

How to maintain fleet vehicles for longer

Fleet vehicles may be retained longer than normal due to reduced hours by companies facing economic challenges. This stagnancy places additional pressure on fleet operators to ensure vehicles are properly cared for. To ease the pressure, companies can take certain measures to ensure the longevity of their fleet vehicles.



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

Certain maintenance costs can be delayed by implementing strict policies about caring for vehicles. The managing director of MasterDrive, Eugene Herbert, explains: “Following the basic principles of defensive driving can help companies reduce some of the highest expenses in maintenance costs. Along with this, the consequences of not following these principles must be clearly communicated.”

The first of these is in brake maintenance. “Harsh braking causes the ABS to trigger unnecessarily and consequently the brakes wear out faster than normal. Driving with a three-second following distance and while looking 12 seconds ahead of you can prevent harsh braking as drivers have adequate time to respond.

Additionally, whenever you can, reduce your use of the brakes to reduce their wear and tear. You can do this through driving techniques such as anticipating traffic light changes and preventing the vehicle from coming to a complete stop while driving.”

It is also possible to slow down wear and tear on your tyres. “Tyres will inevitably wear out but the goal should be to protect the life of the tread, in particular by ensuring the tread wears out evenly. An important habit should be to get your wheel alignment and balancing done regularly.



Car maintenance tips

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Additionally, correct tyre pressure is critical in protecting tyres. Over-inflated tyres wear faster at the centre. Under-inflated tyres wear out faster on the outside and increase risk of blow-out and increase fuel consumption. Vehicles over 3,500kg that have dual-wheels need tyre pressure to be consistent. If the inside dual is underinflated, one tyre is then carrying the majority of the load. A simple solution is to ensure tyre pressure is checked regularly with a quality tyre pressure gauge.”

Battery replacement could become an issue for organisations coming out of long lockdown periods. “It could continue to pose an issue for companies that reduced working hours to short time. If a vehicle will be parked while a driver is off for a week or two, ensure that the battery is disconnected during this time to ensure that it does not die before its time.

Other things that one can do to increase the longevity of their vehicle’s engines include avoiding stop/start driving where possible, ensuring the cars have adequate coolant and oil and do not miss a service. The more care you place into looking after the vehicles in your fleet, the more you will get out of the vehicles during economically strained times,” says Herbert.

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