



CONTACT US:

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New Haven Repair Facility

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After Hours Emergencies

Call **1-877-454-4204** (toll-free)
Your call will be answered through the Department of Environmental Protection Dispatch Office, which will assist you.

Online

Go to www.das.state.ct.us and click on **FLEET OPERATIONS** for additional information on fueling locations, accident forms and mileage reports.

Over the past few weeks we have received a number of inquiries about the Toyota products in our fleet. We've heard from drivers, managers, ATA's and at least one TV station. Considering that many of the recent updates regarding Toyota bring more troubling news,

Regarding Toyota

we thought that now would be an appropriate time to share how Toyota's situation impacts us, and also to shed some light on why we have Toyota's in the first place.

First and most important, to date none of our Prius vehicles (this is the only Toyota model that DAS owns) are part of a recall for unintended acceleration – zero. However, we were notified some months back regarding the concern of floor mats potentially interfering with the gas pedal. Upon receipt of that notice we asked that drivers remove floor mats and place them into the trunk until such time that Toyota identifies, and communicates a solution. Additionally, DAS maintenance facilities have been instructed to check every Prius at each service to make certain that the mat has been removed. If it is still on the driver's floor, our staff moves it to the trunk.

Regarding the size of our Prius fleet, in total we have 330 models that are 2005-2008. In addition to Toyota hybrids, we also own 100 Honda Civic hybrids, also 2005-2008 models.

We were led to hybrids because, as the state's primary light-duty vehicle operator, DAS needs to be in compliance with conflicting, state and federal requirements.

For example, there is a state statute that requires 50% of our purchases to average in excess of 40 MPG. To achieve this we had no option but to buy large quantities of the Toyota and Honda hybrids, since no American manufacturers offered hybrids that could achieve 45+ MPG like those offered by Toyota and Honda. Simply put, they were the only vehicles available that achieved the MPG required by State law.

On the other hand, DAS must comply with federal Department of Energy (EPA) guidelines requiring that 75% of our fleet purchases be classified as alternate fuel vehicles. Regrettably, DOE fails to recognize hybrid vehicles as being alternate fuel. Therefore purchasing a large quantity of E85 vehicles became necessary to achieve the EPA requirements, but they do not yet meet state fuel efficiency standards.

Up until this point in time, our maintenance, reliability, and safety experience with both the Toyota and Honda have been superb. And with actual real world fuel mileage of close to 50 MPG, they have proven to be extremely fuel-efficient as well.

We will continue to monitor the Toyota situation on a daily basis, and provide updates as new information becomes available.

Another Fleet Management Tool!

So, how do your supervisors know when a car is overdue for service? Besides any measures that your agency may have implemented, Fleet Operations assists by tracking the dates and odometer readings from service work orders, monthly reports and every fill-up to give us a pretty good idea of each vehicle's mileage. For about a year now we have used this information to report vehicles that are overdue for service to agencies so that they can work with their staff to resolve. For the most part this process has proven to be effective although recently we discov-

ered a situation in which the twice a month updates had been ignored on a vehicle causing it to become severely overdue for service.

To help prevent a reoccurrence of that scenario, in addition to the current report, we will be running a new report once a month, on roughly the 15th, to identify any vehicle that is seriously overdue for service. Only vehicles that are more than 3,000 miles or 90 days overdue for service will be identified on this new report. The ATA for any agency that has a vehicle in either of these categories will receive notification, with the vehicle details, requesting that the situation be remedied within two weeks.

If you don't receive this report it is because your agency doesn't have any seriously overdue vehicles.

The *Vehicle Accident Report Form* is now posted on the Fleet page of the DAS website. The *MVCU-1* is now history, and any copies can be recycled. In addition, over the past month we eliminated the technical problem we had of not being able to save a completed report and attach it to an email. The form is now 100% writable and able to be saved and then emailed. It can also be saved even if it's only partially done and completed later.

It's Finally Here!

Each time a vehicle from your agency is involved in an accident, instruct the driver to go to the Fleet Operations page of the DAS website to access the Accident Information link and complete the form. Once finished, drivers can rename the form by incident, save it to their computer and include it as an attachment in an email to Fleet Administration. Any police reports or other miscellaneous data related to the accident can be sent via fax or thru inter-office courier. All that we ask is that the accident date and plate number be noted so that we can include all of the necessary paperwork in one file.

The introduction of the on-line report obviates the need to complete the old paper form – it is a replacement not an addition. Using the electronic report does not require agencies to change any internal reporting procedures that they may have. However, if you have a requirement to forward motor vehicle accident reports to your supervisory team, feel free to switch over to this electronic version. Besides saving some trees, it will streamline the reporting process and enable electronic storage for future reference.

To recap

1. Accident occurs
2. Driver goes to Accident section of DAS Fleet page
3. Completes Vehicle Accident Report
4. Emails report to Fleet Administration
5. Forwards police report and any other paper documents via fax, or through courier service (it's also ok to scan and email if you choose).
6. Driver complies with any internal reporting requirements that his/her agency may have.

We ask for your support with our revised reporting process. Towards that end we ask that you forward this newsletter to all of the supervisors within your agency who have responsibility for employees who use vehicles to complete their duties. And, as always, if there are any questions on the who, what, when, where, and why aspects of completing and forwarding this document, just give our office a call.