

Comments and anecdotal information supplied by fleet managers using E85 in their fleet. Some of these use only retail E85 stations, while others operate one or more of their own.

Fleet Manager #1: 1000-plus FFVs; one E85 fueling site

Expect both support and opposition. Alternative fuel is a controversial subject. Petroleum has strong support and financial means.

Partnerships make it happen and keep it moving. DOE Clean Cities, state energy office, NEVC, others can be a big help.

Simply consider E85 as another fuel type and plan accordingly.

Typically, fuel site installation steps are:

- Plan
- Project cost
- Build in business plan
- Receive approval for expenditure
- Monitor progress
- Accept project
- Pay vendor

Fleet Manager #2: 600-plus FFVs; only uses retail E85 fueling stations

Something that happened in our fleet was that at some point many drivers, especially the military recruiters, were told to use only regular, 87-octane unleaded and absolutely nothing else. I believe the intent of the directive was to stop drivers from wasting money on premium or midgrade gasoline. As a result, it was extremely difficult to get them to start using E85 even though it is of lower cost per gallon.

Make sure, especially if your fleet has a mixture of FFVs and non-FFVs that drivers understand which vehicles will run on E85 and which will not. I have had a few experiences where drivers have fueled a non-FFV with E85. Its not a disaster, and they simply blended in gasoline to dilute the mixture. But, over time, this could be a problem.

We had a 2004 Dodge Stratus into a dealer for a complaint. The dealer looked it over and after some testing stated that there was way too much alcohol in the fuel. I asked him how much, and he told me 54%! Since the vehicle is able to run on E85, I opened the manual and showed him the section where it covers E85 and the use of any mixture of ethanol from 0 to 85%. He did not have a clue about E85 or FFVs.

Fleet Manager #3: 50-plus FFVs; Multiple E85 sites and use of retail E85 stations

At our fueling sites, we decided in the design process to include E85. It was easy to either size the tanks or buy split tanks at that point. The price difference was not an issue. I couldn't tell you if the decision to add E85 had a cost as it was incorporated into our overall project. If much, it was minimal.

The dispenser care is the same as our gasoline and diesel pumps. The fuel controller is the same.

If for some reason E85 was to not work out or if the OEMs stopped making FFVs, we could easily change the tanks and pumps to a different fuel at any time at no cost.

The main issue with any fleet operation is cost. I know very few people that will do something for the environment that costs them much money. E85 has been relatively easy for us to do. The trick has been to find FFVs available in the model and engine we can use in our fleet.

Fleet Manager #4: 25-plus FFVs; Use of retail E85 stations only

In the future, we hope to have our own E85 fueling site/s. We need to:
Evaluate the number of gallons needed per year. (we need to boost FFV numbers)
Decide which is more cost effective -- to outsource or to provide in-house.
Evaluate possible needs of other customers: police, fire, public works

I offer that E85 may be of help in the event of a major emergency. When there may be a shortage of gasoline or diesel, the FFVs can fuel on either gasoline or E85. E85 could be made part of a back up or security plan.

I believe it is very important that OEM's provide larger E85 vehicle selections. This would make it easier to convert fleets to E85. This would allow our city to switch all of our fueling sites to E85. This would be a very good situation for our fleet and us.

There is always going to be resistance to change, but working together on a regional basis to purchase fuel would reduce costs for everyone in the metro government agencies.

Fleet Manager #5: 50-plus FFVs; multiple E85 fueling sites and retail E85 stations

We will continue to purchase FFVs for use in our fleet. As we increase the number of units we will look at additional fueling sites.

If you have existing fuel tanks there shouldn't be any real cost. We think its important because it is a renewable fuel and we should be doing more things like this whenever we can.

Work with vendors that are familiar with E85 fuel and E85 installation/conversions.

Don't use a new fuel supplier. Make sure they have the proper test equipment and can convert the summer/winter blends automatically – This is the only problem we have had. Our fuel supplier brought a summer-blended fuel in late fall. It caused slow starting in some of our FFVs.

Fleet Manager #6: 15-plus FFVs; one E85 fueling site and retail E85 stations

We simply converted our 6,000-gallon gasoline tank to E85 and, then, purchased a new 2,000-gallon, aboveground tank for gasoline storage. Very simple!

The project cost approximately \$10,500. We received a grant to help offset the cost.

All of our FFVs are refueled with E85 when they return to the main fleet office. Our personnel ensure they are fueled only with E85.

All of our FFVs have fuel door decals to help remind drivers to use E85 when out on trips. We also place the E85 fueling station maps in the FFVs.