

**Fleet Management Software is not just for Large Fleets:** Of the 60+ thousand municipal fleets (cities, counties, states, schools, police, transit, fire districts) in the U.S., less than half have automated fleet management systems. Regardless of your fleet size and available funding, you can have an automated system. But before I get into what options are available, you need to ask yourself “Do I need a fleet software program” and “Do I have the time needed to input the information into a computer in order to track equipment and costs” and your answer may be NO! Whether you agree with me or not, anyone who owns a fleet management software program must admit two things 1) it takes time to input information into your system, and 2) if information is not put in correctly or not kept up with, it is of no use. For larger fleets of approximately 200 vehicles or more with an equal number of support equipment, the use of a fleet management software program can provide valuable information in relationship to equipment costs per mile, capital costs, parts costs, fuel usage and other equipment-related data. Data entry takes time and your staff’s time should be spent doing the things that are important to the management of your fleet. So you need to determine what information should be gathered. I know in our operation with 550 motorized vehicles and 300 off-road and support vehicles, I have to decide what work each staff member has time to do. Some things we track very closely and other items I do not track. So by knowing what is important, we can find at fleet maintenance software programs that will do what we need at a low, or no, cost to a use.

Before you get all excited about finding one of these low cost programs, another question to ask yourself is, “Why do I want to do this?” If the answer is because you need to have an idea as to what your fleet costs are or how many technicians you need, your answer may be easier answered by asking the larger fleets in your area that operate a fleet in similar road and climactic conditions as to what their costs are for specific classes of equipment and use their numbers. You would more than

likely be able to come within 95% of what your actual costs are. However, if you need to know your fleet operational cost numbers, here are a couple of suggestions to move you toward automating your fleet information.

There are hundreds of fleet management software companies to choose from (just look on the Internet). My suggestions below are recommended for smaller fleets not requiring a system that is expected to handle numerous users at one time. I found one free fleet software company, Dossier 32 that offered a free download of their more sophisticated program for fleets with less than five vehicles. While most fleets have more than five vehicles, this is a good place to start if you want to find out what a fleet management system looks like and how it might be able to help.

Here are some fleet maintenance software program options for less than \$100 – some limit fleet size, others do not.

- 1) Car Care, \$99.95
- 2) Dossier 32, free for fleets with less than five vehicles
- 3) Capterrals, website, list numerous programs available. Some more than \$100, but this website may be worth your time.
- 4) Plant Maintenance Resource Center, website, lists numerous free and low cost programs written for fleets
- 5) Software Geek, Fleet Management System Freeware, website, lists numerous programs at low costs

- 6) Sharewareconnection, Fleetmanager, website, lists some free and low cost fleet management software
- 7) File Guru, website, lists low cost fleet software programs

While there are more listings of low cost fleet software programs on the Internet, I am sure the list above will keep you busy for days and I am sure will have something you are looking for.

Before you purchase any software system, make sure you have a computer system large enough to operate the program you select and a memory large enough for the information you will be storing.

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