

Navy Installations Going Green with Vehicle Fleet

06/26/15

By LTjg Clyde Shavers, special to Navy Installations Command Public Affairs

Washington, D.C (June 25, 2015) - Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced in 2009 that the Navy's goal to reduce petroleum consumption by the non-tactical vehicle fleet is 50% by 2020, and Navy installations are doing their part by working on its fleet of government vehicles.

Partnering with Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Navy Installations Command (NIC) is implementing several initiatives to meet this goal to include: investments in alternate fuel infrastructure, implementation of a vehicle monitoring system, replacement of vehicles with hybrid electric vehicles, recoding gas keys for E85 - an ethanol fuel blend of 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline - and increasing awareness among government vehicle drivers.

"The biggest reduction in petroleum consumption will come from using E85 in flex fuel vehicles and taking underutilized vehicles off the road," said Lt. Cmdr. Grant Watanabe, facility support branch head for NIC. "For now, hybrids are too expensive and too few."

Watanabe explained that flex fuel vehicles are designed to run on more than one fuel, in this case, gasoline or an ethanol blend. In addition to flex fuel vehicles, other alternate fuel vehicles have been designed to operate on electricity and hydrogen. He also added that ethanol is less efficient and can be more expensive than gasoline on an energy-equivalent basis.

"As ethanol continues to attract attention, and become more widely available," Watanabe said, "E85 has become a more viable option as an alternate fuel."

With multiple stations serving E85, Watanabe is optimistic about the future of this biofuel.

"Almost every U.S. Marine Corps base has an E85 station. The Navy has a few in fleet concentration areas, such as Norfolk and Naval Base Kitsap, with additional ones under construction. With plans to build even more, the Navy can achieve similar reductions," Watanabe added.

Navy drivers are required to use alternative fuel in alternative fuel vehicles when available within a fifteen minute or five mile radius. Drivers can use a handy reference provided by the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) alternative fueling station locator website to find nearby stations anywhere in the United States.



The Navy Yard's government vehicles use the closest E85 ethanol fuel station located at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling. All fueling stops are scheduled, recorded and maintained in an effort to maximize use of nearby E85 stations. (U.S. Navy photo by by Lieutenant Junior Grade Clyde Shavers/Released)

In addition, NREL maintains a fleet sustainability dashboard (FleetDASH) website which tracks all fuel transactions. It also identifies missed opportunities to use alternative fuel, which unit commanders may use to hold drivers accountable. Visit the FleetDASH website at https://federalfleets.energy.gov/FleetDASH/users/sign_in.

Navy Installations Command is comprised of 70 installations under 11 regions with more than 52,000 military and civilian personnel to sustain the fleet, enable the fighter, and support Navy families worldwide.

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