

GSA FLEET NEWSLETTER



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Toth Talk – Welcome

On June 28th, we officially implemented a new organizational structure that will further improve our promise to provide you with outstanding products and service at the lowest possible price. Our efforts in this new organizational structure will streamline internal processes and better ensure consist service delivery across our program. Changes in this new structure include:

- Renaming the Office of Motor Vehicle Management to the Office of Fleet Management,
- Streamlining service delivery points from 11 Regions to 4 Zones that report centrally, and
- Realigning a number of branches/functions to focus on emerging vehicle solutions and services to meet customer needs.

These changes will encourage cohesiveness in the GSA Fleet program and will streamline existing service delivery points to enhance our ability to provide outstanding service to you. During the implementation of these organizational changes, it is expected that the transition will be seamless to you, the customer. Initially, no changes will be made to our Fleet Services

Representative or Fleet Management Center customer assignments. Further, all customer number and log-ins will remain the same in GSA Fleet Drive-thru.

I am also very pleased to announce the release of the GSA Fleet Customer Leasing Guide. The Guide provides a comprehensive, single source for everything related to leasing vehicles from GSA Fleet. Our hope and expectation is that it will bring more transparency and consistency to the leasing relationship that we have with you. The Guide can be accessed within GSA Fleet Drive-thru. For more information, please see “GSA Fleet Customer Leasing Guide Released!” on page 2.

Our goal each day is to provide you with the right vehicle, at the right price, with great service, and the data required to effectively and efficiently manage your fleet. In that spirit, we hope these changes will further our promise to you as we continually seek efficiencies and enhancements within the Fleet program.

William A. Toth, Jr. Director of Fleet Management

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GSA Fleet Customer Leasing Guide Released!

GSA Fleet is pleased to announce the release of a new resource for its customers. The Customer Leasing Guide is a one-stop source for all matters related to leasing a vehicle from GSA Fleet.

Since GSA Fleet does not enter into formal contracts with its customers when leasing vehicles, the Customer Leasing Guide is designed to lay out the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in the leasing of GSA Fleet vehicles. It's relevant to drivers, local fleet managers, bureau and agency headquarters managers, as well as agency budget officials. The Guide covers the most common questions and situations a stakeholder is likely to encounter including, but not limited to:

- Becoming a GSA Fleet customer
- Rates and Costs

- Annual Acquisitions
- Fueling
- Maintenance and Repairs
- Accidents
- Billing

The Guide is hyperlinked to allow the user easy and direct access to regulations, policies and governmental websites for the most current information. It will be updated each year, and as special circumstances require, to ensure that GSA Fleet customers always have the most up to date information readily available.

The most current version of the Guide will always be available to you by visiting [GSA Fleet Drive-thru \(drivethru.fas.gsa.gov\)](https://drivethru.fas.gsa.gov) and can be accessed after logging in with your customer number and access code.

The GSA Motor Vehicle Hallway Launches

As a follow-up to our FY15 second quarter newsletter, we are pleased to announce that GSA has launched the Category Management Motor Vehicle Hallway. The Motor Vehicle Hallway exists within GSA's Common Acquisition Platform (CAP) as a subcategory under the Transportation and Logistics Services. CAP is the Federal customer's technology platform/acquisition gateway where category management information and tools can be accessed. Within the Acquisition Gateway there is access to multiple Category Management Hallways, which now includes the Motor Vehicle Hallway. You may be asking "What is Category Management?" – to synopsise, Category Management is a management concept the Federal Government is applying to buy smarter and more like a single enterprise. The end result will help the Government drive down prices, reduce duplication and price variability, leading to smarter purchasing decisions across Government.

The Motor Vehicle Hallway is dynamic and will be updated with relevant vehicle solutions, expert articles, and spend data. Today you have access to current and historical vehicle pricing data, vehicle-related Multiple Award Schedules (MAS), policy and environmental

mandate information, expert articles related to Fleet Management, training videos, and a host of other information beneficial to Fleet Managers, policy makers, and members of the acquisition workforce – all accessible in one location. The Hallway is collaborative in nature, providing opportunities to become a contributing member and share your vehicle expertise. We invite you to explore the Motor Vehicle Hallway and take a look at the information we've made available for use across the Federal Government and check back frequently to see what's new and relevant.

Visit the Motor Vehicle Category Management Hallway at <https://hallways.cap.gsa.gov/motorvehicles>. Access to the Hallways requires the use of a PIV or CAC card and an account with OMB MAX. If you need an OMB MAX account, instructions for obtaining an account are provided through the link above. Once you've accessed, join the conversation in the Gateway and share your vehicle expertise to help us build the Motor Vehicle Hallway. Please stay tuned for an upcoming customer desktop workshop training on the Category Management Motor Vehicle Hallway.

Vendor and Customer Self Service (VCSS) Updates

Just Launched! New Bill Notifications

Great news for all GSA Fleet customers. VCSS is launching a bill notification system in July 2015. What does this mean for you? If you are a customer registered in VCSS, you will now receive an email notifying you of a new bill for your registered BOAC(s). You will then be able to login to <https://vcss.ocfo.gsa.gov/> and view or download your bill. Be on the lookout for your first notification in early July.



Interest Penalties & Administrative Fees (IP&A)

Why is it important to receive notification so you can pay your GSA Fleet bill promptly? It is important because Interest, Penalties and Administrative Charges may be applied to aged billings in ordinance with the Debt Collection Act. If you are a non-federal customer, IP&A will be applied to any delinquent bills outstanding. More information for contractors can be found at <https://www.acquisition.gov/?q=browse/far/51>.

How can I tell if I've been charged Interest, Penalties and Administrative Charges? You can view these line items while logged in to your VCSS account. Search for a statement, check the box by the statement once it is returned in your search and click "view". In the "statement amounts" section you can see the breakout of the invoice.

FedFMS Update

Two new features are coming soon to FedFMS: Fuel Use Reports (FUR) and the ability to "Get Odometer Readings from the Pump" (GORP).

The FedFMS Fuel Use Reports will closely mirror what is available in GSA Fleet Drive-thru for your GSA Fleet leased vehicles and will be available from the FedFMS Main Menu under the "Reports" column. There will be three report types to choose from:

- *Transactional by Vehicle* - All individual transactions for every vehicle within the selected date range
- *Summary by Vehicle* - Transactions grouped by tag, then summarized, within the selected date range
- *Detailed by Reporting Level* -

Transactions grouped by product type only, then summarized.

The Fuel Use Reports may be set up in the same manner as other FedFMS reports -- at the Agency, Bureau and Office levels -- and you'll even find an option to pull fuel use data on your combined fleet of FedFMS and GSA Fleet leased vehicles.

GORP: Emulating a process currently in place for GSA Fleet leased vehicles, GORP will soon be instituted in FedFMS to automatically populate monthly mileages from the odometer readings in your agency's fleet card data files. GORP will be applied to those agencies' records for which FedFMS already captures electronic fleet card data. Mileages will be captured throughout the month as daily fleet card files are

processed in FedFMS, and the last mileage recorded as of the last day of a given month is the one that will be stored in FedFMS for that month. Mileages entered manually into FedFMS will not be overwritten by mileages from fleet card transactions, since it is assumed that manual entries are purposeful on the part of the agency. Exception reports will be produced and available online in FedFMS, allowing users to review and correct records that, due to specific system edits (e.g., obvious erroneous entries such as 999999 or 123456), were not updated electronically.

We are excited about these latest enhancements to FedFMS and hope you are, too. Please direct any questions to the FedFMS mailbox at gsa.fedfms@gsa.gov.

Recall P25 – Update and Parts Availability

GSA Fleet is making efforts to provide more timely and relevant information concerning the recalls that affect our customers and drivers. To that end, we want to provide you with some information on Chrysler's recall number [P25](#) (NHTSA number [14V-234](#), www.safercar.gov), a recall that has affected a large number of vehicles and customers.

P25 was issued to resolve a problem with the rear vent window switch on the driver's armrest which could overheat and present a potential risk of fire. This recall was announced during the summer of 2014, for over 600,000 2010-2014 Chrysler Town

and Country, and Dodge Grand Caravan vehicles. That number included almost 9,800 GSA Fleet leased vehicles that belong to almost every agency leasing from GSA. Over two-thirds (6,870) of those recalls are still open today. These vehicles need to be repaired. Although P25 was announced almost a year ago, it took a while for Chrysler to produce the replacement parts required for the recall work. Parts are now available, but not all dealerships may have a large enough supply. Knowing this, customers and their Fleet Service Representatives (FSRs) can work with Chrysler to have parts sent to the

locations where they are needed. When you contact your local dealer to schedule an appointment for this recall work, verify that they have the parts on hand to perform the work. If the dealer indicates they do not have parts, please contact your FSR in order to have a parts request submitted.

We know the current volume of recalls is unusually high, and keeping track of all of them can be a bit overwhelming. We appreciate your efforts to have the recall work completed. Those efforts help to ensure that your vehicles are safe to operate.

2016 Draft Federal Bus Standards/Comment Collector

GSA's Comment Collector is an interactive online coordination tool that replaced the GSA Federal Vehicle Standards Conference and the printed version of the federal vehicle standards. Interested parties are invited to provide their comments on the 2016 Draft Bus Standards via the Comment Collector from June 15, 2015, to July 29, 2015, at 4:30 pm, Eastern Time.

The Comment Collector supports the required coordination activities for vehicle standards and specifications development. Interested parties can view federal vehicle standard items and documentation and submit their comments online.

To submit comments to the Draft 2016 Federal Bus Standards, go to <http://vehiclestd.fas.gsa.gov/>. Once the standards online application is open:

- 1) Select the year "2016" in the dropdown box
- 2) Select "Buses"
- 3) Select the standard item number you wish to comment on and then click "Get Standards"
- 4) Click "Add Generic Comment" to add your comments to the standard. You must enter your email address before submitting comments.
- 5) Select the highlighted link "tutorial" for detailed instructions

To view Standards supporting documents:

- 1) Select the year "2016" in the dropdown box
- 2) On the right dropdown menu pick the vehicle type
- 3) Click "Get Document"
- 4) Click on the PDF or Word doc you want to view
- 5) A pop-up will open asking if you want to download, click "download file"

Important - Click "Save" and save it on your computer somewhere (desktop, etc.) and then click "Open". If you do not save it first, it will open in a small window that cannot be expanded.

Did you know?

GSA Fleet offers a Defense Driver Course at no additional cost to leasing customers. Please visit www.gsa.gov/drivertraining for more information.

Avoiding Excessive Storage Costs

By Penny Hargett, Atlanta AMC Manager

If you are involved in an accident and your vehicle is not drivable what should you do?

First and foremost in the case of an accident, ensure the safety of all persons involved and contact the local police to report the accident.

As soon as possible, from the scene of the accident or immediately after, contact the Accident Management Center (AMC) or your local Fleet Service Representative. The AMC can assist in coordinating the transport of your vehicle to a local GSA-approved repair facility or marshalling service. Our early involvement could possibly save your agency from accruing excessive storage fees, which can range anywhere from \$20 to over \$50 per day. It does not take long for daily fees to add up to a substantial dollar amount which

will be charged to your agency or the third party. Insurance companies will generally not pay excessive storage fees, even if the insurance company agrees to payment of the GSA vehicle damages. Depending on the situation, your agency may incur the cost of excess storage fees even though a third party is at fault.

For example, we have had several instances of vehicles towed to locations without our knowledge that resulted in the following:

- Excessive storage fees
- Vehicle held hostage until payment was rendered to the storage facility
- Inability to contact the storage facility which in turn increased the daily storage fee

In each instance, the agency was

responsible for the additional charges. From October 2014 through June 2015, agencies incurred \$112,662 in storage costs. The average storage cost was \$682; however, there were 10 instances of the storage costs exceeding \$2,000 and one vehicle in particular accumulated \$4,320 in storage costs.

We understand state and local police jurisdictions may direct the immediate movement of the vehicle without contacting GSA first. In these cases, notify the AMC as soon as possible with the name and contact information of the tow company, the storage location or collision repair center where the vehicle was transported. This will assist us in avoiding high storage fees and will enable us to get your vehicle repaired and back in service as soon as practical.

Temporary GSA Fleet Rate Reduction

GSA Fleet issued a temporary rate reduction that began April 1, 2015 and will continue through September 30, 2015. As GSA Fleet reviewed the 2015 lease rates mid-year, it was determined an annualized total rate decrease of 12% to customers in the form of a temporary rate reduction would adequately recover all 2015 costs. Prior to each new fiscal year, GSA completes a full review of rates in order to set them at a rate appropriate for their projected costs. In FY15, GSA Fleet

continued to realize and abnormally strong vehicle resale market and a sizeable drop in retail petroleum, both of which were not fully anticipated when rates were set for the fiscal year. Due to these unexpected factors, GSA Fleet determined a rate reduction for the rest of the fiscal year was appropriate. Customers will see the reductions reflected in their current bills, continuing through the remainder of the fiscal year. An updated rate bulletin is available at www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21852.

Dispatch & Reservation Module

Coming soon, the Vehicle Dispatch & Reservation Module (DRM) will allow for the creation of multiple motor pools! Dispatchers will now have the ability to create a limitless number of motor pools. Multiple motor pools will allow Dispatchers improved motor pool management, while giving drivers greater flexibility when determining which vehicles best meet their dispatch needs. Look for this new capability effective July 20th, 2015.

GSA Fleet Charge Card News

In the Federal charge card community there has been a lot of discussion surrounding Chip and Pin-enabled charge cards. Chip and PIN-enabled cards have an embedded microprocessor that encrypts transaction data differently for each purchase. It is inserted into a terminal where the chip is read and either a PIN or signature is required. Beginning in 2015, many of you have already begun to receive travel and purchase cards with this new chip technology. It is important to note that the GSA Fleet WEX card is following a different set of rollout requirements for two reasons. Today's fleet cards already contain a higher level of security with the driver ID/PIN already in use. Second, the fueling industry has

been given a longer timeline to implement chip technology due to the significant infrastructure changes required to upgrade 168,000 fuel stations nationwide. You can read more on the requirements for chip charge cards in the Executive Order - Improving the Security of Consumer Financial Transactions (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/10/17/executive-order-improving-security-consumer-financial-transactions>).

You may have also noticed that your GSA Fleet issued WEX, Inc. charge card will be expiring this year on November 30th. Plans are already underway to ensure a smooth transition. Customer agencies can expect to begin receiving

their cards October 1st. Agencies will also receive a customized packing list so that they can easily track and monitor the distribution, collection and destruction of the old fleet cards during the distribution process. The new cards will arrive active and ready to use. Additional questions about this process can be directed to your local Fleet Service Representative (FSR) or to replacementcards@gsa.gov.



It may be summer but school is not out! If you are looking to brush up on information about managing your fleet or doing business with GSA Fleet, visit our Fleet training library found on the Drive-thru (drivethru.fas.gsa.gov/). Once you're on the homepage, find the apple icon in the upper right corner of the home screen that indicates "training." This resource contains AFV training series as well as previously recorded Desktop Workshops. These workshops cover a myriad of topics including VCSS, preparing your vehicle for exchange, and incorporating AFVs in your fleet. Additionally, look for our upcoming Desktop Workshop sessions including another live VCSS session and CAM coming in September and November. Register for these courses at <https://events-na3.adobeconnect.com/content/connect/c1/994668786/en/events/catalog.html?folder-id=1151390160>.

FMVRS: Expiring License Plate E-mail Notifications

Believe it or not, the year 2016 will mark eight years since license plates have been required to display an expiration date. This means that you may have plates expiring very soon. As promised, GSA's Office of Fleet Management has developed a process to notify FMVRS customers via e-mail when plates are set to expire.

The individual listed as the Primary Point of Contact (POC) in the FMVRS will receive an e-mail notification 6 months prior to the date that the first pair of plate(s) is set to expire. A follow-up e-mail will be sent 3 months prior to expiration if the license plate status has not yet been updated in the FMVRS.

Please ensure your agency reorders plates from UNICOR in a timely manner. Keep in mind that many agencies will be reordering plates during the same time frame, which may cause a backlog. Questions may be directed to gsafleet@gsa.gov.

Roadside Assistance



When your car heaves a sigh and collapses, or leaves you stranded in the parking lot with a flat tire, it would be nice to know that you have someone to come to your rescue. Fortunately, you do have someone. GSA vehicles are typically on the newer side and don't often have mechanical breakdowns, it does happen on occasion. When it does, GSA is here to get you going again.

Since the majority of GSA lease vehicles are under warranty, the first option is for drivers to contact the manufacturer's roadside assistance service for a variety of issues such as jump-starting, towing a vehicle, changing a flat tire, and providing a small amount of fuel when a vehicle runs out of it. These services are available 24/7.

What does Roadside Assistance cover?

Programs vary by manufacturer, but as a general guide, they offer:

- Towing service—If your car breaks down, you'll get a tow to the nearest dealer.
- Flat tire change—Your spare tire will be installed to get you back on the road. Once installed you can drive your vehicle to the nearest or most convenient tire

repair facility.

- Battery jump-start—This service provides a jump-start to get you running again.
- Lockout service—Did you lock yourself out of your car? Roadside Assistance can help you get back in your vehicle.
- Emergency fuel delivery—You can get enough fuel to make it to the nearest gas station.
- Roadside assistance is typically available for vehicles covered under warranty but may extend beyond the manufacturer's basic warranty periods. For example:
 - General Motors—5 years, 100,000 miles (light duty vehicles)
 - Ford—5 years, 60,000 miles
 - Chrysler (2013 and newer)—5 years, 100,000 miles
 - Chrysler (2012 and older)—3 years, 60,000 miles (Towing and Jump Starts only)
 - Hyundai (2011 and newer)—5 year, unlimited miles

So how does it work?

A roadside assistance customer service representative will contact a local service provider to get help to you as quickly as possible. This service is available throughout the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Canada. The Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), make/model, color, license plate number, a description of the problem, current odometer reading, driver's name and contact number, and vehicle location are needed when contacting a roadside service

representative. You can find the numbers for warranty roadside assistance for all participating manufacturers at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100039>. You will also find phone numbers for Chrysler, Ford, GM and Hyundai in the "Guide to Your Fleet Vehicle" which is located in the glove box in each vehicle.

Why use the manufacturer's roadside assistance service?

It is FREE. There is no cost to the agency to utilize the warranty roadside assistance service. If you or your agency contact an independent towing company, whether an authorized GSA vendor or not, and the vehicle could have been covered by the manufacturer's warranty roadside assistance service, your agency may be required to pay the bill.

What if my vehicle is no longer covered?

The MCC is always available to help drivers obtain roadside assistance. Drivers can contact the MCC during normal business hours, at 866-400-0411, Option 1, and the MCC will connect you with the appropriate manufacturer if the vehicle is still under warranty. If the warranty is no longer available, the MCC technician will arrange for roadside assistance through one of our commercial providers. After normal business hours, calls to 866-400-0401 will be routed to our after-hours provider, which will assist you. Help is available 24/7!

Executive Order 13693 -- CEQ's Implementing Instructions Released June 10th

Since the release of Executive Order 13693 on March 19, 2015 there has been much discussion on what would be outlined in the corresponding implementing instructions. The White House's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued the implementing instructions on June 10, 2015 and announced that Federal Energy Management Program's (FEMP) superseding guidance would be released 90 days later to reflect the purposes of E.O. 13693 and CEQ's guidance, including how they interact with similar statutory requirements. Below is the implementing guidance that relates to fleet vehicles:

Section 3(g) (i) calls on the **Agency head to determine the optimal Fleet Inventory**. The guidance goes further stating that beginning with the 2016 Sustainability Performance Plan (SSPP) the annual Vehicle Allocation Methodology (VAM) reports shall be combined with the Fleet Management Plan as an appendix to the SSPP and made available to the public.

Section 3(g)(ii) **sets specific greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions** for intermediate years, relative to a FY 2014 baseline:

- a) not less than 4% by the end of fiscal year 2017;
- b) not less than 15% by the end of fiscal year 2021; and
- c) not less than 30% by the end of fiscal year 2025.

It also describes the formula used to calculate this reduction: sum the product of gallons of gasoline equivalent (GGE) consumed and a fuel-specific GHG emission conversion factor (CF) that will be updated in FEMP's revised guidance document, which indicates the grams of CO_{2e}³⁵ emitted per GGE for each fuel type:

$$\frac{(\text{GGE E85} * \text{CF E85}) + (\text{GGE diesel} * \text{CF diesel}) + (\text{GGE B20} * \text{CF B20})}{\text{Fleetwide miles traveled}}$$

Section 3(g)(iii) directs agencies to collect and utilize as a fleet management tool, **vehicle telematics** for all new light-duty acquisitions. The guidance states that within two years, agencies must ensure that telematics collect the maximum vehicle diagnostics to include fuel consumption, emissions, maintenance, utilization, idling, speed and location data.

Section 3(g)(iv) talks about **asset-level data collection** and states, "GSA and DOE shall ensure that vehicle level government-wide reporting systems are updated by December 15, 2016 for the primary annual data call to collect asset-level data."

Section 3(g)(v) directs agencies to **increase the percentage of zero emission and plug-in hybrid vehicle acquisitions** in their fleets to comprise 20% of all new vehicle acquisitions by 2020 and 50% of all new acquisitions by 2025.

The guidance for Section 3(g)(vi) directs agencies to **plan for appropriate charging or refueling infrastructure** by procuring charging stations and, where possible, infrastructure that will allow for vehicle level data reporting capabilities. This means rather than relying on the standard 110-volt cord that comes with the electric vehicle or plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, agencies must look to procure Level II stations.

Section 7(e) states that the Chief Sustainability Officer **(CSO) or as designated by the CSO, a delegate, must approve new acquisitions and any new waiver requests under section 701 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005.**

Within 90 days of the issuing of CEQ's initial implementing guidance, FEMP will issue superseding guidance at https://federalfleets.energy.gov/federal_requirements/guidance.



Save the Date!

**2016 FedFleet
January 26 - 28, 2016
Washington, DC**

Save the Date!

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations – What do I need to know?

E.O. 13693 Section 3(g)(vi) mandates agencies that operate fleets of at least 20 motor vehicles, to improve agency fleet and vehicle efficiency and management by: planning for appropriate charging or refueling infrastructure... for zero emission vehicles or plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Agencies can acquire Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) through GSA's Schedules Program. Schedule 23V, the Automotive Superstore, as well as Schedules 51V, 56 and 70 on GSA Advantage, offer EVSE. Simply type "electric vehicle charging station," into the search bar in GSA Advantage to see the full selection of charging stations available. To select an appropriate EVSE to meet your agency specific needs, it is important to identify the following requirements prior to selection:

1. Length of charging time required;
2. Data capturing capabilities;
3. Placement of station; and
4. Station communication method.

What does the new EO mean by appropriate charging infrastructure? All electrics and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles come with a portable Level I cord that can be used to charge the vehicle by simply plugging in to a standard 120-volt outlet. Although a cost-effective and viable solution for most drivers, the Level I cord will take between 7 and 18 hours to fully charge the vehicle and does not have the ability to capture data. For a driver who needs a faster charging time--between 2 and 4 hours--and the ability to capture and record charging data, a Level II station is required.

Why the need to collect vehicle level charging data? Section 3(g)(iv) directs agencies to ensure that agency annual asset-level fleet data is properly and accurately accounted for in a formal agency Fleet Management

System and any relevant data is submitted to the Federal Automotive Statistical Tool, Federal Motor Vehicle Registration System and the FleetDASH system. With this new emphasis, Level II stations may become the norm. Level II stations can provide data through metering or the use of an on-line data network which will cost an additional \$150-\$250 a year. Agencies must look to station vendors that ensure connectivity--whether that be through ethernet, wireless or cellular service as well as the opportunity for vehicle-level rather than simply charging station-level data capture.

Level II hardware ranges from \$1,000 - \$9,000, depending on the configuration selected. Installation cost is variable depending on amount of trenching needed, the material being drilled through, the distance to the power source, etc. The location selected should be determined prior to station purchase. If multiple locations are available, consult an electrician or building facility manager to determine the most cost effective location. The location selected will dictate the mount type. Charging station mounts are available in bollard/pedestal (freestanding EVSE, does not need a pole or wall to be fixated to); pole mount (current pole structure is already present); and wall mount (the EVSE will be installed on a support structure, parking garage wall, etc.). If more than one vehicle will be charging at a time, procuring a dual port station could be more cost-effective than procuring 2 single port stations.

For more information please reach out to your GSA Alternative Fuel Vehicle team at mvmfvteam@gsa.gov or visit GSA Advantage at <https://www.gsaadvantage.gov> to find a station and station vendor best suited to your needs. As always, GSA Fleet is here to support you as you strive to meet the mandates and fulfill your agency's goals.

Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles – What, When & Where Can we get them?

GSA Fleet strives to make the latest emerging technology vehicles and vehicle solutions available to Federal Agencies. However, at this time the direct purchase or leasing of fuel cell vehicles is not yet available to the government by the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). GSA Fleet continues to express Federal interest with our vehicle providers to get fuel cell vehicles under GSA contract. Currently, there is reluctance on the part of OEMs to sell directly to private and government fleets due in part to limited production availability and hydrogen fueling infrastructure. When these vehicles do become available, GSA Fleet will notify you immediately.

Manufacturers such as Hyundai North America and Toyota North America have primarily targeted Southern California as their test market for fuel cell vehicles; meaning these vehicles will not initially be

available in most of your operating locations. Testing both the vehicles themselves, as well as their commercial fueling agreements with hydrogen suppliers, manufacturers are hoping to overcome obstacles associated with high vehicle prices and limited fueling locations to increase sales. Despite setting a target to sell 1,000 Tucson Fuel Cell vehicles by 2015, South Korea's largest automaker, Hyundai, has only sold or leased about 300 since beginning production in 2013. Manufacturers continue to improve their technology, support training to first responder personnel as to the hazards and challenges of responding to fuel cell vehicle fires and collisions, and network to develop the necessary hydrogen fueling infrastructure and dealership service networks necessary to launch fuel cell vehicles in more robust quantities. Once there is adequate infrastructure to support greater numbers of vehicles, we sus-

pect these manufacturers will look more towards incorporating public and private fleets into their customer base.

As of now, retail customers can get a 3-year lease on the Tucson (outright purchasing is not available) for \$499 a month and \$2,999 due at signing which includes fuel, maintenance and HOV access. The Toyota Mirai is priced similarly with \$3,649 due at lease signing.

Over the past year, GSA Fleet has been in communication with the various manufacturers regarding the procurement of fuel cell vehicles and opportunities for commercial or pass-through lease agreements. The requirements for fuel cell vehicles are included in the Federal purchase requirements for the fiscal year 2016 light-duty vehicle procurement with the hope of being able to provide fuel cell vehicles to customers soon.

Acquisition Season is on the horizon -- What type of vehicle is best for me?

- Mostly rocky terrain
 - ⇒ Gasoline, compressed natural gasoline (CNG) or E85
 - ⇒ 4WD may be necessary
- Hot climate
 - ⇒ Electrics and hybrids may be less effective/reduced range
- Cold/snowy terrain
 - ⇒ Electrics and hybrids less effective/range reduced
 - ⇒ Engine heater may be necessary
- ⇒ Choose front wheel drive over rear wheel
- ⇒ 4WD or AWD may be necessary but remember to consider snow tires first
- Mostly city driving
 - ⇒ Electric, hybrid, or low-greenhouse gasoline (GHG) sedan
- Mostly highway driving
 - ⇒ Low-GHG sedan or diesel sedan
- E85 stations are not available
 - ⇒ Low-GHG, internal-combustion engine (ICE) vehicle



Hydrogen Fuel Cell Research

Fuel cell technology is twice as efficient as combustion in turning carbon fuel to energy. Hydrogen, the simplest chemical element (one proton and one electron), is plentiful and exceptionally clean as a fuel. Hydrogen makes up 90 percent of the universe and is the third most abundant element on the earth's surface. Such a wealth of fuel would provide an almost unlimited pool of clean energy at relatively low cost. But there is a hitch. Hydrogen is usually bound to other substances and "unleashing" the gas takes technology and a substantial amount of energy. In terms of net calorific value (NCV), hydrogen is more costly to produce than gasoline. Some say that hydrogen is nearly energy neutral, meaning that it takes as much energy to produce as it delivers at the end destination.

Storage of hydrogen poses a further disadvantage. Pressurized hydrogen requires heavy steel tanks, and the NCV by volume is about 24-times lower than a liquid petroleum product. In liquid form, which is much denser, hydrogen needs extensive insulation for cold storage.

Hydrogen can also be produced with a reformer by means of extraction from an existing fuel, such as methanol, propane, butane or natural gas. Converting these fossil fuels into pure hydrogen releases some leftover carbon, but this is 90 percent less harmful than what comes from the tailpipe of a car. Carrying a reformer would add weight to the vehicle and increase its cost. Reformers are also known to be sluggish.

The net benefit of hydrogen conversion is in question because it does not solve the energy problem. With the

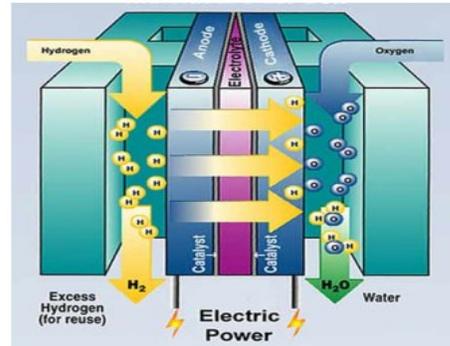


Figure 1:
Concept of a fuel cell

The anode (negative electrode) receives the hydrogen and the cathode (positive electrode) collects the oxygen.

Source: US Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

availability of hydrogen through extraction, the fuel cell core (stack) to convert hydrogen and oxygen to electricity is expensive and the stack has a limited life span. Burning fossil fuels in a combustion engine is the simplest and most effective means of harnessing energy, but this contributes to pollution.

"There are many, many more places around the world where battery storage is not sufficient and engines are needed instead. And a fuel cell is an engine which, unlike conventional petrol or diesel engines can be made large or very small and also has the merit of being much more efficient than any of those conventional, so called, internal combustion engines.

It's clear the world wants energy freedom from the grid, from emissions and from the wall socket. But we don't have that luxury, as battery life can't keep up and in some countries power isn't readily available or not appropriate to use. The global energy mix must be liberated from the grid in order to serve the mobile economy, and we believe within the next 5 years wireless charging and energy freedom will become mainstream, freeing customers from the grid entirely."

-CEO of Intelligent Energy, Henri Winand

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