

inroads

May 2009



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New Haven Repair Facility

140 Pond Lily Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515
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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.

Carol is Retiring!



Just where did the time go? After 28 years of working in Fleet Operations, Carol Biernacki has decided to hang up her Fleet Vehicle Control hat so that she can retire and spend more time with her family.

One of Carol's new activities will be helping to care for three of her six grandchildren

a few days each week. For some people this might not quite be the retirement dream, but considering her high energy level and organizational skills, we are certain that Carol will have those kids under control at all times!

In her absence, the rest of the Fleet management team will be very busy working

to fill the huge hole that her departure creates. Until a permanent replacement can be hired, all vehicle assignment, lease rate, and billing questions should be directed to our general office number, (860) 713-5160, and we will do our best to provide the support and assistance that you need.

Fleet Operations cannot thank Carol enough for her many years of hard work, dedication, loyalty and the too-numerous-to-mention contributions that she has made to our office and agency. Besides her knowledge and skills, we will miss her positive outlook, customer service focus and outstanding work ethic. Her presence will truly be missed by all of us.

So that you can have the opportunity to extend your best wishes to Carol, please join us on Wednesday, May 27, from 11:30 – 2:00 at 165 Capitol Ave., Fifth Floor in the South Mechanical Room. We hope that you can stop by and share a memory.

Keep Them Coming...

A big thank you to all of the agencies who have already turned in vehicles to meet their reduction goal as directed by Governor Rell's Executive Order 22. To date over 300 vehicles have been turned in. Newer turn-ins will be reassigned in the coming weeks to replace the older, higher-mileage vehicles; the oldest and most used vehicles will be sold at our May 9 or June 6 auctions.

As final vehicle turn-in plans are made, don't forget to factor in any employee who is currently assigned a vehicle that will be retiring shortly. If their duties will be consolidated under an existing employee/vehicle, consider whether that will allow a vehicle to be turned-in toward your total.

General Letter 115 Revised Pursuant to Executive Order No. 22

In Executive Order No. 22, Governor M. Jodi Rell directed the Department of Administrative Services to assume the final authority over purchasing, leasing and maintaining the state's passenger car and light-duty truck fleet and establish procedures and standards regarding the acquisition, use, maintenance and garaging of passenger cars and light duty trucks. In addition to explicitly directing DAS to revise General Letter 115 with regard to the assignment of state vehicles, the Executive Order (directly or indirectly) modified several other existing procedures and practices. Accordingly, DAS undertook a thorough review of the March 2008 version of General Letter 115 and revised it to bring it into accord with Executive Order 22.



In recognition of DAS' expanded authority, the statement of DAS responsibilities in the "Allocation of Responsibilities" section has been revised to include DAS's new authority over the purchasing, leasing and maintaining of vehicles, as well as its authority to establish policies and procedures. The Agency Transportation Administrator (ATA) responsibilities were also amended to state explicitly that the ATA is responsible for (1) determining whether a contract employee or volunteer has a justifiable need to drive a state vehicle and, if so, seeking DAS' permission; and (2) promptly investigating complaints and notifying DAS of the outcome of their investigations within 30 days, absent extenuating circumstances.

The responsibilities of the drivers were also clarified. The revised General Letter 115 establishes a 72-hour time frame for a driver to notify his/her ATA of any motor vehicle violations incurred while driving a state vehicle and a 24-hour deadline for notifying the ATA if his/her motor vehicle license has been suspended, revoked or has expired. The revised General Letter also highlights the pre-existing rule that parking fines and other liability charges are the personal liability of the driver.

The explanation of when the assignment of a vehicle to an agency is appropriate was similarly clarified. Pursuant to the Executive Order, DAS shall approve a

request for a vehicle only when it determines that it will be less costly to use a state vehicle than to reimburse the driver for the mileage or when the agency can demonstrate that specialized

circumstances, such as particular equipment needs or risk management concerns, dictate the acquisition of a state vehicle.

General Letter 115 reaffirms the state's preference for the use of inter- and intra-agency motor pools. Additionally, it provides additional guidelines to help agencies to better understand when DAS will be likely to approve requests for a vehicle to be assigned to an individual driver on a long-term basis. Pursuant to the Executive Order, the General Letter also states

that, with limited exceptions, approval to assign a vehicle to an individual on a long-term basis will not be granted if the individual driver averages less than 700 miles per month.

In addition to restricting the circumstances under which an individual driver may be assigned a vehicle, the revised General Letter imposes additional restrictions on the home-garaging of vehicles. Notably, in order to support a request for home-garaging based on an employee's "on-call" status, an agency will have to demonstrate why the employee could not use a personally-owned vehicle to respond to a call.

Finally, the General Letter stipulates that drivers who have been the subject of two or more valid complaints or have two or more motor vehicle violations while driving a state-owned vehicle within a six-month period may lose their individually-assigned vehicle or may forfeit the privilege of using any state-owned vehicles. It also clarifies that drivers are prohibited from removing any prescribed markings, including license plates and state-issued bumper stickers.

We have a new tool to help ATA's manage their fleets – Overdue Mileage reports. The days of learning that a vehicle has somehow become months and/or thousands of miles overdue for service are in our rearview mirror.

Overdue for Service Reminders

By using the same log-in button and sign-on process that is required to access the monthly mileage updates, you can also access a report called – **Overdue for Maintenance**. Once logged in,

just go to **Select a Report** and hit the drop down button. All vehicles within your agency that are overdue by our established parameters (six-months or 6,000 miles) will be clearly identified on this new report.

Also, to save you the trouble of frequent searches, we have established a reminder system similar to the one that is used to notify you when monthly mileage for a vehicle hasn't been updated. The system will be scanned on a regular basis for any vehicles that have

exceeded service guidelines. If any vehicles in your fleet are identified, you will receive an email to alert you accordingly. Then all you need to do is to log in and review the report to get details of which cars.

Once a vehicle becomes overdue it should be brought to a shop within the next week. Since appointments for while-you-wait services at our Wethersfield and New Haven location are often booked weeks, if not months in advance, it will most likely be necessary to drop the car off for a day or two so that the shop can fit it in to their schedule and avoid having a driver potentially wait for hours. Our shops have been instructed that drivers/agencies will be calling to request a drop-off service and that they will need to make accommodations to provide a quick turnaround.

Finally, our Norwich facility currently does not have the maintenance backlog of our other two locations, so if it is critical to have the service done while waiting, this facility may be able to provide that level of service in the shortest timeframe.

Q What do you get when you combine employees with many years of service, the right age, and an incentive to retire?

A People leaving to enjoy the rest of their lives.

That's the scenario in our Wethersfield maintenance location. So far Shop Supervisor Bob Chausse and Parts Supervisor Norm Townley have both decided that the time is right to move on. A couple of other Wethersfield employees are also contemplating if now is the best time to retire.

Bob has been with Fleet Operations for all of his 30 years of state employment, starting as a skilled maintainer, and then becoming a QCW before being promoted to a supervisor 15 years ago. Besides Wethersfield, he has spent time working in our Hartford, Norwich, New Haven and Seymour locations. Bob is looking forward to extra rounds of golf, catching up on his list of around-the-house jobs, and possibly spending some additional time in a warm weather climate.

Norm began his career with the state 35 years ago as a toll collector. After a couple of years he went to work as a Material Storage Supervisor for DOT, working in both East Haven and Seymour. About two years later, the opportunity to work in a similar capacity for DAS was presented and he became part of our fleet maintenance team. After over 30 years with DAS Fleet Operations, Norm has established himself as a parts man extraordinaire. He is looking forward to some traveling and lowering his golf handicap.

We will miss Bob's and Norm's presence and contributions, but at the same time wish them nothing but the best as they move on to the next chapter of their lives.