The Fleet Express

A quarterly publication for Agency Transportation Officers

OFMS KEY STAFF

MICHAEL BISOGNO
DIRECTOR
michael.bisogno@dgs.virginia.gov

GARY JOHNSON
PLANNING AND DEPLOYMENT MANAGER
gary.johnson@dgs.virginia.gov

KEVIN CRAIN
FLEET SERVICES MANAGER
kevin.crain@dgs.virginia.gov

CARL LOVELAND
BUSINESS MANAGER
carl.loveland@dgs.virginia.gov

CONNIE BECK
VMCC PROJECT MANAGER
connie.beck@dgs.virginia.gov

Department of General Services
Office of Fleet Management Services
2400 W. Leigh St. Richmond, VA 23220
P: (804) 367-6526 F: (804) 367-8987
www.fleet.dgs.virginia.gov

Choosing the Right Size Car

While agency missions are not changing, most agency budgets are getting leaner. As the ATO, you are called on to make tough decisions to meet the transportation needs of your agency and hold the line on costs at the same time. A common problem, we repeatedly hear, is the need for a bigger car just because.

This year the problem is more noticeable since we are seeing significant increases in the cost of new vehicles. Larger vehicles cost more to purchase and are generally more expensive to operate.

The auto manufacturers have made a number of changes over the past years to improve their vehicles besides simply improving fuel economy. The new four cylinder engines perform like V6's , while maintaining four cylinder fuel economy. The smaller engines require less space in the front of the car. Engineers used the space gained through this process to enlarge interior room and trunk space, while maintaining the same footprint. In short, compact cars are not the same size as compact cars of 5 to 7 years ago.

Last year, we conducted an analysis of our compact, mid-size, and full size vehicles to see what the differences were. We did this analysis again for the 2013 models. Again, in most dimensions, we are not seeing significant dimensional changes from model to model. For example, the front legroom only varies by ½ inch from the least to the greatest legroom. Practically, it is doubtful that one could notice ½ inch.

Hopefully this will help you the next time an employee comes to you and says, "I need a large car because….".

Dimension	Avenger	Impala	Focus
Wheelbase	108.9	110.5	104.3
Overall Length	192.6	200.4	178.5
Vehicle Height	58.4	58.7	57.7
Vehicle Width	72.8	72.9	71.8
Seating Capacity	5	5	5
Cargo Capacity	13	19	13
Front Headroom	40	39.4	38.3
Front Legroom	42.4	42.3	41.9
Rear Headroom	38.3	37.8	38
Rear Legroom	36.2	37.6	33.2

All measurements in inches except cargo capacity which is cubic feet

From the Director:

Fiscal Responsibility…For My Fleet?

The "Fiscal Cliff" is in the national news everywhere we turn these days. …but why, do you ask, is fiscal responsibility the subject of an article in this Fleet Newsletter?

Fiscal responsibility is probably part of your Employee Work Profile (EWP), but what does that mean in practice? Here are a few ideas for you to consider:

- Vehicle Assignments: Are all of your vehicles still assigned correctly? They may have correctly been assigned years ago, but what about now? An annual analysis may show where you can re-assign vehicles for better use.
- Vehicle Size: Are there any opportunities to downsize your vehicle sizes? Even though a certain size vehicle was justified years ago, it is always a good idea to re-evaluate your needs.
- Vehicle Choice: Do you always need a vehicle or do you simply need access to a vehicle sometimes. It may be that using the OFMS Enterprise rental contract would be more cost effective.

Managing your agency's fleet in a fiscally responsible manner will help the Commonwealth avoid higher costs.

Update: Governor's Alternative Fuel Vehicle PPEA

OFMS has received a number of vehicle surveys from agencies. If you have not already done so, complete the survey and submit to Michael.bisogno@dgs.virginia.gov ASAP.

Per Executive Directive #5, DGS and DMME will now be using the data provided to look for areas in the state with high concentrations of vehicles that would be advantageous for alt-fuel infrastructure. As we move through this process, we may at times reach out for additional information.

DGS and DMME will also work with Clean Energy and Blossman Gas to identify localities, transit authorities and other fleets that may have interest in moving towards alternative fuels. Once identified, we will work with those fleets to explore synergies and opportunities that can support further expansion of fueling infrastructure.

As we move through these next steps, we will do our best to keep all affected agencies abreast of changes and updates as they happen. Also, please be sure to check the OFMS website regularly for updates to this and other OFMS initiatives.

Gasoline: Winter-Blend vs. Summer-Blend Fuel

Lower gasoline prices bring cheer to Virginia drivers, but if you also notice a slight drop in fuel economy you are experiencing the effects of seasonal gasoline transition.

Seasonal gasoline transition occurs, twice a year and accounts for part of the gasoline price-spike during the spring/summer months and the drop in prices after about September 15. It began in 1995 as part of the Reformulated Gasoline Program that was established through the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The EPA regulations require gasoline to have lower RVP (Reid Vapor Pressure) numbers in hotter months, which equates to a slight rise in fuel economy, less pollution and fewer emissions, but more production expense. This leads to higher prices at the pump. With cooler weather in the fall/winter months, the gasoline requirements are eased and refiners move back to winter-blend fuel, which is cheaper to produce, so pump prices drop.

Winter-blend gasoline contains more butane than summer-blend gasoline and while butane costs less, it also evaporates more quickly and is more volatile. Since the weather temperatures are cooler, the increase in volatility is permitted. The slight increase in evaporation accounts for a slight drop in fuel economy. The EPA says winter-blend gasoline contains 1.7 percent less energy than summer-blend gasoline.

Winter Vehicle/Driver Preparation

Although the fall weather is lingering this year, it won't be long before winter arrives in Virginia. Here are a few reminders of some vehicle care and driving tips that are helpful when dealing with the harsh winter weather. These reminders contain information necessary to prepare for the worst case scenario. This will help ensure you are prepared to safely travel during this time of year.

Winter Maintenance:

Battery:
A battery has 15 percent less power at 32 degrees than it does at 80 degrees. While most batteries these days are maintenance free and require no additional water, there are a few things you can do to ensure proper operation even without knowing anything about automotive maintenance. While you have the hood raised checking your fluid levels, perform a visual inspection of your battery. Look for yellow or white powder around the cable ends. Look for loose or frayed wires.

Cooling:
Have you checked your coolant lately? We don't expect you to know how to determine the coolant's condition, however a visual check goes a long way in preventive maintenance. WARNING: DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE YOUR RADIATOR CAP WHEN THE ENGINE IS HOT. Even an engine which has only been run a few minutes can build up enough pressure in the system to spray fluid into the air.

Belts and Hoses:
Engine belts and hoses should be visually inspected for cracks, leaks or bulges. One of these conditions could indicate deterioration requiring immediate attention.

Washer Fluid and Wipers:
Windshield washer systems should always be filled with an approved fluid and never just water. This is especially important in the winter when water alone will freeze and cause extensive damage to the washer system. Additionally, it is a good idea to visually inspect your wiper blades. They should be pliable, never torn and should not streak the window or make excessive noise during operation on a wet windshield.

Tires:
Tires should have sufficient tread depth to dissipate water and snow to ensure maximum traction. As you have probably heard before, place a penny upside down in the tread at different points. If you can't see the top of Lincoln's head, your tires are legal. If you can barely see the top of his head, you will probably need tires soon and should not wait long before you call the VMCC. They should not have excessive cracks or have any wires protruding.

Proper air pressure will also ensure maximum traction. Improper tire pressures will often illuminate a TPMS light on your dash. This light should not cause panic, however it requires immediate attention. Once tire pressures have been set to the proper level the light should automatically turn off. If this does not happen, please contact the VMCC or the shop at Fleet Management, if you are in Richmond.

Lights:
Lights and signals should always be operational and lenses should be free of cracks. They should also be transparent to ensure appropriate illumination. Excessive cloudiness on lenses should be reported to the VMCC as soon as possible since it affects your safety.

Should you need any of these items inspected by a professional, or if you have any questions, call the VMCC at (866) 857-6866.

Winter Driving:

Never warm your car up in an enclosed space such as a garage. Warming up your car is only necessary for comfort. Modern cars should be warmed up while driving at a moderate speed for the first few miles.

Do not let your fuel level drop below a ¼ tank to prevent lines from freezing. Moisture will find its way into your fuel system over time. This moisture will have a more difficult time freezing your lines when the moisture/fuel ratio is mostly fuel.

Do not use cruise control on slippery roads. Your computer could react to limited traction conditions causing a loss of control.

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT. This is the best safety device available to protect you and your vehicle's occupants.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on this subject, please contact us at 804-367-6982 or e-mail kevin.crain@dgs.virginia.gov.