

inroads

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After Hours Emergencies
 Call **1-877-454-4204** (toll-free)
 Your call will be answered through
 the Department of Energy and
 Environmental Protection Dispatch
 Office, which will assist you.

Online
 Go to:
<http://das.ct.gov> and click on **FLEET
 OPERATIONS** for additional infor-
 mation on fueling locations, acci-
 dent forms and mileage reports.

Alternative Vehicles



Thinking that your agency is ready to consider something other than a vehicle powered by only gasoline? If so, here's an update on some alternatives:

2015 Focus Electric – For 2015 Ford has lowered the cost of the electric Focus by a whopping \$9,500! The new state contract price is \$27,284, down from the 2014 price of \$36,874. Clearly Ford is trying to find the sweet spot where cost meets perceived value. This is an all-electric model with an estimated driving range of 76 miles according to the EPA.

Fleet Operations has placed orders of the electric Focus for two agencies. We are interested in how they perform and plan on providing an update later in 2015.

2016 Chevrolet Volt – After a couple of years of disappointing sales results Chevrolet is taking another swing at getting the Volt right. As with Ford and the Focus, Chevrolet initially tried lowering the price. The state contract price has been reduced from \$38,000 to \$33,574 and Chevrolet still hasn't been able to achieve its sales targets. So sometime next spring the 2016 Volt will be launched as a redesign of the current model and Chevrolet promises many enhancements including better performance and an extended range. Being both an electric and gasoline-powered vehicle, the Volt currently promotes an electric range of 35 miles and a gasoline range of 380 miles. Fleet Operations will report numbers for the 2016 model when they become available.

DAS has been approved to purchase two Volts under a grant from the Connecticut Clean Fuels Program. We intend to order the 2016 model as soon as pricing is made available and the contract can be updated. Fleet Operations will utilize the Volts in our daily rental and loaner fleet. We will also make them available to agencies for a short trial period so that they may experience the technology.

The DAS motor vehicle contract (10PSX0239) includes both the Focus and the Volt in addition to several other Hybrids. If any of these vehicles can help you to fulfill your agency's mission, give us a call to discuss how you can replace a vehicle that is coming due for replacement with a hybrid.

Hands-Free Options

Technology continues to play a bigger role in our everyday lives - especially when it comes to automobiles. Many features of today's cars and trucks are controlled in some way by an electrical or wireless connection as opposed to being mostly mechanical in the past - and the possibilities are endless.

Some upcoming enhancements in vehicles will be:

- General Motors has introduced Wi-Fi technology in over thirty 2015 models. The current goal is to offer it for all their vehicles by 2018.
- A rear-view camera will be required in all new light vehicles (under 10,000 lbs.) - including cars, SUVs, trucks and vans. The phase-in period begins May 2016 and all models must be at 100% by May 1, 2018. NHTSA estimates the additional cost will be approximately \$132 - \$142.
- For 2015 GM has introduced wireless charging of cell phones. It automatically charges your phone as you drive - no wires are required. It is currently only offered in one Cadillac model, but watch for it to be expanded to additional models, and by other manufacturers, over the next few years.

One change that has come to the forefront is hands-free telephone technology. Whereas several years ago this was only available as an expensive option on mostly higher-end vehicles, it is now becoming commonplace in most makes and models. Since it was first offered several years ago, competition and technological advancements allowed the cost for this feature to drop significantly. In many models it is now affordable enough (or even free) that Fleet Operations has begun including it as part of our basic spec. Some examples include;

- Ford Focus Hatchback (also the Focus sedan beginning with the 2015 model)
- Chevrolet Cruze
- Chevrolet Malibu
- Ford Fusion
- Chevrolet Impala

If your agency has cars equipped with the hands-free feature, and employees that may need to use their phone while driving, please encourage them to make use of this technology. They'll not only be safer, but in full compliance with the law.

Where does the air go?

As the outside temperature drops, so does the amount of air pressure in a vehicle's tires. Some experts claim the rate is roughly one pound of air pressure lost for every 10 degrees drop in temperature. What this translates to is potentially under-inflated tires. The loss of a few pounds may be hard to catch with a visual inspection, but it will translate into less responsive steering and much faster tire wear.

Please encourage drivers to be aware of potentially under-inflated tires. Besides the ability to check and add air at many service stations, drivers can stop at any DAS Fleet location for assistance.