

# City of Reno, NV

## Performance Indicators

- **Customer satisfaction with the quality of fleet maintenance services**
- **Customer satisfaction with the timeliness of fleet maintenance services**

For FY 2006, the city of Reno's fleet maintenance division reported that 97.7 percent of its customers rated the quality of service as excellent or good. The mean and median values for all jurisdictions reporting were 89.7 percent and 86.2 percent, respectively.

With regard to the timeliness of service, 97.7 percent of Reno's fleet customers gave a rating of excellent or good. The mean value was 88.6 percent, and the median value was 81.8 percent.

### Fix it right the first time, schedule well

When asked how the city's fleet maintenance operation achieved such high satisfaction ratings, the manager cited two factors:

1. Fixing problems correctly on the first try
2. Scheduling work properly.

### Certified techs promote proper diagnosis and repair

To ensure that problems are diagnosed accurately and repaired properly during a vehicle's first visit to the garage, Reno's fleet manager has strongly encouraged all mechanics to become certified by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). The fleet manager pointed out that ASE certification ensures third-party, industry-accepted assessment and recognition of a mechanic's education and skill—and that pursuit of certification (which requires a great deal of study) demonstrates a mechanic's own commitment to professional excellence.

### Fix-it-right-the-first-time philosophy saves \$20,000

Beginning in 2003, as the city's fleet manager was beginning to address what he considered to be a higher-than-desired comeback rate that at the time was approximately 2.0 percent, he decided to encourage certification. (The comeback rate refers to the frequency with which vehicles are returned to the shop for the same repair problem.)

That same year, three of Reno's eight mechanics were ASE certified. By 2008, seven had earned ASE certification, and the comeback rate had dropped to less than 0.5 percent. That may not appear dramatic at first, but it translates to a cash savings of approximately \$20,000 per year.

The city also boasts of having its parts technicians and counter staff ASE certified, further enhancing the fleet maintenance staff's ability to diagnose and repair problems correctly during a vehicle's first visit.

To encourage certification, the city reimburses its staff for all successfully completed ASE tests and pays a modest bonus to certified employees. This bonus is paid each pay period as long as the technician remains certified.

## Case Profile

### Population:

206,735

### Square miles:

102

### Median household income:

\$42,214

### Form of government:

Council-manager



For additional information about the practices described in this case study, please contact Bruce Mullin, fleet manager, at [mullin@ci.reno.nv.us](mailto:mullin@ci.reno.nv.us).

### **Scheduling all routine work saves time**

Reno believes that ASE certification may also promote more efficient repairs by its mechanics, which in turn may boost timeliness, but the fleet manager points to the city's fleet maintenance scheduling system as the most significant factor in its high ratings for timeliness.

Reno's fleet manager schedules all nonemergency maintenance on city vehicles. A computer program is used to track the need for oil changes, tire rotation, and other standard maintenance for each vehicle, and an electronic alert is issued whenever such work is needed.

### **Communicate, communicate, communicate**

The fleet department has established in each city department a fleet department liaison to whom the department sends a monthly e-mail notice that lists all vehicles in the department for which maintenance is due. The list also notes any vehicles for which regular maintenance is past due. Fleet staff then work with the liaisons to schedule work on the vehicles. In cases of a vehicle that is used by a single employee, the liaison may ask that employee to contact the fleet department directly to schedule the work.

Liaisons and individual employees are welcome to specify repair times that are most convenient for themselves. For some departments, loaner vehicles are available for use while maintenance is performed on their regular vehicles. Runners are also available to ferry staff back and forth to their offices to facilitate drop-off and pickup of their vehicles in cases when loaner vehicles are not available. For some high-intensity users like police officers, fleet department staff also provide direct pickup and drop-off of the vehicles.

### **No waiting for scheduled work**

For regular maintenance, mechanics are scheduled to be ready and waiting to perform the work as soon as the vehicle is dropped off, thus reducing wait time for return of the vehicle. If a repair problem is found during the course of regular maintenance, customers are immediately notified of the problem and of the estimated time to correct it. (The fleet maintenance director cited this communication as another factor contributing to high satisfaction with service quality.)

### **Floater accommodates unexpected jobs**

A "floating mechanic" is usually available to accommodate unexpected repair work without compromising the timeliness of other scheduled work.