A complete guide to fleet maintenance



wex™

1995871883 (6/25)



Fleet maintenance is a foundational element for businesses that rely on commercial vehicles. Whether you manage a handful of service vans, a large regional fleet, or government vehicles across multiple sites, your success depends on how well you care for the assets that keep your business moving.

Regular maintenance isn't just about oil changes and tire rotations. It's about creating a proactive system that helps you lower costs, improve safety, maintain compliance, reduce downtime, and extend vehicle life. In this guide, we'll cover everything fleet managers need to know to build and maintain an effective fleet maintenance strategy.

What is fleet maintenance- and why does it matter?

Fleet maintenance refers to the ongoing process of inspecting, servicing, repairing, and documenting the condition and performance of your vehicles. The goal is simple: keep your fleet running safely, efficiently, and compliantly while avoiding surprise costs and unnecessary downtime.

For business owners in industries like HVAC, plumbing, construction, delivery, or landscaping, your fleet is more than transportation—it's a business-critical tool. If even one vehicle is sidelined unexpectedly, it can impact your schedule, your team, and your revenue.

Core components of fleet maintenance

- **Preventive maintenance:** Routine service like oil changes, brake inspections, and filter replacements scheduled based on mileage or time intervals.
- **Corrective maintenance:** Repairs made after a problem is identified or a vehicle fails an inspection.
- **Predictive maintenance:** Using real-time data from telematics to anticipate service needs before issues occur.
- **Compliance checks:** Ensuring vehicles meet local, state, and federal regulations for safety and emissions.
- **Recordkeeping:** Tracking all maintenance activities and costs to inform decision-making and budgeting.

The business case for regular fleet maintenance

Investing in a structured maintenance program delivers benefits that go beyond keeping your vehicles in working order. For small business fleets, these advantages can be the difference between profit and loss:

1

Reduce operating costs

Neglecting routine maintenance often leads to bigger, more expensive problems in the future. Catching issues early—before a breakdown—helps you avoid emergency repairs, towing costs, and lost productivity. Well-maintained vehicles also get better fuel economy, helping you manage one of your biggest operating expenses.

2

Improve safety and compliance

Your team's safety is non-negotiable. Maintenance helps ensure that tires, brakes, lights, and other critical systems are functioning properly. It also supports compliance with DOT regulations and other safety standards, reducing your risk of violations and penalties.

3

Increase vehicle lifespan

Regular maintenance extends the life of your vehicles, allowing you to get the most from each asset. This means fewer early replacements, better ROI, and the ability to delay major capital expenses.

4

Protect your brand reputation

Unexpected breakdowns or delays don't just cost money—they can hurt your customer relationships. Keeping your fleet in top condition means more reliable service and fewer schedule disruptions.

5

Enhance resale value

A documented history of regular maintenance improves resale or trade-in value. Buyers will pay more for a vehicle that's been properly cared for and has a clear service record.



Leveraging technology to streamline fleet maintenance



The days of relying solely on paper checklists and driver memory are over. Today, fleet maintenance is powered by tools and technologies that provide real-time visibility and actionable insights:

Telematics systems

Telematics involves GPS-enabled platforms tracking vehicle usage, location, and performance metrics like engine temperature, fuel efficiency, and idle time. Alerts can be triggered by diagnostic trouble codes (DTCs) or driver behavior—helping you spot problems before they escalate. Pairing your fuel card with telematics creates a single source of truth for vehicle performance, fueling behavior, and service data. That's the kind of insight that turns reactive operations into strategic ones.

Fleet management analytics and insights

Digital platforms like WEX ClearView provide essential data for optimizing your fleet. Get snapshots of your company's fueling activities delivered right to your inbox. Whether you're a small fleet with basic data questions or a large fleet overseeing hundreds or thousands of vehicles, **there's a WEX ClearView analytics and insights solution for you:**

- **Snap:** Stay informed with easy-to-interpret, highly visual reports delivered directly to your inbox.
- **Essentials:** Explore compelling visuals and drill-down capability to better manage your fleet.
- **Advanced:** Move from insight to action with advanced options to target non-compliance.

Electric vehicle (EV) diagostics

As more businesses add electric or hybrid vehicles to their fleet, EV-specific diagnostics and battery management tools become essential. These systems monitor battery health, charge cycles, and range efficiency to help you plan your charging and EV service needs. Telematics creates a single source of truth for vehicle performance, fueling behavior, and service data. That's the kind of insight that turns reactive operations into strategic ones.

Building a preventive maintenance schedule

The backbone of any fleet maintenance program is a clear preventive maintenance (PM) schedule. This is your proactive plan for servicing vehicles at regular intervals to avoid unplanned downtime.

What to include in your PM plan:

- [ ] Oil and fluid changes (based on mileage or hours)
- [ ] Brake and tire inspections
- [ ] Transmission and coolant checks
- [ ] Battery and electrical system checks
- [ ] Filter replacements (air, fuel, cabin)
- [ ] Suspension and steering inspections
- [ ] Safety checks (lights, signals, wipers)

Each vehicle type and use case may have unique needs. Consult your manufacturer's service schedule and adjust based on how your fleet operates—whether that's urban deliveries or rural service calls.

Empowering drivers as frontline maintenance partners

Your drivers are in the best position to spot early warning signs on your commercial vehicles. Empowering them with knowledge and communication tools is critical.

Encourage driver input

- Require drivers to conduct pre- and post-trip inspections.
- Train them to identify warning signs like unusual noises, poor handling, or dashboard alerts.
- Create easy ways to report maintenance issues in real time.

Promote driver mechanic collaboration

- Foster communication between drivers and your service team to give context to vehicle issues.
- Provide feedback on driving habits that affect wear-and-tear (e.g., aggressive braking, idling).
- Use telematics data to coach safer, more fuel-efficient driving.

Overcoming common maintenance challenges

Even with a good system in place, many fleets face roadblocks in maintaining consistency. Here's how to solve the most common issues:

Budget constraints

Set a maintenance budget and prioritize high-impact services. Preventive maintenance costs far less than unplanned repairs.

Schedule disruptions

Use telematics and mileage data to create optimized service intervals. Try to align maintenance appointments with off-peak times or vehicle downtime.

Part or service delays

Build relationships with reliable service providers. Keep common parts in inventory, especially if you operate older or specialized vehicles.

Limited internal resources

If you don't have an in-house maintenance team, outsource to a local provider or dealership you trust. Consider using a maintenance management platform to centralize all communication and history.



Maintenance strategies for electric and hybrid fleets

As you add EVs or hybrids to your fleet, maintenance needs will change. While these vehicles often require less frequent service, they come with new components like battery packs, electric motors, and regenerative braking systems.

Key EV maintenance considerations

- Monitor battery health and charging cycles.
- Rotate tires frequently (EVs are heavier).
- Use manufacturer-certified mechanics for software and high-voltage repairs.
- Stay on top of software updates that impact performance or diagnostics.

Best practices for recordkeeping and reporting

Documenting fleet maintenance is more than good housekeeping—it's a business necessity. Good records help you:

- Track spending
- Demonstrate compliance
- Improve resale value
- Plan for future vehicle replacements

What to track:

- Service dates and mileage
- Completed maintenance activities
- Technician notes or photos
- Invoices and costs
- Downtime associated with repairs

Environmental and sustainability benefits

Maintenance also plays a role in meeting sustainability goals. Efficient engines and well-maintained vehicles consume less fuel and emit fewer pollutants. For government fleets or businesses with ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) goals, fleet maintenance supports regulatory compliance and demonstrates a commitment to greener operations.

Recap: Why fleet maintenance is a must for business success

Fleet maintenance isn't just about avoiding breakdowns—it's about building a resilient, cost-effective, and high-performing operation. When you invest in proactive maintenance, you're investing in:

- Financial stability
- Business continuity
- Customer satisfaction
- Brand reputation
- Driver safety
- Long-term growth

Whether you manage a local plumbing company, a mobile healthcare fleet, or regional delivery vehicles, your fleet is your foundation—and maintenance is your safeguard.



How WEX helps:

WEX supports businesses with commercial fleets with tools that make maintenance easier to manage:

Fuel cards with Level III data
to track spending and usage patterns

Telematics
to monitor vehicle performance and prevent breakdowns

Maintenance alerts
and reporting to simplify scheduling

Cash flow solutions
to keep you moving- even when repairs are costly

Apply for a WEX fleet card and **take control of your commercial vehicle operations.**

Learn more at wexinc.com

wex™

1995871883 (6/25)