

Vehicle and Fleet Management

Common Terms in Vehicle and Fleet Management

Four Wheel Drive (4WD) vehicle	Specific type of vehicle able to transfer traction from the engine to the front and rear axis, enabling grip to all four wheels. Also referred as “all terrain” vehicles.
Car	A four wheel motorised vehicle commonly used for transport of people.
Discharge of Liability	A printed form signed by passengers not working for the organisation operating the vehicle, discharging the agency of any legal claims in case of accident.
Driver	The person operating a vehicle. He/she must hold a valid driving license specific to the type of vehicle.
Fleet	A set of assets with similar characteristics that are jointly managed. A vehicle fleet is a group of managed vehicles used to achieve a particular operational purpose.
Fuel	Combustible material - normally in liquid form - that when burnt releases the energy required to power the mechanical engine in a vehicle. Petrol and Diesel are the most common fuels used for road motorised vehicles. Jet-A1 is the most common fuel used for air vehicles.
Fuel voucher	A printed form used to access fuel under certain agreement with a particular fuel station. The holder of the fuel voucher will receive a specific amount of fuel on behalf of the organisation in exchange of the voucher. This is a common practice to avoid the management of cash among drivers and to ease the refilling process.
Hard-top vehicle	A vehicle with rigid roof. As opposed to pick-up vehicles, “hard top” is a common term for all 4WD vehicles, except for pickup vehicles.
Light vehicle	A commercial carrier vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of no more than 3.5 metric tons (EU definition); sometimes referred to as light commercial vehicle (LCV),
Mileage	The distance (miles or kilometres) covered by a vehicle for a certain journey. It also refers to the total distance covered by a vehicle since its first use.
Odometer	Counter in the vehicle dashboard to measure distances. Motor vehicles are equipped with at least one odometer to count the mileage since its first use. Additional odometers are available in some vehicles or external devices (such as GPS) to measure trip distance. As opposed to the main vehicle odometer, additional odometers can be paused or reset to 0.
Pickup Vehicle	A light vehicle with an enclosed cabin and an open cargo area, sometimes covered with a soft roof. Generally, pickup vehicles are 4WD.

Sedan	A passenger vehicle with separate compartment for passenger and small cargo (trunk). The trunk compartment is normally positioned in the back of the vehicle. They are also commonly referred as “city-cars”.
Fleet Standardisation	The process of reducing the degree of diversity in the managed fleet by homogenising vehicle make, model, major components and/or equipment.
Truck	A motorised vehicle specifically designed for transport of goods and with a gross weight that exceeds 3.5 metric tons. Trucks often require a specific driving license for its operation.
Van	A type of road vehicle used for transporting goods or people in one single compartment.
Vehicle	Any asset operated by a person (driver) with the purpose of transporting goods or people between two different locations. Assets can be motorised or animal-drawn and have from two to more than four wheels.
Vehicle Logbook	A records book for a unique vehicle. A logbook is always kept in the vehicle glove box compartment under the responsibility of the driver assigned to the vehicle. Normally they have two different parts: one to register all repairs and maintenance activities and a second to register mileage and fuel consumption.

Scope and Definition

Humanitarian action frequently requires vehicle-based mobility work and often demands the management of a fleet of vehicles. Vehicle fleet management refers to the knowledge and practices of managing a set of vehicles to achieve a particular operational purpose. Fleet management allows agencies to minimise risks, reduce costs and improve efficiency related to transportation of goods and people. In addition, it ensures compliance with local legislation and duty of care.

Depending on the organisation, fleet management may include commercial motor vehicles such as cars, vans, trucks, and motorbikes but also air or water transport means such as planes, helicopters, boats, and more. Other sets of assets such as generators, shipping containers, computers or even mobile phones are sometimes also treated as a fleet. The common ground for these sets of assets to be considered as a fleet, includes characteristics such as:

- Managing a considerable number of similar assets.
- Being the set of assets essential for the organisation goals achievement.
- Incurring in significant running costs.
- Facing significant risks if poorly managed.

This section covers only vehicle fleet management, with special focus on motor ground vehicles. Although the same principles and logic could be applicable to other means of transport or other types of assets, these are not specifically covered here.

Furthermore, fleet management is closely related to “Asset management” and “Road transport”.

Owned vehicles are commonly considered as part of the asset/equipment inventory. Therefore, all management processes affecting assets/equipment should also be applied to vehicles

belonging to the organisation's fleet. This chapter complements asset/equipment management information with specifics related to the motorised vehicles.

It is common for humanitarian agencies manage a fleet of vehicles (cars, vans or motorbikes) to transport people. Agencies specialised in humanitarian logistics may also have to manage a fleet of trucks to regularly transport goods, water or construction materials. This chapter mainly focuses on the management of light vehicle fleets used for the transport of people. For complementary considerations and technical information related to cargo transport, such as cargo configuration, route planning and scheduling or documentation for goods transport, please refer to the [road transport chapter](#).