



WHITEPAPER

How Idling Affects Your OEM Warranty



Navigating a powertrain or OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) warranty can be tough, especially when dealing with a large fleet of heavy-duty vehicles. Even police fleets and other light-duty cars and trucks can have trouble sticking to the parameters of their warranty, especially because idling is so common in these industries.

It helps to have a firm understanding of the warranty, as well as what actions and behaviors are the most impactful - both positively and negatively. Below are some more insights into how OEM policies can be better handled by fleet managers and why idling is one of the biggest culprits among those who void their warranties.

The Sneaky Thing About Idle Engine Hours

An OEM warranty may specify a certain number of engine hours that are covered, but the thing about engine hours is that they refer to times when the truck is moving and idling. Just because the vehicle isn't in motion, it could still be using up precious engine hours, and that is how many companies get burned on their warranty by fleet idling.

It is way too easy to idle the hours away, and it is often a minute or two here and there that really adds up. Fleets of all sizes in various industries can find themselves wasting resources and costing the company more money in the long run. For instance, police cars and other light-duty vehicles might end up idling quite often to oversee construction work or while addressing an off-road situation. Ambulances may





idle while loading and unloading, and more heavy-duty trucks may idle several times a day. These small actions add up and put a damper on powertrain warranties.

Wearing Out the Hours and the Engine

It's not just the hours on the OEM warranty that tick by. Engine wear is a huge problem that often results from idle time in a vehicle. If the warranty states specific maintenance schedules, you might find yourself needing engine work sooner than when the parameters stated. Of course, choosing to forgo maintenance checks when you need them can result in further damage to the vehicle. You don't want to break the warranty guidelines, but what choice do you have? In many cases, fleet managers need to bite the bullet and deal with the extra costs of breaking the warranty policy.

In some cases, engine wear can cause fleets to void on other terms of the warranty, such as periodic replacement for filters and other parts. This makes maintaining a fleet of vehicles even more expensive, which cuts into the entire company.

Difficulties Keeping Track of Fleet Idling

Another tricky thing about idling is that, for most companies, it is very hard to keep track of. If a fleet manager is in charge of dozens or even hundreds of drivers, how can they be sure that all of them are following idling policies and procedures? It's one thing to tell employees about how to avoid idling but ensuring that they follow these regulations is another story. Some may try to keep a record of their mileage to help them stay within the engine hour guidelines of their warranty – if you're lucky. Still, mileage is not a good indicator of true engine hours or wear on the vehicle.

For example, if the general rule of thumb is to have an inspection or oil change every 5,000 miles, this doesn't account for the hidden





“ghost miles” that occur during idling (which is approximately 32.9 miles per hour of idling). Even if a driver deliberately and painstakingly records their total mileage every single day, it’s unlikely they’re taking idle time into account. Besides, how practical is that without technology? Various job types, vehicles, and operators idle for a number of reasons, which drastically influences their time at idle each day – this is a lot of additional work for operators to keep track of.

What’s the Big Deal About Idling?

For one thing, an idling car or truck is using up precious resources such as fuel and money. An idling vehicle increases the cost of maintaining and fueling it, which seriously adds up over time. If the majority of a fleet is idling on a daily basis, that is hundreds of dollars wasted every month on extra fuel, not to mention the more frequent maintenance intervals and decreased availability. It might not seem like a big deal, but idling is the number-one culprit of voided warranty policies.

Conclusion

Fortunately, things such as idle reduction technology can make a huge difference in extending your fleet’s OEM warranty – not to mention extending the life of the asset, reducing costs, and decreasing maintenance intervals. Idle reduction technology, such as the GRIP Idle Management System, serve as a viable solution to reduce idling while extending the powertrain warranty. GRIP’s idle reduction technology helps operators and fleet managers keep track of idle time and idle-related data, such as engine usage and wear, operator contribution to idle, and fuel and maintenance costs. This drastically decreases the opportunity for human error and helps employers identify and solve critical idling and compliance issues.





Optimizing Fleet Performance

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