



ISSUE

11

# Fleet Matters

Best practice in fleet management

SECURITY

SAFETY

ENVIRONMENT

LEASING

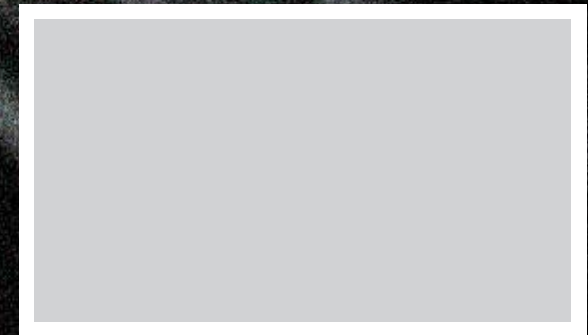
MOTORWAYS



# Best practice in fleet management

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Fleet Matters from Fuel Card Services brings you the news that matters most to help you manage your fleet. In this issue, we cover five subjects that could help your vehicle operations. These include protecting your fleet from the rise in crime, monitoring driver safety, confusion over Clean Air Zones in cities, the increasing appeal of leasing, and good news for motorways – all with recommended actions for fleet managers.



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# Security – How to protect your fleet

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In 2013, 65,783 vehicles were reported stolen in England and Wales. By 2016, this had risen to 85,688 – a shocking 30% crime surge in just three years, reported the [RAC](#). Statistically, fleet drivers are more likely to be targeted.

## So, what can fleet managers do?

Warn your drivers about the sophisticated new ways that their identity data, personal belongings and vehicles can now be stolen, advises business mobility specialists [Alphabet](#).

Criminals are increasingly learning how to exploit technology such as keyless entry and remote ignition, as well as [“connected”](#) services, commonly found in the latest commercial vehicles.

The problem is that many high-end vehicles today contain as many as 100 million lines of computer code. “That’s twice as much as the Large Hadron Collider and eight times more than in the flight systems of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner,” observes Alphabet.

Of course, this new tech approach to vehicle crime doesn’t mean that traditional threats to commercial drivers have lessened. It just means that there are even more ways that your drivers’ vehicle can be targeted.

To help, Alphabet have published a helpful [safety advice guide](#) to help fleet managers bring their drivers up to speed with the latest risks to their vehicle’s security – and to their own. This practical guide covers three areas of security risk to drivers:

## 1 Vehicle security:

Understanding the potential vulnerabilities of keyless entry and starting systems. Techniques used by thieves to exploit them, e.g. key fob ‘code sniffers’, relays or signal blockers. There are personal behaviours and physical security measures that drivers can use to minimise the risks.

## 2 Cybersecurity:

Protecting personal data within in-car infotainment and ‘cloud-based’ services such as social media, as well as helping to avoid online scams aimed at motorists, such as ‘Impostor’ sites that charge users for services that are free at official sites, e.g. driving licence renewals.

## 3 Personal safety:

Dealing with harassment or road rage incidents. Parking safely and securing valuables.

## Action Point:

Make sure drivers know about the elevated risks for fleets, and how to work securely.

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# Safety – health-checks for your drivers

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Do your drivers seem safe? Looks can be deceiving. Literally. Poor eyesight is linked with around 3,000 road casualties a year, estimates road safety charity Brake. Today, over 1.8 million drivers have vision below the minimum standard.

Driving with poor vision increases the risk of collisions, either because the hazards aren't seen or because the driver has insufficient time to react when they do see them. A report quoted by Specsavers states that road crashes involving a driver with poor vision are estimated to cause nearly 3,000 casualties in the UK every year.

That's why Brake is urging fleet managers to ensure drivers get their eyesight check, to see if they meet the legal requirements for road safety. By law, all drivers must be able to read a number plate from 20 meters away, with glasses or contact lenses if required.

## Complacency can be a killer

Just because your drivers passed their sight test when they obtained their license, that doesn't mean their eyesight still meets the legal standard. Eyesight can deteriorate naturally by as much as 40% before a person notices. It's easy to get your eyesight checked on a regular basis, and free eye tests are widely available.

## The other burning health issue to look out for

After impaired eyesight, driver burnout (Covered in Issue 10) remains a serious watch-out. It's not just about being tired as this article explains. It's a serious state of persistent depletion that can have life-threatening consequences, for both your drivers and others on the road.

You need to watch out for **signs of physical and mental exhaustion**. Exhaustion could be the first sign of it. **Being cynical about the job and becoming distant** (especially if an employee starts saying they "don't care anymore" or they just want to "get away from all this") and **loss of confidence in abilities and skill** are warning signs. As is drivers start doubting whether their work is important and whether they're any good at it.

Remember, regular health checks are not just a good idea; they are part of a fleet manager's duty of care.

## Action Point:

Ensure your drivers' health checks are up-to-date and remind them they're still free on the NHS.

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The government's drive to improve air quality in cities by introducing five Clean Air Zones (CAZ) by 2020 has been brought forward one year in London, causing confusion over the new rules among fleet managers.

The problem is a lack of certainty about the shape of these CAZs to guide fleet procurement teams.

London is leading the way by announcing the world's first Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), which will start from April 8, 2019. But it will also impose additional charges on top of the congestion charge and Toxicity Charge (T-Charge) for vans that don't meet Euro 6 standards and lorries that aren't Euro VI compliant.

## Confused? You're not alone

Especially as there are proposals to expand the ULEZ to cover all vehicles across more of London by 2020. London's plan could be joined by similar zones in Middlesbrough, Sheffield, Glasgow and part of Wales, while

Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Greater Manchester and Newcastle might introduce schemes that only affect lorries.

These announcements have caused concern for fleets over their immediate purchasing plans. One company said it would have to replace up to 60 lorries next year if the zone is expanded as far as London's North and South Circular roads.

Peter Symons of commercial vehicle manufacturer Iveco UK highlighted that, given the average rate of fleet replacement cycles, around 39% of trucks (approx. 175,000) will not be compliant.

## Heavier vehicles will be hit hardest

Due to their longer replacement cycles, operators of heavier vehicles will clearly face the biggest challenge. The Freight Transport Association (FTA) pointed out that "by April 2019, there will only be two-and-a-half years' production of vans available for operators to purchase, with little or no compliant second-hand market. This will put pressure on operators already working to fragile margins."

Although special consideration should be given to support commercial vehicle operators, argues the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), particularly small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), there's no escaping the fact that businesses operating within the new ULEZs will have to make a choice: replace their relatively new vehicles or pay extra charges.

Fleets are watching what happens in London's ULEZ, as this will most likely form a template for other clean air zones across the UK.

## Action Point:

Keep your fleet flexible with leasing, and downscale larger vehicles to vans if possible

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# Leasing – growing van popularity

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Maintaining a flexible fleet is a smart and increasingly popular strategy, especially with the economic and legal uncertainties of Brexit. Van leasing is now set to lead the way as industry regulation this year is “unlikely”, says the BVRLA’s Industry Outlook report, with diesel’s dominance a “strong certainty”.

The report says that British Vehicle Renting & Leasing Association (BVRLA) members are “divided” on the issue of whether and even how the van market could be regulated, which is why it’s very unlikely to change in 2018.

The report goes on to outline how the BVRLA and its members are united in predicting “another year of steady growth for the van leasing and rental sector”, although a sudden shift in the economy could of course upset these forecasts.

If trends continue as they’ve started this year, vehicle hire companies will continue to diversify their offering including short-term, long-term and flexible rental or contract hire, finance lease and hybrid products that combine elements of both.

## Accelerating demand for van leasing

Demand is increasing from numerous channels, including small-to-medium fleets attracted by the cashflow and risk management benefits of contract hire or finance leases. There’s also demand from operators replacing non-essential HGV fleets with vans, to reduce the cost and hassle of new legislation which is penalising larger vehicles.

“More and more operators are moving away from 7.5t trucks into larger panel or Luton vans,” said Chief executive of BVRLA member Northgate, Kevin Bradshaw, “because there is much less regulation.”

## Diesel is still a long way in front

Finally, this report also predicts that while electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrid (dual-power) vehicles will make increasing inroads to the company car sector, “diesel’s dominance of the commercial vehicle market will not change due to payload, range and running costs considerations”.

In short, diesel’s here to stay for the foreseeable future. And vans are currently among the least regulated commercial vehicles on the road today.

## Action Point:

See if vans could do the job of your larger vehicles, and look into a lease deal soon.

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# Motorways – get traffic back in the fast lane

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In Issue 10 of Fleet Matters, we revealed the average driver spends a working week each year sat in traffic on major roads, losing almost £1,000 in the process. As the cost of congestion to UK business approaches £1bn, we welcome the advent of “smart motorways” and A-road “expressways”.

A smart motorway (previous known as a managed motorway) is a section of motorway in UK that uses active traffic management (ATM) techniques to increase capacity and flow, and reduce emissions and collisions. These include the use of hard shoulders and variable speed limits during busy times.

Expressways are upgraded A-roads, developed by Highways England and due to be delivered from 2020. They promise to be “motorway-standard” which most likely means they will:

be made dual carriageway with a central barrier

exclude cyclists, slow vehicles and other non-motorway traffic

remove bus stops and divert bus routes

close-off existing junctions with minor local roads

introduce “grade-separated” junctions for connections with A and B roads

introduce more service stations, overhead gantries, large signs and concrete barriers

You can see where the new Expressways are planned [here](#). And you can read the full report on proposals for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) [here](#).

These future expressway corridors are promised to be “up to six times safer” than the A-roads they replace. As well as easing congestion, the report also claims that an intelligent network combined with connected vehicles would also improve the efficiency of road maintenance, as well as road safety.

On smart motorways, connected vehicles could even report potholes automatically to help other vehicles avoid them, and also inform Highways England so they can schedule repairs. There’s even talk of flying drones overhead that would improve response times by reporting back on incidents.

All in all, the future is looking brighter for fleets using Britain’s major roads.

## Action Point:

When buying a new vehicle, choose one that’s internet connected to be future-ready

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# What help is available?

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Fuel Card Services has many years' experience in helping with cost-effective fleet management, gaining an invaluable depth and breadth of expertise. Its help is readily available to fleet managers through a widening range of specialist services and products.

Whatever the fleet management question, either Fuel Card Services or one of its expert, specialist partners is likely to have met the issue many times already. You can be assured of straightforward answers, based on deep fleet insight and long experience.

Its services include emissions recording, mileage capture solutions, intelligent vehicle management and automation of tasks, from service scheduling to licence checking. There is also access to exclusive deals in such areas as tyres, insurance and more.

Q&A

## Action Point:

Contact Fuel Card Services with your fleet management issue. At the same time, ask for an illustration of how much money and time you could save, with solutions that exactly meet your specific refuelling and fleet management requirements.

Call 0844 870 9988





# Contact us

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