



DAS FLEET NEWSLETTER

# inroads

March 2009

## CONTACT US:

### Administration

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### Wethersfield Repair Facility

60 State Street (rear)  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
**860-566-7826**

### Norwich Repair Facility

171 Salem Turnpike  
Norwich, CT 06360  
**860-885-2153**

### New Haven Repair Facility

140 Pond Lily Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06515  
**203-397-4590**

### 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](http://www.das.state.ct.us) and click on **FLEET OPERATIONS** for additional information on fueling locations, accident forms and mileage reports.

When developing a maintenance schedule, the question ultimately becomes, “when is the most effective time to perform each task to ensure that a vehicle provides reliable and low-cost service?” Considerations include manufacturers’ recommendations, type of use, and fiscal constraints. As you may know, besides changing the oil and filter, a service consists of a multitude of safety and operational inspections designed to keep our vehicles safe and reliable.

Recognizing the improved quality and reliability of recently built cars, compared to those of a generation ago, we have reviewed our past service schedules and maintenance histories and decided to make some adjustments. Beginning January 1, with the exception of certain special-use vehicles (wheelchair lifts and buses), our fleet vehicles will be serviced on a six-month or 6,000 mile schedule.

To incorporate this change into our existing service schedule with minimal impact, we will honor the next scheduled appointment for all vehicles. Once the first service of 2009 is completed, any subsequent services will be scheduled in accordance with the needs established for that vehicle. In most cases this will be six months or 6,000 miles.

## Service schedules and appointments

We feel that this schedule achieves the critical balance of timely attention to vehicle maintenance issues and prudent fiscal management.

This will generate savings of both time and money to DAS and all user agencies, and we are confident that this will not negatively

impact the assumed life of our fleet, nor reduce the overall reliability that is so important to everyone.

Regarding service appointments - we ask that each agency institute an internal process to make certain that vehicles are getting service when they should. And, if you’re ever unsure whether a particular vehicle is due for service, just call one of our garages to confirm.

Additionally, DAS is reviewing all vehicle records to better identify cars that have not been serviced according to our schedule. This process requires that monthly mileages be updated in order to provide current data. Each month we will run an “Overdue for Service” report, and ATA’s will be informed of any vehicles assigned to their agency that are past due for service either by time or mileage.

For the month of March we are mailing these reports, but in the future notices for overdue service will be **emailed** directly to agency ATA’s.

## Why not turn them in early?

In February, Governor Rell ordered a 20% reduction of the state fleet by July 1, 2009 to reduce costs to the state and to help meet the large revenue shortfalls the state is experiencing during this recession. Likewise, most agencies could use some budget relief about now in order to manage budget rescissions and other cutbacks. If your agency would like to turn in leased DAS fleet vehicles *now* in order to shed monthly fees, Fleet Operations will gladly accept these cars which will be credited towards the overall reductions we must achieve. Contact Carol Biernacki for assistance.

## Car Wash

As you all are aware, due to the economic climate, Governor Rell announced a sweeping review of active state contracts in an effort to sharply reduce and curtail spending and eliminate non-essential spending. To support this effort, DAS Fleet Operations recently met with the DAS Procurement Division to review the current car wash contract and its cost to the state.

After careful review, it has been decided to significantly restrict the number of car washes paid for by state resources. Therefore, we will no longer supply wash coupons to each agency on a monthly, or even a regular basis. This will provide for a significant reduction in discretionary expenditures in support of the Governor's directive.

Special consideration will be given for those situations where vehicle cleaning is required for health and safety reasons.

**Did you know?** Making an appointment in advance for your next service is appreciated and preferred, but sometimes



circumstances dictate that waiting a month or so just isn't possible. When you need service and you don't have an appointment, it's OK to drop off your car at any of our garages, and we will fit that car in to our schedule – almost always within a day or two.

All you have to do is call to let us know when your car will be coming in. As soon as the car has been serviced and is ready to go, we'll contact the agency/driver. Unfortunately, under these circumstances we will not be able to provide a loaner, as they are committed to drivers with appointments and to cover long-term repair needs.

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As we alluded to last month, our New Haven garage is currently the busiest of our three maintenance facilities. There are two primary reasons for this. First, this is our western-most location. So, in addition to maintaining all of the cars in the greater New Haven region, agencies with offices as far away as Stamford, Danbury, Waterbury, and even northwest CT, rely upon New Haven to service their vehicles. In addition, our staffing level has been down one mechanic for some time.

## NEW HAVEN GARAGE

So that we may provide the support you need and service cars in a prompt and timely manner, we are working to transfer a mechanic to the New Haven garage. We will continue to work limited additional hours to minimize the downtime on cars dropped off for repair.

We recognize that in these difficult times, when every car must be justified, it is more critical than ever to keep the vehicles up and running that you need to support your agency mission. Thank you for your patience and flexibility, and we will keep you posted on changes or any other happenings that allow us to better support cars based in New Haven, Fairfield, and Litchfield counties.