

Minimising commercial vehicle downtime

Keep your business moving



Keeping your vehicle's downtime to a minimum can make all the difference to your company's profitability and productivity – so we've pulled together some helpful tips to reduce your fleet's time off the road.

Having a vehicle unexpectedly off the road can cost a business over £700 a day. And with unplanned vehicle off-road time (VOR) averaging around five to six days per year, it's easy to see how it could end up costing your business thousands of pounds in lost revenue.

Prevention is the key to minimising downtime and this guide focuses on the key areas that'll help keep your business moving and running to budget.

Start with your vehicle supplier

There's a surprising amount your leasing company can do to help you keep downtime to a minimum. Helping you choose the right commercial vehicle and making sure it's correctly specified for your business will make a huge difference to unplanned VOR. A vehicle that isn't up to the job in terms of size, payload, equipment or power will be put under unnecessary strain, leading to more breakdowns. Take a look at our guide to choosing the right commercial vehicle for more details but you can always call us if you have any questions.

Speak to your team

Before choosing your vehicle and specification, it's a good idea to bring together any relevant parties, including your drivers, and listen to their needs. They'll often be able to help you identify and pre-empt potential downtime issues.

Consider your spare tyre policy

Lots of companies struggle to balance the trade-off between load capacity, driver safety and minimising downtime, but we'd recommend carrying a spare as it means the right tyre is available if needed. This is definitely something to talk to your leasing company about when negotiating your contract and vehicle specifications – you can also get their roadside assistance network to carry out any wheel changes to keep your drivers safe and on the move. It's also worth proactively checking your tyres on a regular basis – that way, you can minimise vehicle downtime by ordering any new tyres in advance.



Be prepared with stand-by vehicles

When you consider the amount of downtime your vehicles are likely to have, it can be really difficult to know how many to have in your fleet – a lean fleet keeps overheads low but can cause issues when vehicles are unexpectedly taken off the road. Depending on your business, you might find that a mix of permanent, leased and back-up rental vehicles might work for you.

We offer all our customers flexible, medium-term hire packages, which can include maintenance, livery and common vehicle modifications, to help bridge the gap between contract hire and daily rental. And we make sure we have these vehicles available at various hubs across the country to give you immediate cover as and when you need it.

Stay on top of your service and repair networks. Keeping to service schedules and booking workshop visits well in advance can help keep your VOR time down, as it should mean the workshop has the necessary parts in stock. However, once a vehicle has gone into the service or repair centre, the duration of the downtime is largely out of your hands. It's why a lot of businesses are turning to while-you-wait servicing and maintenance-inclusive contracts.

This is where our expert team can really help – chasing workshops for updates, moving vehicles to other service centres if necessary to speed things up, and minimising the amount of time your drivers and vehicles are off the road. Unlike other leasing providers, we can also work with your current service network to help you manage your downtime costs.

Engage with your drivers

Drivers can have the biggest impact on downtime levels. How they drive and how they use specialist equipment directly affects wear and tear levels, incident rates and unscheduled repairs to any fittings. Although telematic systems and 'traffic light'-style in-cab devices can help encourage better driving behaviour, they only go so far.

We recommend giving your drivers time to familiarise themselves with your new vehicles and any new features. To help with this, we'll email you and your drivers a video guide of the new vehicle approximately two weeks before it's due to be delivered. If your vehicle is being converted, one of our preferred suppliers will include a QR code in the vehicle itself. This links to a virtual tour of its controls, equipment and safety features – great for subsequent drivers or for any queries they have while out on a job.



Choose a provider who understands your business

Ultimately, the more a leasing provider understands your business and the pressures on your fleet, the more effectively they will be able to use their capabilities – proactively and reactively – to reduce and even eliminate your vehicle's downtime.

How we can help

Alphabet is an experienced provider of commercial vehicles to both the private and public sectors. Our cost-effective service is delivered by a team of specialists who know the market.

Alphabet – dedicated to meeting your expectations without compromise.

Call us on **0370 50 50 100**

Email us at **alphabet@alphabet.co.uk**

or visit **www.alphabet.co.uk**

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