



20 RED FLAGS IN YOUR FLEET DATA (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM)



Identify early warning signs hiding in your reports and dashboards. Use this guide to take action before small issues become expensive problems.

Introduction

Fleet operations generate thousands of data points every day, but knowing what to look for is what separates reactive managers from proactive leaders.

This guide highlights 20 common red flags across maintenance, safety, fuel, utilization, compliance, and financial performance. Each red flag comes with a practical next step so you can move from awareness to action.

Use it as a diagnostic checklist, training resource, or internal audit tool.

Red Flags & What to Do

- ▶ **Excessive Idling Time**
Why it matters: Burns fuel, increases emissions, adds wear.
What to do: Set idle alerts via telematics. Coach drivers with high idle time and review vehicle-specific thresholds.
- ▶ **Increasing Cost per Mile**
Why it matters: Indicates worsening efficiency or rising costs.
What to do: Break down cost by category (fuel, maintenance, labor) to isolate the root.
- ▶ **Frequent Emergency Repairs**
Why it matters: Indicates poor preventive maintenance.
What to do: Audit your PM schedule and service intervals. Automate reminders if not already in place.
- ▶ **Low Vehicle Utilization**
Why it matters: You're paying for unused assets.
What to do: Track asset use per week/month. Reassign, rotate, or sell underused vehicles.
- ▶ **High Fuel Spend Without Usage Spike**
Why it matters: May signal theft, fraud, or inefficiency.
What to do: Verify transactions by driver/vehicle. Use fuel cards or GPS-fuel integration to tighten control.
- ▶ **Driver Safety Scores Trending Down**
Why it matters: Predicts future accidents and liability.
What to do: Review telematics. Launch coaching sessions for risky behavior (e.g., harsh braking, speeding).
- ▶ **Rising Number of Inspection Failures**
Why it matters: Signals poor compliance or driver apathy.
What to do: Re-train on DVIR protocols. Make inspections mobile and track completion rates.
- ▶ **Inconsistent PM Compliance Rates**
Why it matters: Skipping scheduled service = surprise breakdowns.
What to do: Automate PM tracking and flag missed tasks.
- ▶ **High Turnover of Drivers**
Why it matters: Leads to inconsistent service and training costs.
What to do: Survey exit reasons. Build an onboarding-to-retention workflow with feedback loops.
- ▶ **Too Many Empty Miles (Deadhead)**
Why it matters: Wastes fuel and time.
What to do: Use route optimization and freight-matching tools. Share empty capacity with dispatch.
- ▶ **Low On-Time Delivery Rate**
Why it matters: Impacts customer trust and SLAs.
What to do: Use GPS tracking to review routes and pinpoint delay causes.

- ▶ **Missing or Incomplete DVIRs**
Why it matters: Regulatory risk and safety blind spots.
What to do: Require photo validation. Incentivize timely, complete reporting.
- ▶ **CSA Scores Climbing**
Why it matters: Higher scrutiny from FMCSA.
What to do: Address violations. Retrain and monitor behavior. Digitize documentation.
- ▶ **Uneven Maintenance Costs Across Similar Vehicles**
Why it matters: Suggests issues with specific drivers, routes, or equipment.
What to do: Normalize cost by vehicle type. Analyze wear patterns.
- ▶ **Paper-Based Workflows**
Why it matters: Slows response time and data accuracy.
What to do: Migrate to digital inspections, maintenance logs, and fuel reporting.
- ▶ **Reactive Maintenance Dominates**
Why it matters: Higher cost per repair and downtime.
What to do: Shift toward preventive or predictive maintenance. Monitor service triggers.
- ▶ **Telematics Data Not Used**
Why it matters: You have insights you aren't acting on.
What to do: Define weekly KPIs from telematics (e.g., idle time, harsh events, route deviation).
- ▶ **License/Permit Renewals Missed**
Why it matters: Compliance fines and vehicle downtime.
What to do: Centralize renewal tracking. Use alerting tools.
- ▶ **Excessive Vehicle Downtime**
Why it matters: Missed revenue and customer commitments.
What to do: Analyze downtime by cause. Prioritize parts availability and service scheduling.
- ▶ **Fleet Reports Aren't Shared with Leadership**
Why it matters: No visibility = no support for improvements.
What to do: Set up a monthly report cadence with key metrics aligned to business goals.

Final Takeaway

Every red flag on this list is an opportunity. Not every issue needs a fleet consultant — but most need visibility and a system that makes acting easy.

Looking to monitor these red flags in real-time? Let FleetFocus do the heavy lifting. Schedule a custom demo of the powerful platform at assetworks.com/fleet.