

STATE FLEET SERVICES SURVEY SUMMARY

This memorandum summarizes information reported by 48 of 56 agencies in a survey regarding State Fleet Services. The survey responses are reported anonymously.

STATE FLEET SERVICES EXPENDITURES REPORTED FOR SELECTED BIENNIUMS

The following schedule is a summary of the total general fund, special funds, and federal funds expenditures reported by the agencies responding to the survey for the 2013-15 and 2015-17 bienniums and total budgeted expenditures for the 2017-19 biennium.

Biennium	General Fund	Special Funds	Federal Funds	Biennium Total
2013-15	\$12,303,386	\$6,618,893	\$3,266,737	\$22,189,016
2015-17	11,175,224	6,248,641	2,737,675	20,161,540
2017-19 (Projected)	12,364,401	6,522,044	3,224,942	22,111,387
Total	\$35,843,011	\$19,389,578	\$9,229,354	\$64,461,943

SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARIES

Vehicle Usage

Of the agencies reporting, 11 use vehicles on an as-needed basis and 37 use both assigned vehicles and vehicles on an as-needed basis.

State Fleet Services Billing

Most agencies reported billing as being easy to understand and received on a timely basis. The online system makes it easy to get more information on a particular vehicle. A few agencies reported some delays in the billing system, particularly at the end of the biennium. Agency suggestions to improve the billing process include:

- Incorporate available technology to record vehicle data, such as mileage, hours, user, and destinations.
- Include information in the billing such as destination, miles traveled, and cost per trip.

Efficiency of State Fleet Services

The majority of the comments were positive regarding the efficiency of State Fleet Services and the maintenance of vehicles, but agency concerns include:

- Department of Transportation fueling stations are difficult to find.
- State Fleet Services vehicle locations are not the most convenient for staff located in other cities, such as Fargo.
- The inability to leave a state fleet vehicle in the designated motor pool lot after checking out a fleet vehicle can be an inconvenience.
- Early morning and late night vehicle pickup and dropoff can be an issue because of hours of operation.
- Some vehicle maintenance--eg. bad windshield wipers--is not addressed prior to the vehicle being assigned.
- Vehicle reservation and key pickup is inconvenient.
- Lack of notice regarding the timing of replacement of assigned vehicles is a concern.
- The time to obtain a requested vehicle, at times, can be excessive.
- Trade-in of assigned vehicles can be inefficient due to the location in relation to the user. The condition of the replacement vehicle has not been favorable leading to additional expenses for the agency.
- The Dickinson District Office requires users to obtain the necessary bids to repair an assigned vehicle, which is a different policy from all other areas of the state.
- The replacement cycle of tires for vehicles that operate in rough terrain is too long.

Agency suggestions to improve the efficiency of State Fleet Services include:

- Provide a separate one-page flyer showing the state fleet fueling locations in addition to the manual provided with the vehicle.
- Provide a mobile application with geographic information system features to state fleet fueling stations.

- Authorize users to take a state fleet vehicle home when it is necessary to leave early in the morning or return late at night.
- Provide an online reservation system that does not require phone verification. It would allow users to view the types of vehicles available, which location it is available, and the dates the vehicle is available.
- Improve user access by allowing users to apply for motor pool reservation portal access electronically, allow agencies or individuals to submit a copy of users' driver's license electronically to keep access up to date.
- Notify agencies when assigned vehicles are to be replaced and consider agency input for the replacement vehicle.
- Authorize agencies, which have assigned vehicles that are not in close proximity to State Fleet Services sites or a dealership, to conduct preventative maintenance at an alternative vendor.

State Fleet Services Rates

The majority of the comments were positive regarding the rates of State Fleet Services, but agency concerns include:

- Specialty vehicle rates are exorbitant and the agency is reluctant to put miles on those vehicles as a result.
- Monthly depreciation is a fixed amount regardless of the actual use of the vehicle.
- Agencies assigned vehicles with high mileage are charged the same fee schedule for depreciation and per mile costs as agencies receiving new vehicles.
- It is unclear how State Fleet Services monitors repair costs for damaged vehicles, how it credits restitution provided through the court system, and how the cost of salaries of State Fleet Services employees is being applied to various vehicle groups.
- Rates fluctuate every 3 months making it difficult to budget through the biennium.

Agency suggestions to improve the rates of State Fleet Services include:

- Charge depreciation on a prorated basis.
- Authorize agencies to purchase specialty vehicles outside of the State Fleet Services program to reduce costs.

Types of Vehicles Provided by State Fleet Services

The majority of state agencies believe State Fleet Services provides appropriate types of vehicles, but agency concerns include:

- There are not enough four wheel drive vehicles available for winter travel.
- The number of long bed pickup trucks available is not sufficient.
- The length of time to obtain appropriate specialty vehicles may take several years.
- State Fleet Services does not consider agency costs for cleaning and setting up assigned vehicles when providing vehicles.
- State Fleet Services does not purchase appropriate trucks to accommodate special equipment and as result, modifications to the vehicles may be required to accommodate the specialty equipment. This results in additional cost to the agency.
- The configuration of 15 passenger vans is not flexible and the availability of 15 passenger vans is limited.
- Large SUVs have been dirty when needed to transport clients and the availability is limited.

Agency suggestions to improve the types of State Fleet Services vehicles offered include:

- Provide vehicles with cabin filters for those that travel on gravel and dirt roads.
- Provide 15 passenger vans with removable seats.
- Make available small-enclosed trailers to haul additional equipment.

Assigned Vehicle Replacement Schedule

The majority of state agencies believe State Fleet Services replacement schedule for vehicles is appropriate, but agency concerns include:

- Replacement vehicles assigned have high mileage. As a result, the vehicle must again be replaced within a shorter timeframe. Additional agency costs are incurred to remove and install specialty equipment, which State Fleet Services should consider.
- Vehicles are sometimes assigned with over 100,000 miles which may affect the safety of the user.
- Requirement for the new 4-year, 85,000 mile plan for certain vehicles rather than the previous 3-year, 85,000 mile plan for the same group.
- Newer assigned vehicles may be replaced with dirty, older vehicles with mechanical issues, in order to have miles put on the older vehicle.

Agency Preference to Use Services Other Than State Fleet Services

The majority of state agencies prefer to use State Fleet Services, but agency concerns include:

- Employee safety is a concern when returning vehicles after hours.
- The restrictive policies combined with the state self-insurance system puts the employee at considerable and unreasonable personal and economic risk. Some employees will refuse to use state fleet vehicles due to the self-insurance and restrictive use policies, for which minor perceived deviation from policy results in the employee being at risk for no insurance coverage, resulting in substantial monetary harm.
- Picking up and returning vehicles outside of business hours is inconvenient.
- Learning the controls, swapping cars, the inability to take the vehicle home overnight, and the inability to transport children are inconvenient.
- Inability to use the vehicle to travel to a store or restaurant while traveling for multiple day meetings or conferences is inconvenient.
- Because of the requirement to use State Fleet Services, no alternative options are considered.

Agency suggestions to improve State Fleet Services include:

- Allow agencies that use specialty vehicles to purchase and maintain the specialty vehicle themselves to meet the agency's needs, and control costs, the replacement schedule, and equipment utilized, especially on specialty vehicles that have low usage.
- Allow self-regulation for agencies with a large fleet of vehicles.
- When purchasing new vehicles for an agency, allow the agency to request specific factory options over and above the state fleet standards, with those additional costs paid by the requesting agency, specifically for specialty vehicles.
- Allow more flexibility in vehicle types, options, and flexibility within the replacement schedule to meet the agency needs and costs.
- Clearly detail all costs within a vehicle group and identify how other agencies use of vehicles within that group impact the groups cost.
- Offer more unassigned vehicles with larger luggage capacity.

Other Agency Suggestions for State Fleet Services

- Expand the "Department ID" field on the website to five to seven digits compared to the current four digits that are allowed and allow both characters and numbers.
- Allow the ability to leave a permanently assigned vehicle with State Fleet Services when due for an oil change rather than taking the vehicles to a dealership.
- Print the driver identification number on the paperwork that is picked up with the keys to make it easily accessible to the driver.
- Utilize numbered parking spots for fleet vehicles to make it easier to find vehicles.
- Provide that state fleet staff fuel and clean vehicles upon return rather than the user.
- Provide instruction card on the use of vehicle options such as car starters and other options and equipment.