Quick Guide
How to Track Fleet Utilization
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Fleet utilization is a measurement of fleet asset performance against resulting profitability. Measuring utilization can help fleet managers determine if they are making the best use of their vehicles, if the return on investment is up to par with expectations, and where adjustments may need to be made to optimize fleet performance.

This quick guide will identify the different ways in which fleet managers can track utilization and will compare the advantages and disadvantages of each.
Manual Meter Capture

Vehicle operators look at meter readings and manually record mileage or engine hour information. This data is then manually input into a meter journal, spreadsheet or other computer system.

**Advantages:**
- Cost-effective
- User-friendly

**Disadvantages:**
- More prone to human error
- Downtime spent on manual data entry instead of other jobs

**Best Used For:**
- Smaller fleets with small budgets
Mass Meter Updates and Logs

A more systematic method to manual meter capturing allows for updates of a larger scale on a more frequent basis, such as through equipment logs or timesheets. The data is similarly stored into a computer, but can be input using a handheld device and then transferred to database.

**Advantages:**
- Increased frequency
- Cost-effective

**Disadvantages:**
- Lag time between meter recordings and system entry
- Inaccurate data

**Best Used For:**
- Fleets with smaller budgets
Route Based Usage

Driving destinations are pinpointed on a routing map and the distance between each point is recorded for each route traveled. These fixed routes can then be used to ensure optimal routing for vehicle operators.

Advantages:
• More jobs finished in less time
• Lowers fuel costs

Disadvantages:
• Based on distance; not time
• Does not account for traffic and detours

Best Used For:
• Transit and other trucking-based fleets where fixed routes are common
Motor Pool Applications

This comprehensive solution allows vehicle operators to capture vehicle usage and trip information. As a result, fleet managers can ‘right-size’ a fleet while increasing utilization.

Advantages:
- Saves time and money
- More accurate data and reports

Disadvantages:
- Requires comprehensive motor pool software
- Only applicable for motor pool vehicles, which is often a small percentage of the total fleet

Best Used For:
- Fleets with motor pools
Manual Fuel Systems

Vehicle operators can manually input meter readings into the fuel pump at the time of fueling. These meter readings are stored with fuel data in the pump’s computer for later integration into a fleet system.

**Advantages:**
- Easy for operator to input data quickly
- More accurate fuel data
- Cost-effective

**Disadvantages:**
- Limited validation
- Data not updated in real-time

**Best Used For:**
- Fleets with centralized fueling locations
Automatic Fuel Systems

Authorized vehicle operators can transmit data from fuel pumps to an on-board device that captures and transmits the issue, receipt and transfer of all fuel data to a centralized database at a remote location.

**Advantages:**
- Increased efficiency and accuracy
- Data updated in real-time
- Can also lower overall fuel expenditures

**Disadvantages:**
- Automatic Fuel systems can be cost-prohibitive for smaller fleets

**Best Used For:**
- Larger fleets with their own fuel islands
Passive AVL Systems

A small device connects to the CAN-bus inside the vehicle and periodically records snapshots of vehicle location, meter data and engine information for future analysis. This provides fleet managers with a record of when a vehicle was used and the duration of the trip.

**Advantages:**

- Increased efficiency and accuracy
- No recurring operating costs
- No effort required by vehicle operator to gather information

**Disadvantages:**

- Data not updated in real-time
- Higher upfront initial costs

**Best Used For:**

- Larger fleets
GPS/AVL Systems

GPS/AVL systems use hardware installed on each vehicle to communicate with satellites to gather location, velocity, meter readings and engine trouble codes. Information is gathered and transmitted in near real time back to the operations center.

**Advantages:**
- Increased efficiency and accuracy
- Gathers more information than just usage – such as driver behavior and engine diagnostic codes
- No effort required by vehicle operator to gather information

**Disadvantages:**
- Higher initial upfront investment
- Recurring operating costs
- Reliability can be dependent on climate

**Best Used For:**
- Larger fleets
Conclusion

There are multiple ways in which you can determine whether your fleet’s assets are being utilized at an optimal level—regardless of fleet size or budget. Taking these methods into consideration can help ensure maximum profitability and pinpoint areas for further improvement.

Gathering utilization data is the first step towards understanding how your fleet is performing. The right fleet management software program can help you analyze this data and help you make fact-based decisions.

For more information on how AssetWorks can help you improve fleet utilization, visit www.assetworks.com.