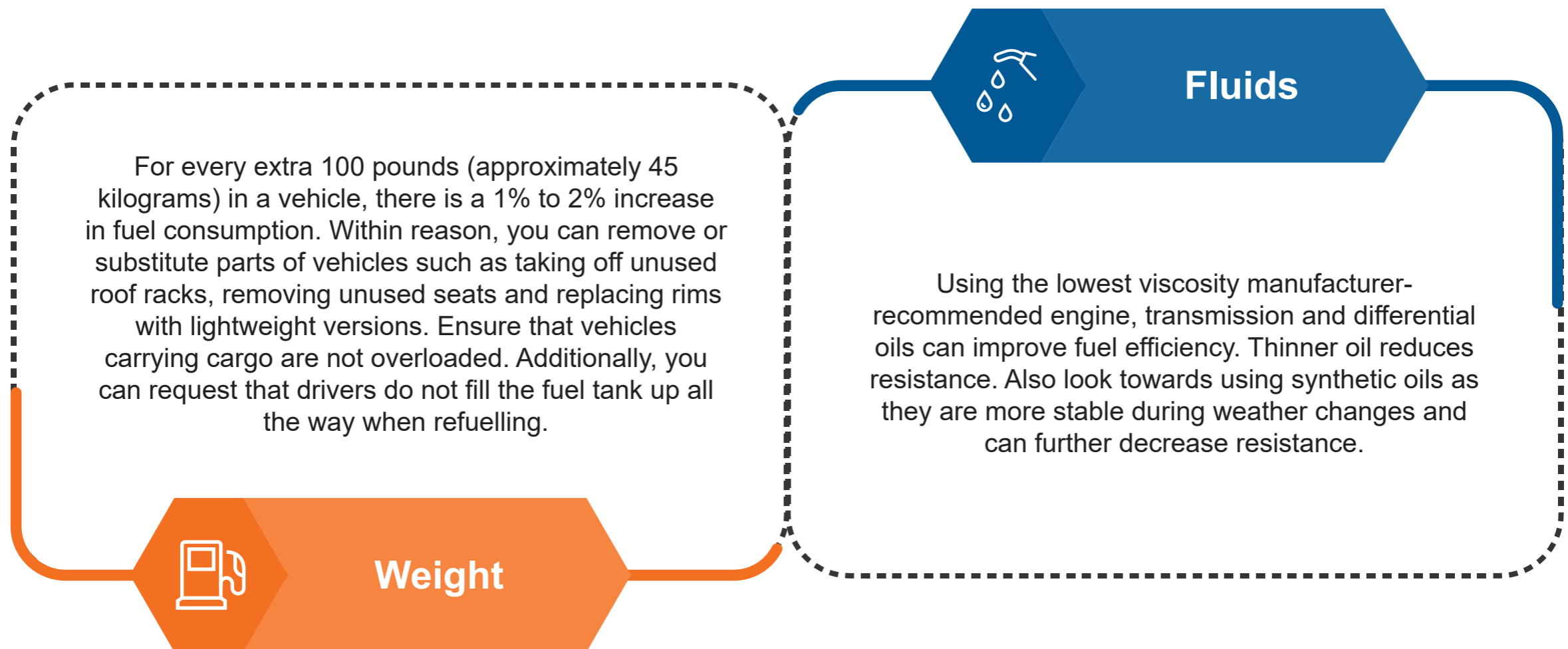
Even though it may seem better to purchase used vehicles due to lower prices and not contributing to the carbon emissions that come with vehicle manufacturing, it's actually much better in the long run to purchase new. Firstly, used vehicles require more maintenance, servicing and replacement parts. Second, the fuel-efficiency of modern vehicles have also vastly improved due to government policy, refined engineering and customer demand. And lastly, tailpipe emissions from used vehicles are much higher due to them needing to burn more fuel to operate.

Keep in mind that badly-driven "green" fleet vehicles can be just as polluting as well-driven conventional vehicles and that's why tip 1 on training your drivers to drive efficiently is so important.



Adapt vehicles for efficiency

If you really want to take your fleet sustainability to the next level, consider modifying your existing vehicles.



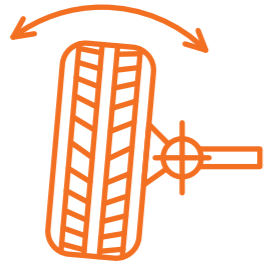
Please note! While vehicle modifications can save you fuel, exercise caution so as to not affect the safety of the vehicle and always follow manufacturers' recommendations.



Stay on top of vehicle maintenance

Regular maintenance and servicing improve vehicle efficiency and, in turn, can improve fuel consumption.

WHEEL ALIGNMENT



Misalignment can decrease fuel economy by up to **10%** as a result of, once again, increased drag. Your tyres will also last longer so that means less replacement and not filling up landfills unnecessarily.



TYRE PRESSURE



Ensure tyres are inflated to the correct pressure as indicated in the owner's manual. Underinflated tyres increase vehicle drag, thus increasing fuel usage. For every **1% decrease** in tyre pressure, there's a **0.3% reduction** in fuel economy. By the time it gets to **40%** below the recommended level, you're **increasing consumption by 8%**.



LUBRICANTS



Use low-viscosity oils (**as mentioned in tip 6**) to minimise the energy required to pump the oil through the system and reduce friction loss.



TIP 7:

Invest in fleet
management technology



To create a more sustainable fleet, you need data to compare how your fleet performed before with how your actions have improved your fleet's efficiency.

Fleet management solutions monitor a variety of data points, such as the amount of fleet idling time and how much emissions it creates, average or per-vehicle fuel usage, inefficient driving behaviours (such as speeding) and the exact routes your drivers take.

Using this information, you can see in which areas improvement is needed and then implement a plan to, for example, reduce idling or train drivers to speed less.



ABOUT MIX TELEMATICS

