Helpful Hints for Fleet Managers

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In the decades leading up to the 21st century, engine technology and performance of passenger cars, trucks and buses improved rapidly, however most drivers have not adapted their driving style to keep pace with the technological advances.

Adapting driving techniques to modern engine technologies means smooth and safe driving at lower engine revolutions. The technique itself has a substantial impact on driving behaviour, on safety and on fuel consumption without increasing travel time.

All councils should have a driving policy and ongoing training for new and existing drivers. It is considered to be as important as doing scheduled maintenance on your fleet and is an OHS responsibility of all employers.

The Seven Elements of Workplace Road Safety
Using the following 10 rules as a guide to modifying your driving behaviour makes you safer, less stressed and also saves you money.

1. A Workplace Road Safety Policy
   Include fleet safety and safe driving policy in organisational policy and objectives.

2. Recruitment and Selection
   While it is preferable to hire drivers based on safe driving records and awareness of safety issues, it should not be the determining factor if adequate training to improve knowledge and/or skills is provided.

3. Induction Programs
   Induct all new recruits and supervisors using an official program containing workplace road safety and safe driving components.

4. Fleet Selection and Maintenance
   Adhere to best practice in fleet selection and fleet maintenance.

5. Vehicle Crash Involvement
   Maintain an efficient system of recording and monitoring overall fleet, individual driver and individual vehicle crash involvement.

6. Incentives and Disincentives
   Recognise good/bad driving performance through an official scheme of commensurate incentives and disincentives.

7. Training and Education
   Support training, education and development programs to engender safe driving.

Minimise aerodynamic drag
Additional parts on the exterior of a vehicle such as roof racks and spoilers, or having the window open, increases air resistance and fuel consumption, in some cases by over 20% at higher speeds. Take off roof and bike racks when not in use. If you have to use roof racks, load them carefully to help minimise wind resistance or use a streamlined roof box.

Look after your vehicle’s tyres
Inflate your vehicle’s tyres to the highest pressure recommended by the vehicle manufacturer and make sure your wheels are properly aligned. Looking after your tyres will not only reduce your fuel consumption, it will also extend tyre life and improve handling.

Use air-conditioning sparingly
Air conditioners can use about 10% extra fuel when operating. However, at speeds of over 80 km/h, use of air-conditioning is better for fuel consumption than an open window as this creates aerodynamic drag. If it is hotter inside your car than outside when you start a trip, drive with the windows down for a few minutes to help cool the car before starting the air-conditioning.

Travel light
The more weight a vehicle carries, the more fuel it uses. Don’t use your car as a mobile store room. Leave heavy items like tools and equipment at the office when you don’t need them on a trip.

Keep your vehicle in good condition
Keep vehicles well tuned and regularly maintained. Get your vehicles serviced at the intervals specified in the manufacturer’s handbook. Use the fuel that is recommended for your vehicle by the manufacturer. If you use regular unleaded in a car designed to run on premium unleaded, you can expect slightly less performance and fractionally higher consumption. Using premium unleaded petrol in a car designed for regular unleaded may give better fuel consumption in some newer vehicles but it is unlikely to offset the extra cost of the fuel.
Tasman to Extend Safer Speeds Trial

The Tasman Council’s current Safer Speeds Trial is to be extended for a further 12 months until December 2010.

The move follows a recommendation from the Tasman Community Road Safety Partnership Working Group and endorsement by the Tasman Council. Tasman was the second Local Government region in Tasmania to introduce a Safer Speeds Trial as a road safety measure, following the lead of the Kingborough Council.

Since December 2008, the limits have been 90 km/h on sealed roads and 80 km/h on gravel roads. Research has shown that lowering speed limits not only reduces the severity of injuries in road crashes, but also gives drivers more opportunity to avoid a collision. A 10% reduction in mean travel speed is likely to result in a 36% reduction in fatalities.

The exercise also has a number of benefits for the municipality. Lower speeds are more tourist-friendly, there is less impact on the environment, reduced fuel consumption and carbon emissions, and improved survival rates for native animals such as the Tasmanian Devil.

The expanded two-year trial will allow a more robust evaluation of speed survey and crash data, given that there are relatively low volumes of traffic in the Tasman municipality. A twelve-month evaluation and a two-year evaluation will be conducted by the Monash University Accident Research Centre, with the final reports being presented to Council in March 2010 and 2011, respectively.

A draft report on community attitudes towards the reduced speed limits will be provided to Council in November 2010 to help it decide whether to continue the trial beyond two years. Extra reminder signs about the trial will be erected within the municipality.

New Truck Safety Rule to Save Lives

Each year in Australia, around 30 people are killed in ‘underrun’ crashes, with most of these victims being the occupants of the cars involved. A new, mandatory vehicle design rule has been introduced by the Federal Government to help save lives and prevent serious injuries on the nation’s roads.

The new Australian Design Rule (ADR) requires Front Underrun Protection Systems (FUPS) to be fitted to the front of all new models of heavy vehicles (over 12 tonnes) from January 2011 and to all existing models from

January 2012. FUPS prevents the car from becoming trapped under the front of the truck in the unfortunate event of a collision between the two, thereby ensuring the car’s safety features such as seatbelts, airbags and crumple zones remain fully effective.

The new ADR (84) was the result of a Regulatory Impact Statement process which carefully weighed up the views of all interested parties, including state and territory governments as well as the heavy vehicle industry. The Government’s actions bring Australia into line with international standards.

Motor Safe Tasmania (MST) offers basic and advanced 4WD & recovery programs which are held over one to two days depending on client needs. Programs can lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

MST is now offering an ATV Safety Program. Conducted in a similar format to the 4WD programs at the Baskerville Training Facility, Programs can lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

The Corporate Services training program involves crash investigation, incident reviews, driver assessment, coaching, counselling and remedial training, needs analysis, vehicle familiarisations and eco-driving.

Driver Training: Training programs are also available for experienced drivers including interactive scenario-based responsive driving programs. These venue-based driver education programs are conducted at our MST Training Facilities at Baskerville and Symmons Plains.

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OHS & Corporate Services: The Corporate Services training program involves crash investigation, incident reviews, driver assessment, coaching, counselling and remedial training, needs analysis, vehicle familiarisations and eco-driving.

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Roads and Engineering