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FACT SHEETS

Propane-Powered Fleets

Today propane is the market leader in alternative fuels for the automotive sector and powers more than 4 million vehicles in more than 38 countries. The reason is clear. Propane provides fleet managers with a cost-effective, clean, safe and reliable alternative fuel.

A Healthy Environment

- The U.S. Department of Energy projects that propane will be the leading alternative vehicle fuel in the 21st century. Local government and private sector fleets will soon be required to purchase alternative-fueled cars and trucks in an effort to reduce harmful emissions from fossil fuels - the leading source of air pollution in the United States.
- Tests conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency show that propane vehicles can produce 30 percent to 90 percent less carbon monoxide and about 50 percent fewer toxics and other smog-producing emissions than gasoline engines.
- Propane is listed as an approved alternative fuel in the Energy Policy Act of 1992.
- The Orange County, California Transit Authority's mass transit buses currently have engines modified to run on propane. Recent tailpipe emissions tests comparing compressed natural gas (CNG) with propane showed that propane is 87 percent lower in total hydrocarbons, 50 percent lower in nitrogen oxides and 40 percent lower in particulate matter.

Propane Performance

- Of all the alternative fuels available, propane offers the best mix of vehicle driving range, durability and performance.
- Many fleets have reported 2 to 3 years longer service life and extended intervals between required maintenance. Spark plugs from a propane vehicle last from 80,000 to 100,000 miles and propane engines can last 2 to 3 times longer than gasoline or diesel engines.
- Propane vehicles have the longest driving range of all clean-burning fuels.

The Bottom Line

- Propane costs in fleets typically range from 5 percent to 30 percent less than those of gasoline.
- The smaller size of propane tanks relative to CNG tanks results in valuable added capacity and lighter weight loads, which translate directly to savings for fleet managers.

Easy Access

- The propane refueling infrastructure consists of more than 10,000 sites available across the country, and the cost of a propane refueling facility is less than that for gasoline refueling facilities. Propane refueling systems also have a much shorter filling time than do natural gas systems.
- Qualified conversion contractors can convert many gasoline-powered vehicles to propane, and part of the conversion cost may be tax deductible. Automakers also continue to manufacture several factory-equipped propane vehicles, such as the Ford F-series Bi-fuel propane pickup truck and the Econoline/Club Wagon propane vehicle.