

Fleet & Mobility

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Hotel California

Seasoned fleet professionals never seem to leave.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending the 2025 Ride & Drive sponsored by NAFA Ontario. The turnout was great, and the vast majority of OEMs were on hand with their latest and greatest for fleet professionals to test drive and try out.

If memory serves, this is the first NAFA Ride & Drive we've had in Ontario since before the pandemic. It was a delight to see so many there, and very heartwarming to see so many familiar faces. Despite a global pandemic, supply chain challenges and a tariff war, it seems that most of us are still in the industry, although some of us now wear a polo shirt with a different logo on it.

Nonetheless, it occurred to me that the fleet industry is a lot like that song "Hotel California" by the Eagles: Fleet professionals just never leave. I've been covering the fleet industry for over two decades, and although some of the older ones have retired, and we're seeing a number of fresh new faces, so many of us are still part of the fleet family. It really is a small world.

Seasoned pros

The fact that we continue to see the same faces year after year and decade after decade is a good thing. When interviewing industry experts for articles that appear in this publication, I often hear the same concerns about companies that entrust their fleet operations to someone within their organization who lacks fleet experience.

They may already be responsible for another department, and fleet is added to their already-long list of responsibilities, almost like a side gig that they have to handle, even though they may lack the experience.

In stark contrast, those familiar faces that have been in the industry for decades understand the complexities of acquiring, upfitting, maintaining and remarketing vehicles—and much more. These seasoned pros are a mainstay in our industry, and we can all continue to count on their expertise and experience as we tackle the next tariff, the next global catastrophe, or the next supply chain challenge. [🔗](#)

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2026 Outlander : Better Than Ever !

Mitsubishi Motors introduces the brand's first mild hybrid powertrain.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

After making a number of noteworthy upgrades to the 2025 Outlander earlier this year, Mitsubishi Motors recently announced that this fleet favourite will be getting a new powertrain for 2026.

The big news is that the current 2.5L four-cylinder engine will be replaced with a 1.5-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine, equipped with the brand's first mild hybrid system.

While the 1.5-litre turbo is new to the Outlander, it's not new to Mitsubishi. "It's the same engine we offer in the Eclipse Cross," says Don Ulmer, Senior Manager, Telematics & Product Strategy at Mitsubishi Motor Sales of Canada. "The big difference is the belt starter generator that's added to the engine, which makes it a mild hybrid."

Another key difference is that the 1.5-litre engine found in the Outlander uses a water-cooled intercooler instead of an air-cooled intercooler, which is standard in the Eclipse Cross. "Otherwise, it's essentially the same engine," Ulmer explains. ➤

According to Luc Grenier, Fleet / VIP Manager, Mitsubishi Motor Sales of Canada, fleet customers can expect deliveries of the new Outlander in early 2026.

According to Mitsubishi, “the 48V Belt-driven Starter Generator (BSG) provides additional torque and driveability thanks to the electrified torque aiding acceleration from a standing start.”

Ulmer explains that the BSG replaces the alternator as well as the starter. “Whenever the driver applies the brakes, energy is taken from the crankshaft and put back into the 48V battery pack,” Ulmer says.

“Then, when the driver accelerates, depending on the throttle input, the BSG will activate, and because it’s belt-driven, it will provide additional power to the crankshaft.”

In other words, instead of using additional fuel, it’s using electricity to speed up the crankshaft and provide more power to the engine. “And because the BSG is like an electric motor, it creates torque instantly,” Ulmer adds.

The 48V battery pack in the Outlander is located underneath the floor at the rear of the vehicle, and is much smaller than the battery pack found in the Outlander PHEV.

Improved performance

Another key benefit of this new hybrid powertrain is the ability of the BSG to reduce turbo lag, which is par for the course with turbo-charged engines. “Turbos have come a long way, but they still tend to have some turbo lag,” Ulmer says. “However, the BSG can mitigate some of that lag, because once it



Luc Grenier, Fleet / VIP Manager,
Mitsubishi Motor Sales of Canada

delivers less power than the outgoing engine (174 vs. 181), simply because of the lower displacement. “The engine makes seven horsepower less, but it’s delivering that horse-

“The new Outlander is rated at 8.7 L/100 km combined, and that’s important to many fleets.”

LUC GRENIER FLEET / VIP MANAGER,
MITSUBISHI MOTOR SALES OF CANADA

engages, the torque kicks in right away, which helps diminish the turbo lag you might otherwise experience.”

The extra torque is available the moment the driver steps on the accelerator, which gives the new Outlander more low-end performance—an improvement over the outgoing Outlander equipped with the 2.5-litre powertrain.

For comparison’s sake, the outgoing engine delivers 181 lb.-ft. of torque, whereas the new 1.5-litre engine delivers 206. “It’s also delivering that extra 25 lb.-ft. of torque at a lower RPM than before,” Ulmer adds.

“That translates into better low-end performance, and that’s something that we know drivers will appreciate.” As for horsepower, Ulmer notes that on paper, the new engine

power at a lower RPM—5,000 vs. 6,000 RPM—and based on my experience driving the new Outlander, you don’t really notice the slightly lower power output,” Ulmer adds.

Fuel economy improvements

Besides improving performance, the new powertrain also delivers better fuel economy. Moreover, the 2026 Outlander is the first Mitsubishi Motors product to feature auto start-stop technology in Canada, which further improves fuel efficiency.

Ulmer stresses that the start-stop technology is especially smooth. “Because the BSG is belt-driven, and because it replaces a traditional starter, when the engine starts up,



you don't hear that typical start-up noise," he explains. "You don't get the traditional metal-on-metal sound, and it's much quieter overall."

Ulmer says that the 2026 Outlander is ideal for fleets that are looking to balance efficiency with a lower cost of entry when shopping for a four-wheel-drive SUV.

"When it comes to fuel economy, fleets need to hit certain targets," adds Luc Grenier, Fleet / VIP Manager, for Mitsubishi Motor Sales of Canada. "The new Outlander is rated at 8.7 L/100 km combined, which gets us under 9 L/100 km combined for a four-wheel-drive SUV, and that's important to many fleets."

Updates to 2025 Outlander

When Mitsubishi Motors announced a mid-cycle refresh to the 2025 Outlander earlier this year, they noted that the goal was to provide an, "elevated refinement and enhancement of the driver and passenger experience, with updates to drivability, interior and exterior styling, and an industry-leading in-car entertainment system developed by the audio experts at Yamaha."

To make the passenger cabin more inviting and quiet, Mitsubishi Motors added strategically placed sound insulation materials throughout, which resulted in a reduction of more than 0.5dB in road noise and nearly 6dB in overall

sound isolation. Moreover, the use of steel for the hood and front fenders enhances the vehicle's NVH (noise, vibration, harshness) damping characteristics, making the passenger cabin that much more comfortable.

In addition, a redesigned centre console, a larger armrest, more storage, a more functional wireless mobile phone charging area, as well as revised controls for the transmission and Super All-Wheel Control (S-AWC) drive mode selector make the new Outlander more practical and functional than ever.

Premium seat materials make the Outlander more inviting and cozy, while ventilated seats (available for the first time) add another layer of comfort for those hot summer days. Outside, the Outlander gets new 18- and 20-inch wheels, an updated front grille and bumper, and new taillights.

In addition, to improve driving feel and enhance confidence behind the wheel, engineers designed a more precise and retuned power steering system, along with recalibrated springs, shock absorbers, and stabilizer bars.

Pricing and availability

The 2026 Mitsubishi Outlander starts at \$36,398, is available in six trims, and comes with a long list of notable features, including auto LED headlights and high beams, headlight washers, room for seven, 3rd row fold-flat seats, multiple USB-C ports for charging, dual and triple-zone automatic climate control, a Bluetooth hands-free cell phone interface, push-button start, wireless Android Auto and wireless Apple CarPlay, Satellite radio, a Yamaha premium sound system with eight speakers, a 12.3-inch screen display, and much more.

Standard safety and ADAS (advanced driver assistance systems) technologies include lane departure warning, forward collision mitigation, rear automatic emergency braking, blind spot warning, rear cross traffic alert, 11 airbags, and rear seat occupant alert.

For added peace of mind, Mitsubishi Motors offers one of the best warranties in the industry. The 2025 Outlander is covered by a 10-year/160,000-km Powertrain Limited Warranty, a 5-year/100,000-km New Vehicle Limited Warranty, and five years of unlimited kilometre Roadside Assistance.

"Production started in October, and the 2026 Outlander will be deliverable for fleet customers in the first quarter of 2026," concludes Grenier, adding that orders are now being accepted. [🔗](#)

What's Up with Rising Costs?

This is why it costs more to keep vehicles on the road.

TEXT KATE VIGNEAU



Across the country, organizations are facing rising costs. Fleet costs have surged across nearly every area of fleet management, including maintenance. There are a number of factors driving maintenance costs up that fleet professionals need to be aware of and mitigate against. These factors range from the type of maintenance being performed, the high turnover of labour, the age and complexity of vehicles, and on-going supply chain disruptions.

Maintenance type

While it is true that inflationary pressures in the economy have raised the cost of parts, raw materials, tires, and glass, this is not the whole story. These increases are compounded by the type of maintenance being performed. Shops are struggling to keep up with repairs and are neglecting the preventive maintenance (PMs) that in the long run keeps vehicles on the road. Reliance on reactive maintenance, rather than PMs, leads to expensive, unplanned repairs, and costly downtime.

Labour

Canada is facing a persistent shortage of qualified service technicians due to an aging workforce and a low number of new entrants into the trade. This trend began at least a decade ago due to declining birth rates, fewer young tradespeople, and the traditional emphasis on university education over careers in the trades. Shortages intensified in the early 2020s due to COVID, and an increase in retirement rates of older mechanics, and the difficulty of attracting younger workers and diverse groups, including women. The shortage of mechanics is being felt in fleets across the country that are experiencing extended vehicle repair times, and being forced to outsource repairs to third parties. Outsourcing will often increase overall costs, due to the hourly rates charged and the downtime involved.

To attract and retain qualified mechanics, organizations are forced to offer higher wages, which leads to higher costs for maintenance and repairs.

Vehicles

Today's vehicles are equipped with complex technologies and advanced safety features, such as collision-avoidance systems. While these systems can improve safety, they require specialized diagnostic tools and training to repair, driving up labour and parts costs. Many internal shops do not have the required diagnostic tools, and are forced to rely on third-party repair facilities.

Delayed replacement also plays a role in price increases. As fleets operate older vehicles for longer, the need for repairs increases. This leads to more frequent unscheduled maintenance, and more extensive repairs, which increases the total cost of ownership over time.

Supply chain delays

Although it's improving, supply chain disruptions continue to impact the availability of new vehicles and parts. This continues to force fleets to keep older vehicles, which leads to higher maintenance costs. When parts are not held in stock, fleets may have to pay inflated prices to access the part, and get the vehicle back on the road, increasing both repair costs and vehicle downtime.

There may be some relief to the increased maintenance cost trend for fleets pursuing electric vehicles (EVs). Despite sustainability goals, the adoption of EVs is slow. Acquisition costs may appear to be prohibitive, despite estimated savings in fuel and maintenance. Light-duty vehicles have the most documented cost data available, and studies from the City of New York show an almost 70% savings in maintenance of light-duty EVs, compare to the conventional equivalent.

Being aware of the pressures on maintenance costs is the first step in addressing this trend, and replacing vehicles at their optimum replacement points is the best way to prevent rising costs. [O](#)



Kate Vigneau, CAFM, is Director (Fleet and Canada) for Matrix Consulting Group. She is responsible for Matrix's fleet solutions division, as well as the lead for expansion in all functional areas related to business in Canada.

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Remarketing EVs

How to get top dollar for your hybrids and electric vehicles.

TEXT HUW EVANS

Within the last decade, there's been a major push to get more electric vehicles into the market. Much of that has been driven by political considerations, including government incentives and mandates at the federal and provincial level.

For fleets, there have been some good opportunities to acquire lower or zero-emission vehicles, but those have often come with caveats. Furthermore, with a change in government policies, and a reduction or elimination of many incentive programs, there's been a change in the trajectory of EV demand, and an impact on operational costs and residual values.

So what should fleets do, especially if they already have EVs, and are looking to offload and remarket those units?

Holly Vollant, Manager, North American Remarketing for Holman notes that when it comes to the resale market for EVs, demand continues to soften. "Buyer hesitancy is largely tied to concerns about battery range and long-term battery health," she says, "both of which are difficult to measure with transparency for prospective buyers."

"Buyer hesitancy is largely tied to concerns about battery range and long-term battery health, both of which are difficult to measure with transparency for prospective buyers."

HOLLY VOLLANT, Manager, North American Remarketing, Holman

Additionally, fleets need to be aware that when they initially acquire new electric vehicles, these face a steeper depreciation curve than comparable ICE vehicles or hybrids. Further complicating the matter is the fact that although charging infrastructure and battery performance have been improving, infrastructure and range concerns still weigh heavily on buyer confidence, particularly in more remote regions



Successfully remarketing EVs requires careful planning, even before fleets initially acquire these vehicles.

of the country where chargers are still not readily available. Therefore, Vollant says, it's critical for fleet operators to align residual value expectations with real market demand. She says it's particularly important for fleets to time their vehicle liquidation strategies so that they align with peaks in market demand for these kinds of vehicles, as well as manufacturer incentive cycles.

At Inspiration Mobility, Maria Neve, Vice President eFMC Services and current NAFA Fleet Management Association Board President says that given today's political and economic environment, fleets need to look at diversifying procurement strategies so they can obtain the right vehicles for the right use, while at the same time minimizing issues around delays or availability.



When it comes to EVs, the changing tax and legislative environment means that fleets need to take advantage of tax credits and incentives while they're still available. Neve says that Canada is currently still moving forward with these kinds of initiatives, even though there's been significant pullback in the U.S.

She notes that real data is showing that when EVs are deployed properly, and performing the role they're supposed to, the operational cost savings can be significant. More fleet driver surveys are demonstrating that when it comes to EVs, once drivers get used to them, they tend to be happier driving EVs vs. traditional internal combustion engine vehicles.

Nevertheless, fleets need to tread cautiously. EVs, particularly pure battery-electric models, are not for everyone, and certain use cases work better than others. Fleet managers and their organizations need to do their homework and understand that they're not just buying vehicles. Rather, they're tapping into an entire ecosystem that includes the necessary charging infrastructure, routes, schedules, driver training, safety and vehicle maintenance, as well as the specific type of role these vehicles will be employed in, and the environmental conditions they're subjected to. In cold winter conditions, battery range and performance can decline significantly,

and this must be factored into the equation when acquiring these assets.

Holman's Vollant stresses the need for fleets to factor in total cost of ownership, and properly assess their acquisition strategy, before looking to purchase EVs. In today's marketplace, they also need to understand that the higher cost for EVs vs. comparable ICE vehicles at the time of acquisition tends to result in weaker residual values, meaning that when it comes to remarketing, they must factor in lower resale prices and reduced demand on the used market.

With that said, there are ways that fleets can maximize remarketing opportunities for these kinds of vehicles. One that's proving effective is the online, wholesale marketplace. "These platforms provide nationwide exposure," says Vollant, largely because they can target a large pool of potential buyers, which is particularly valuable for EVs, where local demand might be limited. [o](#)

Remarketing Hybrids

While battery electric vehicles (BEVs) have been gaining the lion's share of both political and media attention in recent years, those fleets that are pushing forward with sustainability goals, and looking at a cost-effective way to reduce fuel consumption, are actively embracing hybrids. In fact, demand for hybrids has surged in recent years, much of it driven by concerns over range anxiety and charging infrastructure for BEV vehicles. According to data from Statistics Canada, hybrid sales in this country surged by a staggering 60.7% in Q2 of 2025, compared with the same period the previous year, while in the U.S., demand was up by 36%.

Vollant says that the hybrid market is expected to strengthen further, with continued growth in adoption rates and solid consumer confidence. This is reflected in stronger residual rates for hybrids, which are more in line with conventional ICE vehicles than with EVs. Vollant says that when it comes to remarketing hybrids, it's important to capture a wide audience, such as through national online wholesale auctions, but perhaps more importantly, to combine that with a robust maintenance strategy, while these units are in service. She explains that fleets that keep their vehicles, including hybrids, well-maintained and supported with complete service records "typically benefit from stronger resale performance."

Tariff Woes

A closer look at how tariffs affect vehicle values.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

From higher food prices to more expensive consumer goods, the ongoing tariff war is affecting all Canadians, and impacting both our personal and professional lives. This includes fleet managers who are thinking of remarketing their current vehicles, and planning their next acquisition.

"Tariffs are definitely having an impact," says Basil Marcus, President, Foss National Leasing. "The U.S. dollar is always the biggest factor, but we're also seeing a lot less U.S. buyers at the auctions, and that is definitely having an impact on residual values."

Holly Vollant, Manager, North American Remarketing at Holman agrees. "Cross-border sales remain an outlet for Canadian used inventory, but pricing dynamics have shifted significantly due to tariff considerations and global economic uncertainty," she explains. "Dealers still purchase Canadian vehicles for export to the U.S., but values now reflect adjustments for tariff driven inflation. U.S. buyers are showing a greater preference for vehicles manufactured in the United States (identified with VINs beginning with a 1) as they typically provide a stronger return on investment, given today's market conditions."

Another key issue, Foss National's Marcus explains, is something that fleet professionals may not be dealing with now, but will likely have to in the future. "We're getting a lot of Canadian-, Mexican-built vehicles, so they get a different classification than U.S.-built vehicles," he says. "So if we don't resolve the tariffs soon, they're not going to be as desirable in the U.S. market, and that could have an impact on residual values."

Holman's Vollant notes that tariffs already have a measurable impact on remarketing values. "Vehicles manufactured in Canada and Mexico (typically identified with VINs beginning with a 2 or a 3) experienced a rapid decline in fair market value, dropping by approximately 15-20% on average," she says. "This decline occurred virtually overnight as the

"Cross-border sales remain an outlet for Canadian used inventory, but pricing dynamics have shifted significantly due to tariff considerations and global economic uncertainty."

HOLLY VOLLANT MANAGER,
NORTH AMERICAN REMARKETING, HOLMAN



secondary market recalibrated to account for the increased costs tied to tariffs." She stresses that macroeconomic uncertainty and volatility have added a new layer of complexity to

vehicle remarketing. "In addition to standard valuation inputs, such as year, make, model, mileage, condition, etc., remarketing professional must now also account for the vehicle's country of origin," she says. "As you can imagine, this additional variable can significantly influence vehicle demand and, in turn, resale value." The good news, Foss National's Marcus notes, is that

commercial vehicles are generally selling well, especially commercial trucks and vans. "White metal is very consistent," he adds. "There's always a buyer who needs it or wants it."

Higher acquisition costs

The tariffs are proving to be a real two-edged sword for fleet professionals. Not only is remarketing a challenge, but so are higher acquisition costs. In other words, fleets find themselves



in the difficult position of getting less than they might expect for their used vehicles, as well as having to pay more to replace those vehicles with new ones. “New vehicles are getting more expensive, because even if it’s just the steel and aluminum tariffs, which we don’t talk about anymore, they add to the price of new vehicles,” Marcus explains.

Back to normal

Marcus argues that although current economic realities, including tariff pressures, translate into less than ideal remarketing conditions, things aren’t as bad as some might think.

“People say that the markets have softened, but they’re just back to pre-COVID levels, which is normal,” Marcus explains. “So some people may say that tariffs and economic uncertainty are causing a downturn in the residual values of vehicles. But the truth is that vehicles have just normalized back to what they were before COVID, if you look at the data.”

Thinking back to the realities of the past several years, Marcus reminds everyone that we went through COVID, and then we went through supply chain shortages, which then created a massive de-

mand for used vehicles because new vehicles were impossible to find. “And that really ballooned the prices,” he adds.

What we’re seeing now is a flattening of that market, he argues. “What I’d be more concerned about, from a residual perspective, is that a lot of people during that period paid a premium for their vehicles,” he says. “Concessions disappeared, vehicles were over-contented, and fleets paid MSRP-plus vs. book-less-concession. Now they’re going to remarket those vehicles, and it’s going to appear to them that the market has softened. The fact is, a vehicle is worth what it’s worth—you just overpaid for it when it was new.”

A good time to remarket

Marcus offers the following advice to any fleet professional who is contemplating holding on to their assets longer than they had planned, just because they don’t know if they’ll get top dollar for those assets if they were to remarket them now: Don’t!

“If a vehicle has reached its lifecycle from a fleet perspective, the prudent thing to do is remarket it before you start getting into higher expenses from a maintenance perspective,” he says. “I would say that it’s a good time to remarket, because the market is balanced. By that I mean that new vehicle costs have come down just a touch, the manufacturers are keen to move product, and concessions are back to a higher level. So you’re paying less for your new vehicle, and although you might be getting a little less for your used vehicle, as long as you use prudent depreciation, it should be very well balanced.”

When it comes to getting top dollar for a vehicle at remarketing time, fleet professionals need to go back to the fundamental of prudent fleet management. “Fleet operators should ensure vehicles are kept in good condition, and maintain detailed service records to help optimize resale values,” says Holman’s Vollant.

“The fact is, a vehicle is worth what it’s worth—you just overpaid for it when it was new.”

BASIL MARCUS PRESIDENT,
FOSS NATIONAL LEASING

Foss National’s Marcus agrees. “Buyers love fleet vehicles because they know that they have been well maintained, they’ve been serviced at an authorized shop, and a lot of dealers refer to fleet vehicles as lot-ready,” he says. “So they buy them on a Wednesday and put them on their lot on Thursday because they’re that clean. And that’s the key. Dealers don’t want to invest a lot of time and money in these vehicles. That’s what buyers in the used market want, and that’s what fleet sellers can offer.” It’s a win-win. [🔗](#)

2026 Toyota RAV4

A Modern Upgrade To Match The Energy Transition

A fresh take on a Toyota classic.

TEXT ISABELLE HAVASY

Almost 30-year-old, the RAV4 is getting a fresh start. The compact utility vehicle, built at Toyota's plant in Woodstock, Ontario since 2008, now enters its sixth generation. The latest version of the RAV4 is set to establish itself as a smart choice for companies looking to invest in a vehicle built in Canada.

For 2026, Toyota has updated the RAV4's styling and technology while staying true to what makes it a bestseller. In Canada, it ranks second in overall sales, behind only Ford's F-Series pickups.

The RAV4's success has always been grounded in versatility, reliability, and efficiency. It has dominated the compact SUV category for years, and keeps adding to its trophy case. Last year, it earned Canadian Black Book's awards for Best Retained Value and Best Residual Value, along with Vincentric's Best Value in Canada award, an important benchmark for fleet managers.

With this latest generation, Toyota says goodbye to gasoline-only engines. The lineup is now based on two hybrid systems, standard and plug-in. For 2026, the automaker expects plug-in hybrids to account for 20% of sales, up from 8% today.

Both setups have been enhanced for better performance and efficiency. The batteries are smaller, lighter, and better-cooled, with upgraded thermal management for plug-ins, higher voltage, and improved energy capacity. Plug-in variants (SE, XSE, XSE Technology, and GR Sport) now deliver greater electric range: up to 84 kilometres, compared to 68 previously (77 km for the GR).

More power, less fuel

The latest redesign also brings a boost in power. Plug-in versions now generate 324 horsepower, an increase of 18 hp, while conventional hybrids produce 236 hp. Regardless of configuration, the new RAV4 consumes less fuel than before. Hybrid models average between 5.4 and 5.6 L/100 km, except for the Woodland Edition, which is rated at 6.0 L/100 km. Plug-in hybrids offer similar efficiency, rated at 5.7 L/100 km for SE and XSE trims, and 6.4 L/100 km for the GR Sport.

Charging times are shorter as well, thanks to a more powerful 22.7 kWh battery (up from 18.1 kWh). Most versions come with a standard 7 kW onboard charger, while the XSE Technology model increases capacity to 11 kW. Equipped with a dual charging port, it can recharge at a 50 kW direct-current station in about 30 minutes.

The RAV4 lineup is divided into three families (Core, Outdoor Adventure, and Sport), with a total of 11 trims to meet the needs of a diverse customer base. The big news for 2026 is the addition



The new 2026 Toyota RAV4

of the Gazoo Racing (GR) edition, developed by Toyota's performance division. It is aimed at driving enthusiasts who want a more spirited experience, while still enjoying all the qualities that make the RAV4 such a popular SUV.

At first glance, each lineup stands out with distinct exterior styling cues, particularly at the front. The Core trim features a grille painted in the same colour as the body, the Outdoor Adventure lineup adopts a split-grille design, and the Sport family uses the exclusive look developed for the GR models. Equipped with 20-inch black alloy wheels, red brake callipers, and a sport-tuned suspension, the GR edition features bumpers with integrated air intakes, a rear spoiler, and a piano black lower spoiler. Its ground clearance is 16 millimetres lower than the rest of the lineup, and GR-specific accents continue inside the cabin. The Woodland Edition is aimed at drivers who venture off the beaten



Nearly three decades separate the first and sixth generation of the RAV4 (Woodland Edition), which will arrive in showrooms in early 2026.



path. It features a body raised by 10 millimetres, unique skid plates, wider fenders, all-terrain tires, roof rails with crossbars, a storage compartment, all-weather floor mats, a cargo tray, door sill plates, and a rear bumper protector. All of these elements make this version truly ready for adventure.

Innovation inside and out

While many modern vehicles sacrifice visibility, Toyota moves in the opposite direction. The rear window and quarter glass are larger, improving visibility and giving occupants a greater sense of safety.

Towing capabilities have also been increased. Plug-in models can now pull up to 1,588 kilograms (3,500 lb), up from the previous 1,134 kg (2,500 lb). The only exception is the GR, which does not include towing. The entry-level hybrid (LE) maintains a capacity of 794 kg (1,750 lb), while all other hybrid trims match the 1,588 kg rating. Staying true to its ad-



The 2026 RAV4 will be equipped with new features and advanced technologies. (Some features may differ. This vehicle was still in pre-production.)

venturous nature, the Woodland Edition includes a factory-installed hitch.

The rear hatch opens wider and the cargo area is more spacious than before. Hybrid versions offer between 1,070 and 1,994 litres of cargo volume with the second row folded, while plug-in hybrids provide between 951 and 1,800 litres. Models equipped with a panoramic roof lose about 3% of total capacity.

Under the hood, and inside the cabin, Toyota continues to innovate. The 2026 RAV4 integrates a full suite of new technologies to help prevent collisions and protect occupants. Toyota Safety Sense 4.0 makes its debut, featuring a new front camera and radar. Depending on trim, available features include a heated steering wheel, dual wireless chargers, and a shift-by-wire system. All models come standard with an active front grille, a toggle-style shifter, a dual-hinged reversible centre console, and Toyota's new Arene software platform.

With standard all-wheel drive, improved sound insulation, and greater comfort on the road, the 2026 RAV4 fine-tunes an already proven formula. Reliable, efficient, and more capable than ever, it proves that evolution doesn't have to mean a loss of identity. At the time of publication, Toyota had not yet announced pricing for the 2026 RAV4, which will arrive in dealerships early next year. [🔗](#)



Available exclusively as a hybrid, the Woodland Edition features an interior that highlights its adventurous spirit.

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The Ford team

NAFA Ontario Hosts 2025 Ride & Drive

Fleet professionals turn out to check out the latest vehicles and services.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

NAFA Ontario hosted their annual Ride & Drive on Sept 24th at the Pearson Convention Centre in Brampton, Ontario. The event was very well attended with many OEMs, upfitters, suppliers, and fleet service providers on hand to display their latest offerings.

Fleet professionals enjoyed a day of education, networking, and endless test drive opportunities.

NAFA invited Cole Lemette, Account Executive at PowerON Energy Solutions to speak to the audience during the lunch break. PowerON is an “end-to-end fleet electrification partner,” and they provide fleets with “turnkey planning, design, installation, operation and energy management services.”

Lemette discussed the current state of the EV market, and offered fleet professionals insights into how they can get started on their electrification journey.

Besides vehicle selection, he explained the importance of having a charging plan, and he discussed the steps organizations need to take when planning and designing a charging infrastructure.

Jon Grant of Allied Universal Security Services was the master of ceremonies for the day. He announced the date for the NAFA Ontario Holiday Lunch & Toy Drive, which is scheduled to take place on December 11th of this year. More details will follow as plans are finalized. [🔗](#)



Dave Forrest, Michelle Avello Ariztegui,
Naomi Kislanski



Evans Turcotte,
Luc Grenier



Zohair Ahmed, Abdul Pugganwala,
Kevin Forodi

True All-Season Performance

The Geolandar A/T 4 G018 is a top contender for your fleet dollars.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

If you're shopping for light-truck tires that tick all the boxes, consider adding the Yokohama Geolandar A/T 4 G018 to your short list. This all-terrain tire offers a blend of on-road comfort and off-road prowess, and is designed to deliver reliable traction in all weather and road conditions, including ice and snow.

Engineered to tackle tough terrain, the G018 is ideal for fleets that operate off the beaten path, but still want a relatively quiet and comfortable ride on paved roads and highways. Thanks in part to a single-pitch shoulder block design that reduces road noise, your drivers can enjoy a more quiet and comfortable ride, one their way to the job site.

Once the pavement ends, and the dirt roads begin, the G018 delivers the reassuring grip drivers need to take on rough terrain with confidence. The G018 comes equipped with multiple sidewall plies, a full nylon cap and a high turn-up carcass (known collectively as Yokohama's Geo-Shield technology), all of which give this tire the added strength to deal with challenging terrain.

The G018 comes with dual sidewall protectors that shield the tire from side impacts, as well as Yokohama's Enduro-Compound, which adds a layer of protection against cuts and chips, thereby extending the life of the tire.

Yokohama's engineers designed the G018 with aggressive centre blocks for optimum off-road traction, along with mud and stone ejectors that keep the grooves free of debris. Moreover, Yokohama's patented Edgetec grooves deliver more biting edges for maximum grip in deeper snow.

All-weather performance

For maximum cold-weather performance, the G018 comes with three-peak mountain snowflake (3PMS) certification, which means that it can handle our Canadian winters. It also boasts 3D sipes that change shape as the tire wears in order to optimize the number of available biting edges and provide surefooted traction throughout all four seasons. During wet weather, the G018 is able to resist hydroplaning

by efficiently evacuating water through the zig-zag grooves designed into the tread, and it delivers optimum wet traction and wet grip.

For added peace of mind,
the Geolandar A/T 4 G018 comes
with a 30-day satisfaction guarantee.

Broad offering

With an array of LT and flotation sizes, from 15-22 inches, the G018 is available for a variety of crossovers, SUVs, pick-up trucks, and work vans, including heavy-duty workhorses like the Ram 3500, the Ram ProMaster, the Chevrolet Silverado HD and the Ford F-350 Super Duty, to name but a few.

For added peace of mind, the Geolandar A/T 4 G018 comes with a 30-day satisfaction guarantee, and with Yokohama's limited treadwear warranty that covers P/ISO Metric sizes for five years or 105,000 km, and LT Metric sizes for four years or 85,000.

When on-road comfort, off-road durability and traction, as well as all-weather performance are a must, this true four-season tire is a top contender for your fleet dollars. [O](#)

Tracking Growth

These two technologies are gaining traction with fleet professionals.

TEXT CHRIS HILL



I am watching two growing things: telematics and electric vehicle sales. The first is growing in the new territory of regulatory compliance, while the second is still growing, despite the flood of news reports to the contrary.

I have changed my opinion of telematics, which has been around for a quarter century now. I listened to many pitches for a product that would give me instant reports of data I already had available, such as odometer readings and fuel consumption. As for tracking vehicle locations and travel, this was a concern for the operating managers, not the fleet manager, and if they were not interested in this then neither was I.

Benefits of telematics

I am currently working on improving driver compliance with commercial vehicle regulations, such as hours of service and daily vehicle checks. I have seen a remarkable ability in telematics to automate much of these procedures, making it easier and faster for drivers to make complete records that will pass inspection. The avoidance of fines and failing regulatory audits are strong incentives to put a telematics solution in place.

I recently spent a day at a leading telematics vendor's head office with about sixty other fleet managers and their colleagues. These were a mix of private delivery fleets and municipalities.

For municipalities, completing assigned routes to meet minimum maintenance standards has been difficult to measure. This work includes snow clearing, leaf collection, waste collection, pothole remediation and grass trimming. The problem was using paper maps to guide the drivers, which is expensive and time-consuming.

Telematics can provide turn-by-turn navigation for drivers, and proof that maintenance has been done. It can also provide evidence to respond to claims for damage. This has the attention of operating managers now. I am hearing them asking for telematics, not just to be aware of where their drivers are, but for important data that helps them work efficiently.

The case of a propane delivery service provided an interesting case study. This is a service for mainly rural customers, in-

cluding farms and vacation homes, often with long single-lane driveways that can be difficult for heavy trucks. Knowing where to dispatch a single axle truck, instead of a tandem, can make or break a day for a driver.

EV adoption

The situation with electric vehicle sales is unexpected. I thought the removal of government incentives in Canada and the United States would slow down sales of EVs in 2025, but the opposite is happening. Curiously, there is also a rising market for used EVs. Some sources write that the early-adopter phase has ended, and that the mass adoption phase that should happen next will fizzle. There is a lot of noise about the lack of public recharging, which is drowning out announcements of new locations opening. One of the most important is the Electric Circuit megawatt charging facility for transport trucks in Quebec, the first of its kind in eastern North America.

Chinese EVs

There is a debate about removing the 100% tariff on Chinese EVs imported to Canada. EV enthusiasts see this as critical to getting more affordable EVs and increasing market penetration. The auto industry, particularly the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association, says this will severely harm existing auto businesses. I am impressed by the APMA's level-headed, sensible leadership responding to American tariffs, and their support for a Canadian EV industry, and listen to their advice.

Electric vehicles are established in many fleets, despite the meagre choices that are suitable for many of them. The best way to see if they work as well as traditional gas-powered vehicles is to try them. [o](#)



Chris Hill has been a fleet manager and consultant with some of Canada's best-known companies and several municipalities. He is currently working for the City of Waterloo, Ontario.

Mitigating Unpredictability

In today's rollercoaster operating environment, there are a range of solutions to help fleets navigate through it successfully.

TEXT **MARIA NEVE**

There is no question that we are living in some very challenging times for the fleet management industry. Tariffs and supply chain disruptions, rising costs—they are all having a significant impact.

If we look at the tariff situation, some postal agencies and couriers are no longer shipping parts to the U.S. because they don't have the infrastructure to support the new tariff requirements. For fleets that operate in both Canada and the U.S., as well as Mexico, this is having a significant impact on operations, since it can be difficult to determine when replacement parts (or even vehicles) can be delivered, and costs can swing wildly from one week to the next.

Diversification

One way that fleets can help mitigate these types of procurement issues is by diversifying their sources, and looking at new OEMs and vendors to source product. Additionally, extending the order timing out can help lock in pricing, though doing so also means you'll need to extend the life cycle of your current vehicles. This can be a double-edged sword in that while you might be able to get ahead of potential price increases on new vehicles due to tariffs and other inflationary pressures, you will also be spending more of your operational budget on servicing and parts for your existing fleet vehicles, which will require more maintenance as they age.

For vocational fleets and those that rely extensively on upfitting, Canada and the U.S. have traditionally had a great relationship in terms of OEMs and upfitters. Today, with the tariff situation and trade disruptions, we're seeing more upfitting becoming localized with a greater emphasis on more standardized specifications. One reason for this approach is that by having a standardized spec, fleet managers can shop it around for both optimal pricing and timing from a delivery perspective. Much like we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic, this kind of approach helps alleviate some un-

certainty, while allowing fleets to better plan and manage overall costs.


Artificial intelligence

Additionally, we're seeing artificial intelligence play an increasing role as fleets look to predict maintenance issues before they happen. Today, the aim is to maximize profitability out of every kilometre that vehicles are in service, and to minimize any potential repairs and downtime. Fleet managers today are looking to mitigate risk as much as possible through diversification and timing, as well as to maximize revenue opportunities wherever they can.

Today's operating environment is one where margin squeeze is happening across the entire supply chain, from OEMs to vendors to fleet management companies. We're seeing major OEMs significantly scale back head counts, and cut back on various programs, including EV development, and these cutbacks are extending beyond vehicle manufacturing to right across the supply chain. While cutting costs and head counts can be a short-term approach to help stabilize business and profitability, you can only cut so much before safety and service are impacted. We've seen many cases where safety is compromised, resulting in serious implications for fleets and the industry. Moreover, at the end of the day, drivers and employees want to be able to go home to their families.

Significant improvements

We are lucky, in that modern fleet managers tend to be very safety-conscious and laser-focused on mitigating danger and risk wherever possible and, provided it is presented properly, good safety practices can result in significant improvements in fleet operational efficiency and revenue. Modern telematics solutions allow us to monitor performance and operating practices in real time, allowing fleet managers to make better decisions and see clear patterns in how they can maximize efficiencies for the fleets they're responsible for.

While we may be living through some of the most unpredictable times in recent memory, there is still a range of solutions to help mitigate uncertainty and ensure that as fleet managers, we are well prepared for whatever challenges we might face in the future. 



Maria Neve is Vice President of eFMC Services, Inspiration Mobility and serves as NAFA Board President.



Pickups vs. Chassis Cabs

Shifting Gears

When should you upgrade to a medium-duty truck?

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

While there are some jobs that a well-equipped pick-up can easily handle, sometimes only a medium-duty truck will do. And while in some cases the choice is clearly black and white, other times fleet professionals may find themselves in the grey area in between.

If you find yourself in the grey zone, wondering if a pick-up will do, or if it's time to upgrade to something with more muscle, Dan Simpson, Manager, Product Marketing at Fleetio recommends looking at your data. "If the fleet manager already has, or has used, a heavy-duty pickup in the position/route/job, the best course of action would be to look at the data," he explains. "Think about things like: What are the service intervals like? Is the wear and tear on the vehicle above average? What challenges are they facing?"

Simpson recommends that fleet managers ask themselves two key questions: "First, what's the task the vehicle is expected to perform? Hauling, towing? What carrying capacity is needed? Are you looking at weight restrictions (if applicable)? Second, what are the upfitting needs? The more specialized the job, the more specialized the vehicle needs to be, and medium-duty chassis are typically more customizable."

Charlie Johns, Regional Engineering Manager for Holman agrees, noting that the first thing the fleet manager has to do is determine the payload—what's the weight of everything that truck will have to haul? "From there, we take the payload weight, and we add it to the tare weight, which is the weight of the vehicle, including the upfit, plus the weight of the driver and passengers, and a full tank of fuel," he explains. ➤

If maximum torque, payload and application options are a must, then a medium-duty truck, like this International MV, is the better option than a pick-up.

But wait, there's a bit more math to do. "You add the payload weight to the tare weight, and that cannot exceed the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR), which is established by the manufacturer," Johns says. Each vehicle's GVWR is determined by numerous factors including the type of frame, suspension, the axle ratings, the wheel and tire size, and the drivetrain, he adds. The truck must also be able to steer properly when fully loaded, as well as brake safely. "If you overload the truck, the braking system won't be able to stop it in the distance that it needs to," Johns says.

Pros and cons of each

While there's no doubt that a properly upfitted medium-duty truck has a higher GVWR than a pick-up truck, Basil Marcus, President, Foss National Leasing says that there are compelling reasons for fleet managers to stick with pick-ups.

"Cab chassis have their place," Marcus says, "but you're getting into a very expensive upfit, and the drivers will need a different license and certification. On the other hand, the cost of entry into a pick-up truck is lower, they're more comfortable for the driver, and offer a better ride quality. Pick-ups are also easy to service and maintain, easy to cycle, you don't need a specific diesel mechanic, you can bring them to any dealership, and sometimes they're just easier to keep on the road."

While getting into a medium-duty cab chassis comes with its own set of challenges, Marcus says that you can't beat the capacity of these larger trucks, and that if you need one, then you need one. "Overloading a pick-up is dangerous," he adds. "You blow a tire, or your pick-up fails out in the field—and a lot of these vehicles are used in remote places—that's where you're going to have a problem."



Some jobs require the muscle of a medium-duty truck, like this Mack MD.

Many fleets default to heavy-duty pickups because they're more affordable to purchase and easier to source than a medium-duty cab chassis, says Simpson from Fleetio. "Pickups also have strong resale markets and financing options, which makes them attractive to procurement teams under budget pressure," he adds. "But using them in applications better suited for medium-duty platforms comes with hidden costs."

When pickups are overloaded, Simpson explains, fleets face higher safety risks, from brake failures to tire blowouts, as well as potential compliance issues. "These vehicles experience accelerated wear on suspensions, drivetrains, and brakes, driving up maintenance costs and downtime," he says. "Over time, this leads to shorter asset lifespans, more frequent replacements, and an inflated total cost of ownership." While more expensive initially, a medium-duty cab chassis is purpose-built for heavy payloads and can be upfitted for specific jobs, often allowing fleets to operate fewer vehicles overall. "The real danger of relying on heavy-duty pickups is that short-term savings can quickly

Counting the Costs

Besides the added upfront cost, here are the main reasons why fleets might avoid upgrading to a medium-duty cab chassis, according to Dan Simpson, Manager, Product Marketing at Fleetio:

- A major factor could be maintenance and repairs. Do these fleets have technicians who are comfortable working on medium-duty trucks, or do they have third-party maintenance providers certified to work on them?
- There may also be a lack of data around the need to upgrade. Can they identify the benefits, or explain to stakeholders the need to upgrade?
- Availability is a big factor. Pickups can be purchased off

dealer lots, while cab chassis often require factory orders and upfitting that can delay delivery for months.

- Upfitting adds complexity, and coordination with third parties, which many fleets prefer to avoid.
- Driver familiarity is another concern: Pickups drive like consumer vehicles, while medium-duty units may require extra training or even a commercial driver's license, depending on their weight class.
- Flexibility and perception play a role. Pickups can double as work and personal-use vehicles, which is appealing for recruitment and retention, and they present a less industrial image for customer-facing industries.



turn into long-term inefficiencies and liabilities that outweigh the upfront affordability," Simpson explains.


Advice for fleet professionals

Fleet managers who are still on the fence would do well to heed the advice offered by Holman's Charlie Johns. "The fleet manager has to plan for the worst-case scenario, the heaviest payload," he says. "It's not enough to think that a pick-up truck can do the job; you have to be sure that it can. If it's over-

loaded, you're opening yourself up to a number of issues, including compliance, and most importantly, safety."

Sometimes the biggest obstacle to making the right choice is the old adage, "We've always done it this way," Johns explains. "They've always used a particular truck, and it's always worked for them, but maybe they've just been lucky that they haven't been caught in an overloaded situation."

Johns says that another one of the key issues fleet managers may forget is the need to factor in the weight of a trailer, if that's what the truck will be used for. "The manufacturer calls that the gross combined weight rating (GCWR)," he explains. "You add the weight of the loaded truck, plus the weight of the loaded trailer, and it cannot exceed the manufacturer's GCWR."

For those who still aren't sure whether a pick-up will do or whether a medium-duty truck is a must, Basil Marcus from Foss National Leasing suggests a pilot project, just to be sure. "The only way you're going to get a true understanding of your needs is by getting your own real-life data," he says. "So put one in a pilot, put it through the wringer, see how it does for a year, get feedback from everyone involved, and that will help you make the right decision moving forward." 



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Class 5 - 7

Mighty Workhorses

These medium-duty trucks are a must with many fleets.

TEXT JIL MCINTOSH

Medium-duty trucks in Class 5 through 7 are the workhorses that handle everything from deliveries to construction work, from hauling heavy equipment, to overhead buckets and water tanks, and everything in between. Most

are straight trucks, ready to be outfitted for your specific purpose, although some at the upper level are also available as tractors. This selection includes considerations for your fleet. 



Hino L Series

Built in Canada – Woodstock, Ont., to be precise – the Hino L Series medium-duty lineup includes the L6 and lower-profile L6L; and the higher-capacity L7 (the

factory also produces the heavy-duty XL7 and XL8). Standard equipment includes a driver’s air-suspension seat, heated mirrors, cruise control, and three years of 24/7 roadside assistance; while options include emergency front braking, lane departure alert, GPS navigation, LED headlamps, and fender mirrors.

Kenworth T180 / T280 / T380

Kenworth’s lineup includes the Class-5 T180 and Class-6 T280 straight trucks, and Class-7 T380 as straight truck or tractor. The trucks use Paccar diesel engines;



Cummins natural-gas engines may be available. The lineup comes standard with a low roof or can be optioned to a raised roof. Standard features include automatic temperature control, an exterior light self-test system, and three-occupant seating, while available items include emergency front braking, highway distance warning, and adaptive cruise control.

THE SPECS

- **Cummins B6.7:** 240 – 260 hp / 600 – 660 torque
- **Transmission:** Allison 6-speed A/T
- **Maximum GVWR:** 25,940 to 33,000 lbs

THE SPECS

- **Paccar PX-7:** 200 – 360 hp / 600 – 800 torque
- **Paccar PX-9:** 260 – 450 hp / 860 – 1,250 torque
- **Transmission:** 8-speed A/T / 12-speed automated
- **Maximum GVWR:** 19,000 lbs (T180); 26,000 lbs (T280); 33,000 lbs (T380)



Mack MD6 / MD7

Mack’s bulldog oversees Class 6 and 7 with the company’s MD6 and MD7 straight trucks. Available in eight wheelbase lengths, both use a Cummins diesel and come

standard with cruise control, air suspension driver’s seat, and power windows and locks; add-ons include a premium seat, block heater, and PTO harness and switch preparation kit. Suspension choices are multi-leaf or air.

Ford F-650 /F-750

Ford’s medium-duty straight-truck offerings are available with gasoline or diesel power. The diesel’s live-drive PTO can operate while the truck is moving, and can also be equipped with a split-shaft gearbox for two PTOs, able to power two accessories when the truck is stopped. Available driver-assist packages include emergency front braking, lane-keep alert, and adaptive cruise control.



THE SPECS

- **Cummins B6.7:** 220 – 300 hp / 560 – 660 torque
- **Transmission:** 6-speed A/T
- **Maximum GVWR:** 25,995 lbs (MD6); 33,000 lbs (MD7)

THE SPECS

- **Gas:** 7.3-litre V8: 335 hp / 468 torque
- **Diesel:** 6.7-litre V8: 270 – 330 hp / 800 – 850 torque
- **Transmission:** 6-speed A/T (gas) / 10-speed A/T (diesel)
- **Maximum GVWR:** 26,000 – 29,000 lbs (F-650); 33,000 – 37,000 lbs (F-750)



Freightliner M2

Freightliner's M2 line-up spans Class 6 to Class 8, and comes as a straight truck, or as a tractor with day cab, extended

cab, or crew cab, and with available all-wheel drive. Its diesel engine choices are Cummins or Detroit, along with Eaton or Allison transmissions. Available features include a factory-installed rearview camera, adaptive cruise control, and side guard assist to identify pedestrians on the passenger side.

THE SPECS

- **Cummins B6.7:** 200 to 325 hp / 520 to 750 torque
- **Cummins L9:** 260 to 350 hp / 720 to 1,150 torque
- **Detroit DD5:** 200 to 240 hp / 560 to 660 torque
- **Detroit DD8:** 260 to 350 hp / 660 to 1,050 torque
- **Transmission:** M/T / A/T / automated / 7-speed dual-clutch
- **Maximum GVWR:** 66,000 lbs



International CV / MV

International's CV comes in regular or crew cab, and with 4x2 or 4x4 axle configuration. The MV adds an extended cab to those, and 4x2 or 6x4 configuration, along with available integral front frame extensions. Standard features include vinyl or cloth seats, tilt steering wheel, and auxiliary switches, while available features include a power driver's seat, rearview camera, emergency front braking, centre console, and LED headlights.

International's CV comes in regular or crew cab, and with 4x2 or 4x4 axle configuration. The MV adds an extended cab to those, and 4x2 or 6x4 configuration, along with available integral front frame extensions. Standard features include vinyl or cloth seats, tilt steering wheel, and auxiliary switches, while available features include a power driver's seat, rearview camera, emergency front braking, centre console, and LED headlights.

THE SPECS

- **CV:** International 6.6-litre V8 diesel: 350 hp / 750 torque
- **MV:** Cummins B6.7: 200 – 360 hp / 600 – 800 torque
- **Cummins L9:** 200 – 360 hp / 860 – 1,150 torque
- **Transmission:** 6-speed M/T; 10-speed M/T; 10-speed automated manual; 6-speed A/T
- **Maximum GVWR:** 23,000 to 23,500 lbs (CV); 20,000 to 54,700 lbs (MV)

Peterbilt 536

Peterbilt's Class 5-through-7 trucks are the 535, 536, and 537; they also offer the cab-over 220 in Class 6 or 7 configuration, and that one can be ordered in right-hand drive for specialized applications.

Along with a PX-7 diesel in the 535 and 220, and an additional PX-9 in the 536 and 537, Cummins natural-gas engines may be available. Features can include emergency front braking, adaptive cruise control, side object detection, lane departure warning, air suspension seat, seven-inch digital instrument cluster, and a low-profile dash.



THE SPECS

- **Paccar PX-7 (220, 535):** 200 – 325 hp / 660 torque
- **Paccar PX-7 (536, 537):** 220 – 325 hp / 750 torque
- **Paccar PX-9:** 260 – 450 hp / 860 – 1,250 torque
- **Transmission:** 8-speed A/T
- **Maximum GVWR:** 19,500 lbs (535); 26,000 lbs (536); 33,000 lbs (537); 26,000-33,000 lbs (220)

Isuzu N Series / F Series

Isuzu spans the classes with its N and F Series cab-forward trucks.

These include the NQR Class 5 and NRR Class 5; and the FTR Class 6 and the FVR, which is available in Class 7 or a derated Class 6 version. The N Series offers gas or diesel, while the F Series is diesel; and while both offer a regular cab, the N Series also has a crew cab that seats up to seven people. Available features include front collision warning, driver's suspension seat, rearview camera, heated power mirrors, and touchscreen audio system. [O](#)



THE SPECS

- **Gas:** 6.6-litre V8: 350 hp / 425 torque
- **N Series Diesel:** 5.2-litre I4: 215 hp / 452 torque
- **F Series Diesel:** Cummins B6.7: 260 hp / 660 torque
- **Transmission:** 6-speed A/T
- **Maximum GVWR:** 17,950 lbs (NQR); 19,500 lbs (NRR); 25,950 (FTR, FVR Class 6); 33,000 lbs (FVR Class 7)

Saving Time, Money & Maintenance

Regenerative braking systems offer significant advantages for fleets.

TEXT **HUW EVANS**

Anyone who has driven a hybrid or battery electric vehicle is familiar with regenerative braking. In essence, an electric motor or generator is used to “decelerate” the vehicle when the throttle is lifted.

The aim is to use the kinetic energy to slow down the vehicle, and turn it into electricity that can charge the vehicle’s battery and extend the electric range.

These types of systems can take some getting used to. Drivers may feel that the vehicle is dragging the brakes whenever they ease up on the accelerator or hit the brake pedal. It may feel as though a calliper is sticking or the brakes are binding.

Clear gains

For fleets, where TCO and operational efficiency are key, vehicles equipped with regenerative braking systems have demonstrated to have several advantages.

At Geotab, Senior Manager Vik Sridhar notes that real world data has shown clear gains when fleets use vehicles equipped with regenerative braking systems.

Zeroing in on plug-in hybrid vehicles, data shows that among two groups of vehicles (those that were plugged-in consistently to maximize electric range, and those that used the internal combustion engine all the time), the former realized a 45% reduction in overall running costs and a 73% reduction in fuel consumption.

Additionally, Sridhar notes that Geotab’s own data points to significant maintenance and parts savings with regenerative versus conventional vehicle braking systems.

“Our studies have shown that [with regenerative systems] you’re extending your brake pad lifespan more than three times longer. In some cases, we’ve seen vehicles go 100,000 km before requiring brake pad replacement.”

Data like this illustrates that fleets are not only able to save on fuel consumption, but they can also save significantly on



Regenerative braking systems offer significant advantages for fleets with both EV and hybrid vehicles.

maintenance costs and downtime, bolstering TCO and overall operational efficiency.

“Every time you have to bring a vehicle to a service centre for repairs, that’s taking time away from it being on the road,” says Sridhar.

Maintenance considerations

Nevertheless, there are considerations, particularly when it comes to maintenance.

At Holman, Holly Volland, Manager, North American Remarketing explains that hybrids require careful attention when it comes to regular types of repairs and hybrid component-specific maintenance.

Regenerative braking systems require regular inspections of the moving parts, including springs, shoes, callipers and rotors to prevent corrosion build up, particularly if the vehicles are operated in areas that are subject to snow and ice during winter, or are exposed to excessive moisture.

Furthermore, regenerative braking impacts tire performance and wear, which means that tires should be inspected regularly, and fleets may have to budget for more frequent tire replacements.

While some components, such as brake pads, shoes and rotors will not need replacing as frequently, they still need to be inspected.

Geotab’s Sridhar says that he’s seen cases where certain fleets, such as those that operate delivery vehicles, have an annual brake inspection.

This gives technicians the opportunity to examine and clean brake components, lubricate calliper pins and brake pad contact points to prevent rust from building up, which will ultimately cause parts to seize.

Sridhar stresses that when it comes to maintenance and service on hybrids equipped with regenerative braking systems, fleets should base maintenance schedules on actual wear, and not on a pre-set distance, as they could be simply wasting money and resources by doing so. [🔗](#)



Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X)

When fleets become power grid players.

TEXT GUILLAUME BROSSARD

Transportation electrification is a key driver of decarbonization, sparking new technologies that reshape how we think about energy and mobility. Among these, vehicle-to-everything (V2X) is generating significant interest.

This innovative approach turns electric vehicles into two-way energy hubs, capable of both drawing and delivering power.

In simple terms, V2X is based on bidirectional energy management. While standard charging is limited to recharging the EV's battery, V2X enables the energy stored in the battery to be sent elsewhere.

- **Vehicle-to-grid (V2G):** The vehicle sends electricity back to the grid.
- **Vehicle-to-building (V2B):** The vehicle powers a building or commercial site.
- **Vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V):** The vehicle supplies energy to another electric vehicle.
- **Vehicle-to-load (V2L):** The vehicle powers external devices, acting like a mobile outlet.

In short, these technologies turn electric vehicles into smart batteries on wheels, capable of redistributing their energy where it's most needed.

Shared benefits

Bidirectional charging opens new opportunities for commercial fleets. Your vehicles spend many hours parked. Why not make the most of that downtime? With V2G, batteries can generate revenue by returning electricity to the grid when conditions allow. V2B, V2V, and V2L technologies enable cost savings by moving energy, instead of consuming new power.

That means financial benefits for organizations and real progress in energy efficiency.

For energy providers, V2X is just as strategic. The large-scale electrification of transport is placing unprecedented pressure on power grids. V2X, especially V2G, acts as a flexibility tool. Electric vehicles can absorb surplus renewable energy when it's available, and support the grid during peak demand. It's an effective way to minimize the need for costly new generation or distribution infrastructure. V2X is emerging as the next-generation grid management tool.

Inspiring V2X projects

In California, the Fremont Unified School District has turned its electric school buses into true energy partners. When not transporting students, these vehicles store and return energy to help balance the grid.

Here in Canada, the City of Victoriaville launched the country's first urban resilience project to power municipal buildings during peak periods or outages. This project lays the groundwork for new technological applications in local fleets.

We are entering a new era in the evolution of electric fleets. It's no longer just about zero-emission driving. Fleets are now strategic energy assets, playing an active role in the broader energy transition. [🔗](#)



Vice President of Commercial at Polara Energy Inc., Guillaume has over 20 years of experience in commercialization and the development of major infrastructure projects across the energy, marine, and real estate sectors, as well as in commercial law.



Public Transit

Intercity Coach: Not Your Grandpa's Bus

For many years, intercity coaches were seen as the only option for travellers without a car.

Today, they are one of the go-to choices for short and medium regional trips. And the experience has come a long way.

TEXT **CLAUDE BOUCHER**

With urban sprawl continuing across the country, and social changes stretching rush hours on our roads, finding the best way to get from “Point A” to “Point B” has become a real challenge.

Orléans Express is one of the major players in Canada's intercity coach market. With a fleet of about 60 coaches, the company serves more than 35 destinations in Quebec and Ontario, and safely carries over 600,000 passengers every year. The intercity coach operator is owned by Keolis Group, based in Paris, with the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec holding a 30% stake. In addition to coach transportation, Keolis Canada operates the Keolis Grand River light rail system in Waterloo, Ontario, and the company has expanded across the country. In December, Keolis acquired Pacific Western, which operates in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario.

“We have therefore become a national operator from coast to coast,” says Alain Petit, Vice President of Operations for Quebec at Keolis Canada.

Intercity coach service varies significantly from one province to another. Quebec and British Columbia are heavily regulated, while Ontario and provinces farther west follow a free market model. Regulations in Quebec ensure better service for remote regions, which is not necessarily the case elsewhere. ➤

The H3-45 from Prevost

“The Commission des transports du Québec requires carriers to serve even remote regions for the benefit of passengers. In provinces where service is not regulated and carriers compete freely, they tend to focus on profitable routes, regardless of the needs of people in remote areas,” explains Petit.

An option worth a closer look

On the busiest corridors, travellers can choose one of several ways to reach their destination. Between Montreal and Toronto, air, rail, and personal vehicles all compete with coaches. Between Montreal and Quebec City, flying is a less popular option. And according to Martin Latulippe, Director of Operations at Orléans Express, the train is not the real competitor.

“For us, the complexity of the rail network means we do not view rail as a direct threat to our sustainability or our growth,” he says. The real competition comes from solo drivers.

“At Orléans, our marketing team has identified the solo driver as a customer who seeks absolute flexibility,” Latulippe adds. “No other option provides that level of freedom, besides their own car. That segment is very hard to persuade.”

How do you encourage this traveller to choose a coach? “The idea is not to convert them outright,” he says. “It is to get people to try the coach experience so it becomes one of the alternatives they consider, knowing the goal is not to convert everyone. If people start thinking of this mode as one of the options in some situations, and gradually leave the car behind, that will have an impact. There is also the sustainability factor.”

Comfort is a deciding factor

To win customers over, operators like Orléans Express rely on their partnership with Canada’s leading coach manufacturer,



Orléans Express serves Montreal airport.

Prevost. “We probably have one of the newest fleets in the entire industry,” says Latulippe. “That is an integral part of our strategic positioning. To be convincing with customers, they need to see the cleanliness and feel the comfort on board.”

Comfort is very much the order of the day. In 2023, Prevost launched a completely new generation of its flagship, the H3-45. “When we design a vehicle, we truly have three targets in mind, and we make sure to deliver added value to these three customers. There is the owner, the operator (such as Keolis), who needs tangible business benefits. Then the driver, who spends a great deal of time in the vehicle. It is therefore important that they feel comfortable in their



The digital dashboard of the Prevost H3-45.



The H3-45's premium seats.




board and a touchscreen interface that provides access to all vehicle functions on a single screen. Passengers enjoy genuine comfort. The H3-45 offers a brighter cabin with white ceilings, larger windows for better visibility, overhead bins that are easier to access, and premium seating.

"Our teams redesigned the seats, taking inspiration from automotive design," says Tremblay. "Our Cloud One seats now look like performance car seats. We also hired a team of ergonomists who conducted a full year of testing with people of different heights and weights to ensure the seats are very comfortable. We worked on both the look and the comfort of the seats, and we have now become the industry benchmark."

Prevost worked with partners to deliver onboard WiFi that meets the needs of today's travellers. Based in Sainte Claire, Quebec, the manufacturer holds a leading position in North America with a 47% market share. Beyond the comfort and modern design of the H3-45, Prevost can also count on the strength of the Volvo Group. Thanks to group synergies, including Volvo Trucks, Prevost can offer advanced vehicles supported by \$2.5 billion in research and development each year.

"That gives us access to the latest technologies," says Tremblay. "And our component supply chain is aligned with Volvo Trucks, which sells 300,000 trucks per year. That also gives us volume purchasing power."

Modern coaches with advanced technologies and surprising levels of comfort provide compelling reasons for travellers to choose this mode of transport. It also happens to be one of the most environmentally responsible ways to travel. 

work environment. And finally, there is the passenger, who is looking for an excellent experience in terms of comfort and visibility," says François Tremblay, President of Volvo Group Canada, and of Prevost, and Volvo Buses North America.

For operators, the benefits of the new H3-45 platform, and its short distance counterpart, the X3-45, are numerous, including fuel savings of up to 12%, easier maintenance, and a vehicle equipped with the latest technologies. For the driver, there is a completely redesigned cockpit with a digital dash-



Keolis' Orléans Express continually renews their fleet to stay at the cutting edge.

Chauffeur Inc. The Silent Cancer of Canadian Trucking

The "Chauffeur Inc." scheme is quietly eroding the core of Canada's trucking industry.

TEXT **CLAUDE BOUCHER**

For more than two decades, I have watched Canada's trucking sector move between periods of prosperity and hardship, with fluctuating fuel prices, driver shortages, economic crises, and waves of new technology. Yet few problems have done as much long-term harm as the rise of "Chauffeur Inc.", an illegal practice that pretends to promote independence while eroding fair competition, draining public funds, and endangering road safety.

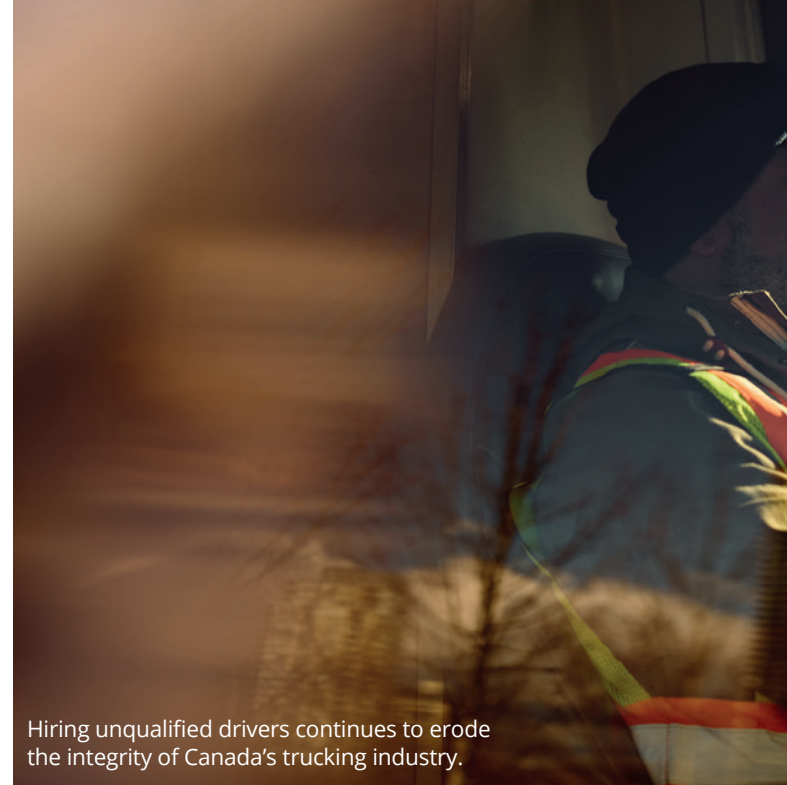
The scheme is straightforward. As both the Quebec Trucking Association (ACQ) and the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) have warned for years, some carriers pressure their drivers to set up a corporation so they can be classified as independent workers, even though they continue to work as regular employees. These drivers do not own their trucks. They operate under the carrier's authority, follow their schedules, and serve their clients. In essence, they are employees disguised as entrepreneurs.

This practice allows some companies to avoid payroll taxes and social contributions, cutting their operating costs by 20-30%. The outcome is profitable for them, but deeply harmful to the rest of the industry and to Canadian taxpayers.

Dangerous cheats in the rearview mirror

"The rules are being trampled on by a group of companies that are weakening our industry from within," said Marc Cadieux, President and CEO of the ACQ during a press conference in Ottawa on October 6th, alongside Bloc Québécois MP Xavier Barsalou-Duval.

The ACQ now calls these operators "dangerous cheats." They cut operating costs by up to 30% through deceptive recruitment practices, taking advantage of their lack of knowledge to persuade them to set up companies, providing



Hiring unqualified drivers continues to erode the integrity of Canada's trucking industry.

false or outdated documents, and relying on substandard training schools.

These fraudulent tactics create unfair competition, pushing legitimate carriers out of contracts, while governments lose billions in unpaid taxes and social contributions.

"Warnings are no longer
enough. It's time for results."

MARC CADIEUX PRESIDENT AND CEO,
QUEBEC TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

From unfair competition to safety crisis

What once worried tax experts and penalized law-abiding carriers has now drawn the attention of road safety authorities. Many

incorporated drivers are undertrained, overworked, and poorly supervised, which increases their involvement in serious road accidents. "Overworked by their employers and undertrained for the demands of operating a heavy vehicle, these drivers are involved in an alarming number of severe crashes," ACQ's Cadieux explains.

The ACQ is calling for coordinated action by Employment and Social Development Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, Transport Canada, and Public Safety to share data, conduct joint audits, and impose stronger penalties on offenders.

A breakdown of the rule of law

The tone is just as serious at the Canadian Trucking Alliance. In their 2025 pre-budget submission, the organization described a "breakdown of the rule of law" in some parts of the trucking industry. According to their data, as many as 65% of carriers in certain segments are violating federal labour laws. This in-



cludes wage theft, exploitation of foreign workers, denial of paid leave, and disregard for safety regulations.

“When companies can steal wages, ignore safety laws, and simply change names to dodge penalties, the message is clear: crime pays,” concludes CTA President Stephen Laskowski.

The alliance is also raising the alarm over “license mills”: private schools that offer low-cost truck-driver training without meeting the standards of the Mandatory Entry-Level Training program. The issue has evolved beyond financial misconduct and now represents a genuine public safety concern.

A political issue that can no longer be ignored

To address this growing threat, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators has started updating safety standards 7, 14, and 15 of the National Safety Code. Meanwhile, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transport is launching hearings this fall on the Chauffeur Inc. phenomenon. The objective is not just to curb tax fraud, but to restore public trust in an industry that is vital to Canada’s economy.

While legitimate carriers invest heavily in telematics, artificial intelligence, and decarbonization, others continue to operate in the shadows of the underground economy. Law-abiding businesses face worker shortages, rising equipment costs, and environmental regulations, while competitors enrich themselves by breaking the law.

Ending the Chauffeur Inc. scheme is about more than compliance. It is about professional integrity, public safety, and economic justice. In an industry known for weathering crises, staying true to those values is the only real path to long-term sustainability. [🔗](#)

Ten Key Demands

Supporting the Quebec Trucking Association, the Bloc Québécois has tabled ten concrete proposals in Ottawa to combat the Chauffeur Inc. scheme:

1. Launch an official investigation into the issue
2. Prohibit temporary foreign workers from working as self-employed drivers
3. Require ESDC and the CRA to audit trucking firms with no employees or trucks within 18 months of their creation
4. Hold contractors liable for unpaid taxes and social contributions
5. Establish a national database of industry violations accessible to roadside inspectors and law enforcement
6. Create a public registry of offending companies
7. Implement an employer certification program for hiring temporary foreign workers
8. Update the hours-of-service regulations for drivers
9. Make it mandatory for trucking companies without employees to issue T4A slips
10. Develop a Canada-wide registry of active truck driver insurance policies

A Warning from the South

In August, a tragedy in Florida shook the transportation sector across North America. A truck driver with no legal status, hired by a questionable company, caused a fatal crash while performing an illegal maneuver. For the Canadian Trucking Alliance, this must serve as a wake-up call. Canada is not immune to a similar disaster.

Since 2020, 83 Canadian trucking firms have been fined for violations of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, accumulating \$2.48 million in penalties, more than half of which remain unpaid.

Avoid Costly ELD Mistakes

Willful or accidental, non-compliance can have a serious impact on your business.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

Electronic logging devices (ELDs) are a fact of life for truck fleets here in Canada, as well as in the U.S.A. Although the technology has been in use now for a number of years, fleets are still experiencing challenges from time to time, as they strive to comply with ELD mandates.

“Drivers still sometimes forget to log into their device at the start of a shift,” says Stephen White, Account Executive, Global Strategic Accounts at Geotab. “Or, more times than not, they fill the log out at the end, which leads to unassigned driving time, and that’s been a big issue with ELD.”

Another issue, White explains, is that the ELD may not be properly connected or updated. “Something as simple as a loose connection can cause the device to malfunction,” he says, adding that sometimes a driver could even unplug the device on purpose.

Why would they do so? “Drivers might want to stay on the road longer than they should, forgetting that the odometer is still rolling, or they might not want anyone to know where they have been,” White says. “They may have taken an alternative route, or they may have stopped somewhere to visit a friend, and they don’t want home base to see where they’ve been.”

Forgetting to switch duty status (from ‘driving’ to ‘not driving’) is another common mistake. This could happen, for example, when waiting for an available loading dock, White says. On the back end, fleet managers could fail to properly manage unassigned driving events or they can fail to review and certify daily logs.

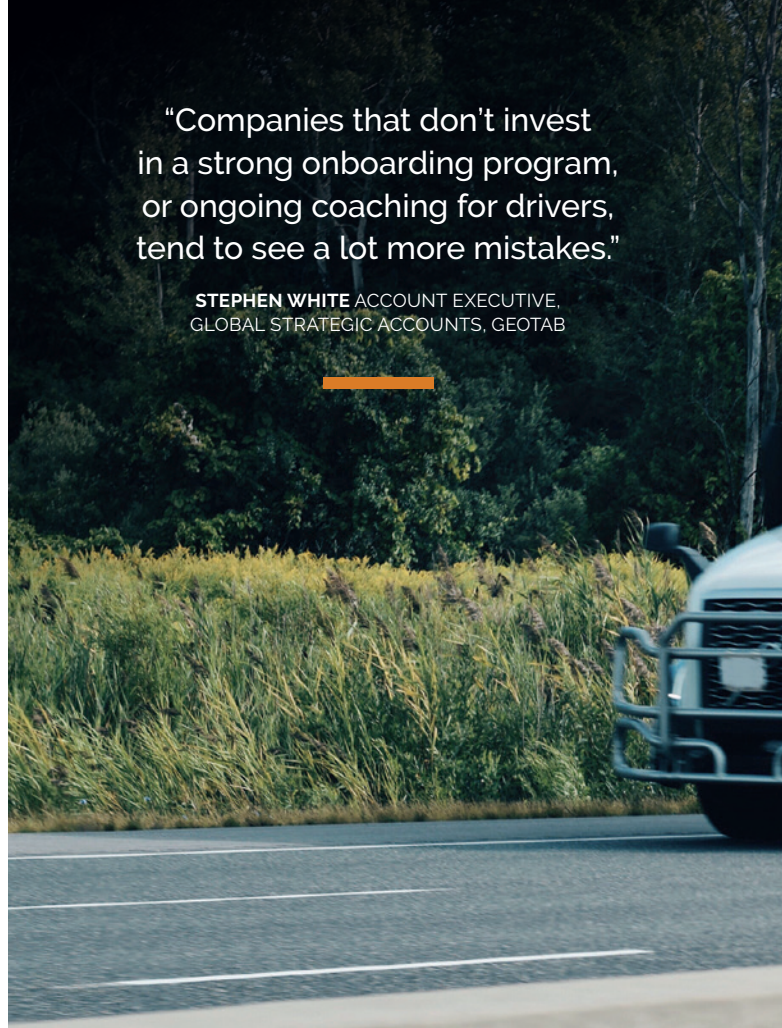
“All these errors add up, and if they’re not corrected, they can put a fleet out of compliance,” White explains.

The knowledge gap

Sometimes, ELD mistakes are caused by a lack of knowledge or understanding. “A lot of drivers aren’t tech-savvy, and turning on a cell phone could be a challenge for them,” White says. “I don’t say that facetiously, but there can be a generational gap or lack of technical knowledge.” White explains that mistakes often happen when a driver is rushed, tired or trying to juggle too

“Companies that don’t invest in a strong onboarding program, or ongoing coaching for drivers, tend to see a lot more mistakes.”

STEPHEN WHITE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE,
GLOBAL STRATEGIC ACCOUNTS, GEOTAB



many tasks. “And if they haven’t been properly trained on the ELD system, it’s easy for them to miss a step,” he says. “Companies that don’t invest in a strong onboarding program, or ongoing coaching for drivers, tend to see a lot more mistakes.”

A lack of communication can be another reason for ELD mistakes. If drivers don’t feel comfortable reporting issues with their device, problems can go unresolved, White says. “If they have a malfunctioning device, they might not know who to report the issue to, and they’ll just keep driving with it,” he adds.

Beyond a thorough understanding of how an ELD works, any new and inexperienced driver also needs to know the law, as it applies to them. “They need to know when they’re supposed to take a break, how long they can drive, how much time they have to spend in the sleeper duty, why they can’t spend two hours in the sleeper berth and go back to driving, and so on,” White says.

Both seasoned and new drivers will have to be made aware of misconceptions and myths. “Drivers want to maximize their drive time and make the most money they can, so they will look for those ‘grey’ areas,” White adds. “Those grey areas don’t really exist, but drivers will still try to find them.”

Penalties and consequences

White says that although penalties for noncompliance vary,



depending on the jurisdiction, they can be significant. “If a driver is pulled over and their logs aren’t compliant, they can be placed out of service on the spot,” he says. “If they’re dealing with an officer who is by-the-book, they won’t even let them drive the truck off the highway. They’re going to make the driver call a tow truck, and that’s going to add a significant cost to the downtime.” In addition, fines can add up over time, and repeated violations will impact the fleet’s safety score. “Their CSA score is vital, not only for insurance costs, but a lot of shippers look at CSA scores and choose the company with the best scores, even if there’s a lower-priced alternative,” White says. “So your reputation could be severely damaged.”

Canada vs. U.S.A.

Although ELD mistakes can happen anywhere, White says that cross-border trips tend to introduce added complexities. “Both Canada and the U.S. require ELDs, but their hours of service rules aren’t identical,” he adds. “Canada allows for split sleeper berth provisions, and that’s different in the U.S.” If your fleet travels into the U.S., then your drivers need to understand the laws on both sides of the border. If they don’t, they may unintentionally be out of compliance. “And in Mexico, where ELD regulations are still in the development stage, fleets face addi-

tional challenges with inconsistent enforcement,” White adds.

In order to make crossing the border as simple as possible, Geotab’s ELD solution, which is certified for both Canada and the U.S.A., takes all the guesswork out of the equation. All a driver has to do when crossing the border is press a button that will switch the ELD to either Canadian or American rules, assuring that they remain in compliance.

Avoiding mistakes

While there are no foolproof ways of avoiding all ELD mistakes, White says that combining reliable technology with strong processes and ongoing training gives fleets the best shot at success.

“A good ELD solution will guide drivers with prompts that automate the process as much as possible,” he says. “Some systems can even notify fleet managers when logs are incomplete or when a malfunction occurs, so they can be corrected quickly.”

Drivers also need to understand the importance of compliance. “When they understand that accurate logs protect their safety and reduce their stress, they’re much more engaged,” White adds. ELD regulations are here to stay, and although laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, fleets that invest in the right equipment and the right training have a good chance of staying compliant, reducing downtime and eliminating costly fines. ○

The Most Precious Cargo

Engineered to carry passengers safely to their destinations, bus tires need to be chosen carefully.

TEXT JACK KAZMIERSKI

When is a bus tire, not just a bus tire? When it's engineered to address the specific needs of a range of applications, from municipal bus fleets, to school buses, to coach buses that travel long-distances between cities. Each type of fleet has its own needs, and fleet managers need to make sure they're investing in the right type of tires for their particular bus fleet needs.

"At Michelin, we engineer tires to help meet the specific needs of the vehicles and environments they serve," says Daniel Neal, Bus Product Category Manager for Michelin North America Inc. "For buses (city, school or long-distance) the design should reflect how the vehicle operates and where it travels."

Alan Eagleson, TBR Segment Manager at Sailun Tire Americas explains the different needs each type of bus fleet should prioritize. "For city buses, tires tend to be lower profile to make the step height as low as possible," he says. "City buses also tend to come in contact with curbs during operation, which is why some city bus tires are designed with sidewall protector ribs to resist this curb damage. For example, the Sailun S638 has three sidewall protector ribs with 5/32 of extra rubber to help protect the sidewall from curb abrasion."

On the other hand, Eagleson explains, "coach buses need tires with a higher speed rating and load carrying capacity. Low rolling resistance tires are also beneficial in highway coach buses. In both city buses and coach buses, a quiet smooth ride is necessary. Generally, a rib pattern is required to keep the ride smooth and quiet." As far as school buses are concerned, Eagleson says

"By focusing on application-specific needs and long-term value, fleet managers can optimize performance and reduce operational costs."

DANIEL NEAL BUS PRODUCT CATEGORY MANAGER,
MICHELIN NORTH AMERICA

that they're often used for more rural routes with gravel roads, and possibly more severe winter conditions, "which is why a more aggressive traction tire is required for the drive position."

Michelin's Neal agrees, adding the following details: "City

buses carry heavy passenger loads, frequently start and stop, and make tight turns while hugging curbs for easy boarding. These conditions need tires with highly scrub-resistant tread compounds and patterns that are optimized to handle constant braking and turning, robust sidewalls that are reinforced to withstand repeated curb contact, wear

indicators built into the sidewall to help fleets monitor casing life and schedule rotations."

Coach buses that operate mostly on highways make fewer stops and turns, Neal adds. "These buses prioritize fuel efficiency and long tread life over sidewall durability," he says, "as well as a smooth ride quality and low rolling resistance for long-haul comfort and economy."

School buses, on the other hand, are a bit of a mixed bag, according to Neal. "School buses vary depending on





location and route,” he adds. “Urban school districts may use city bus tires, while rural school buses may benefit from coach tires.”

Neal notes that buses may use steer or drive axle-specific tires, especially in regions with winter traction needs. “However,” he adds, “many bus fleets choose to use one type of all-position tire at all wheel positions for simplicity and interchangeability.”

Electric buses

One of the trends we’re seeing in recent years is the growth in the number of electric buses coming to market. Due to their unique needs, these buses present tire manufacturers with new challenges. “Electric buses tend to be heavier, so a higher load carrying capacity may be required,” explains Sailun Tire’s Eagleson. “This is not generally an issue, since tires are over-engineered for their applications. Most tires are built to carry higher loads than any application they are put into. There are some buses that are built/imported from other global regions. These buses tend to have less common tire sizes compared to ‘standard’ North American buses.”

Michelin’s Neal explains that the needs of bus fleets are always evolving, especially now with the advent of electric buses. “These vehicles introduce new challenges, such as heavier loads from the battery systems, and range sensitivity,” he says.

“Along with these new demands, tire durability and casing robustness remain essential to minimize downtime and reduce the total cost of fleet operations.”

Neal says that retreading can help bus fleets reduce tire costs, extend casing life, and operate more sustainably—ultimately lowering the total cost of ownership, without compromising reliability or performance.

Key considerations


According to Sailun Tire’s Eagleson, fleet managers should keep the following key considerations in mind when shopping for new bus tires. First, think about the tire type and application. “Different buses require tires designed for specific conditions—frequent stops, longer highway travel, or mixed service,” he says, adding that the load rating is very important. “Ensure that the tires are rated for the gross vehicle weight of the bus.”

Tread design is another key consideration, Eagleson explains. “Buses used for urban or city routes prefer tires with deep, durable tread patterns for frequent stopping and starting, while buses used for highway routes need low rolling resistance treads to improve fuel efficiency. And remember that all-weather or winter-rated tires may be needed in colder regions.”

Eagleson notes the retreadability, fuel efficiency, warranty terms, and the reliability of the tire brand (and their after-sales support) also play a key role in the decision making process.

Michelin’s Neal adds the following key points:

- Prioritize regular tire maintenance
 - Regularly monitor and maintain proper inflation pressure.
 - Use wear indicators (both tread and sidewall) to guide rotations and replacements.
- Consider the total cost of ownership:
 - Premium tires may cost more upfront but offer better mileage, fewer replacements, and superior casing retreadability.
 - Retreading, allowed on all axles except steer, can help bus fleets reduce tire costs, extend casing life, and operate more sustainably—ultimately lowering the total cost of ownership without compromising reliability or performance.
- Even if a fleet doesn’t retread, premium casings have higher resale value.

Neal concludes with a word of advice for fleet professionals: “By focusing on application-specific needs and long-term value, fleet managers can optimize performance and reduce operational costs.” 

Using Renewable Compressed Natural Gas in Waste Collection

The collection of waste, recyclable materials, and compostable matter is increasingly being carried out using trucks powered by compressed natural gas. In some cases, the source of this gas is rather surprising.

TEXT MICHEL BEAUNOYER

Biomethanization allows for the production of gas from biological waste, which, once purified, can be used in the same way as compressed natural gas in vehicle engines. This is known as R-CNG, or renewable compressed natural gas. Numerous facilities in Canada transform organic waste from municipal collections, agricultural or forestry residue, or gases emitted by landfill sites to produce this gas, which is then injected into the distribution network.

The waste management company Waste Management is among several firms developing similar projects in Canada.

In some municipalities, waste collection trucks proudly display the message: “What if your waste fuelled this truck?” This notice reminds local residents about the importance of responsible waste management practices.



interested, in order to meet their decarbonization targets,” explains Elaine Arsenault, Senior Advisor, Media and Public Affairs at Énergir. We inquired about the current market de-

“A growing number of transport fleets and contractors are interested, in order to meet their decarbonization targets.”

ELAINE ARSENAULT SENIOR ADVISOR, MEDIA AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, ÉNERGIR

It’s worth noting that natural gas molecules, whether from fossil fuels or renewable sources, are identical and impossible to distinguish.

However, the key difference lies in production costs, which explains the substantial price variation, since the renewable version costs nearly twice as much. Why would a company or a municipality pay significantly more for exactly the same product distributed through the same pipelines?

An under-utilized fuel

“A growing number of transport fleets and contractors are

mand for this type of gas, to which she replied: “The demand for R-CNG in the transportation sector is still in its early stages. Currently, the transportation sector represents less than 1% of all distributed volumes. We have plenty of room to grow, we offer this renewable alternative to carriers who want it, and we see no constraints to this growth. Our target for 2030 is to ensure that R-CNG accounts for at least 10% of our total customer supply volume.”

Choosing renewable natural gas is therefore more of an environmental commitment than an economic one. Even factoring in the higher price paid to support renewable pro-



A waste collection truck, powered in part by biogas produced from the very same waste, is a striking example of a circular economy.

duction, the natural gas alternative remains an interesting choice. According to data shared by Énergir in March, at \$1.52 per litre for diesel, an equivalent litre of compressed natural gas costs \$0.76, while the renewable version would be \$1.47 at the pump.

At its core, the advantage of the natural gas option is that it emits 23% less greenhouse gases during combustion than diesel. In addition, operators note that the engine is, on average, 10 decibels quieter than the diesel version.

A product to be valued

Nicolas Perrino, Director of Public Affairs at EBI Environnement explains that his company offers integrated waste management to their clients, whether they are municipalities or private companies. In fact, this company, with numerous branches, also contributes to the supply of the renewable natural gas network by recovering biogas emanating from the landfill sites it manages.

“Fleet operators are adopting compressed natural gas largely due to cost considerations,” explains Perrino. “We’re also seeing interest in renewable gas among clients committed to carbon footprint reduction.” Adopting this fuel alternative

also helps municipalities and companies enhance their community standing and public perception.

As part of the public hearings related to Bill 81 of the Ministry of Environment, Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, EBI Énergie submitted a brief to the Quebec National Assembly last January, suggesting an inclusive and coherent approach that combines government environmental ambitions with economic and logistical realities. This document highlights that Quebec possesses abundant organic byproducts from agricultural, forestry, and dairy operations. Converting decomposition gases into energy would prevent these emissions from directly entering the atmosphere, creating an exemplary model of circular economic principles.

The gas of carbon negativity

In this document, Richard Prévost, Representative and Trainer at EBI Énergie says that, “the real decarbonization index must consider the complete life cycle of fuel (well-to-wheel), rather than being restricted to the exhaust.” His explanation challenges conventional zero-emission definitions, since renewable compressed natural gas can actually achieve carbon-negative ➔



performance, depending on the organic feedstock used in its production. Fleet managers should take note of this approach for its significant potential to reduce operational carbon footprints. With its exceptional greenhouse gas reduction profile, renewable natural gas offers a compelling solution for meeting the upcoming 2027 EPA standards.

An accessible solution

EBI Environnement is a good customer of Groupe Labrie, which transforms and adapts trucks for waste and recyclable materials collection. "Collection trucks running on compressed natural gas are not new," says Louis-Charles Lefebvre, Groupe Labrie's Regional Sales Manager. "Depending on the chosen configuration, the version of a waste collection truck using compressed natural gas adds several tens of thousands of dollars to the bill. The company must also ensure access to refuelling facilities. But I insist that the return on investment is real: Natural gas provides measurable fuel cost reductions, a factor of paramount importance to operations managers." In fact, natural gas-powered trucks have something in common with EVs: Operators must monitor range capabilities and schedule refuelling time accordingly. Similar to EVs, both rapid and overnight refuelling options exist, with the slower option typically utilized when trucks return "home" for the

"Fleet operators are adopting compressed natural gas largely due to cost considerations."

NICOLAS PERRINO DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS,
EBI ENVIRONNEMENT

night. "When it comes to operational range, I can guarantee that all of Groupe Labrie offerings feature high-capacity systems designed for a minimum of twelve consecutive hours of operation without interruption," adds Lefebvre.

Fossil fuel costs, along with the availability or absence of purchase incentives, directly influence waste collection vehicle sales figures. Similar to electric vehicle trends, adoption rates form a distinct pattern across North America, with markets in both eastern and western regions demonstrating up to an 80% preference for this environmentally-advantageous technology. [O](#)

Manufacturer Groupe Labrie offers a multitude of solutions for trucks powered by compressed natural gas, specifically designed for waste collection. These purpose-built units can be mounted on the chassis from any major manufacturer, according to customer specifications. The company markets these specialized vehicles across North America under their Labrie, Wittke, and Leach product lines. A graduate of Kedge Business School in Marseilles, France, Dominique currently serves as Marketing Director at Kimoby.



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