

City switching to diesel fuel that's more enviro-friendly

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NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

All 12,600 diesel engines in the city's fleet will be running cleaner by the summer, as the city transitions away from fossil fuels.

Mayor Adams is expected to announce the switch to "renewable diesel" — a fuel chemically similar to conventional diesel — Wednesday morning, making New York the first East Coast city to commit to the alternative fuel source.

"New York City continues to lead the way for the rest of the country by making our vehicles cleaner, greener, and safer," Adams said in a statement. "From our vehicles to our buildings and our food, we are making sustainability a critical component of all the work we do."

The city's diesel engines — which power everything from fire engines, garbage trucks and snowplows to paving machines, generators and wood chippers — have run on a blend of biodiesel since 2013.

Biodiesel, which is made by adding alcohols to a base of vegetable oils or fats to produce chemicals called esters, is a renewable alternative to petroleum diesel, but it requires engine modifications to run and is often blended with its petroleum-based counterpart.

City vehicles typically run a blend of 20% biodiesel and 80% conventional petroleum diesel in the summer. During the winter, the amount of biodiesel in the blend can drop to 5% because biodiesel tends to congeal in low temperatures.

So-called "renewable diesel" starts with the same bases, but adds hydrogen, creating a fuel that is chemically equivalent to petroleum diesel, and can be added to an engine without modification.

"We don't have to touch any of the trucks [to run renewable diesel]," Keith Kerman, the city's chief fleet officer and a deputy commissioner with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, told the Daily News.

"It is, on an operational level, the exact same fuel" as conventional diesel, he said.

A test run of 1 million gallons in 2018



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found no issues with the fuel in various city vehicles, Kerman added.

Because the new mix doesn't have a petroleum base, it burns cleaner, with 15% to 35% fewer tailpipe emissions, Kerman said.

That's key to meeting the city's emissions goals for vehicles without viable electric alternatives — a category that includes many of the city's heavy machines.

Renewable diesel fuel has been in use on the West Coast for several years, where it powers multiple municipal fleets. San Francisco's city fleet has been powered by the fuel since 2015.

Most of the nation's renewable diesel is manufactured on the West Coast. "The major challenge is getting the renewable diesel to the East Coast," Kerman said.

The city has signed a contract for fuel delivery with a Louisiana-based supplier, which ships the diesel up the coast by barge, said Kerman.

An initial shipment of 3.4 million gallons arrived in New York in August, the fleet czar said, and a second barge containing 4.3 million gallons of winter-blend renewable fuel arrived in the city last week.

The city uses an average of roughly 16 million gallons of diesel fuel per year.

Though the city's official announcement is expected Tuesday, the transition process started in September.

"Every New York City garbage truck is using renewable diesel today," Kerman said.

The city's diesel-powered police and fire vehicles will be the last to transition to the cleaner fuel, but Kerman said he expected both of the emergency fleets to be using the new fuel ahead of the city's July 2024 deadline.

2 new centers for asylum seekers makes three total in New York City

New York City has opened two new state-funded application assistance stations for asylum seekers, bringing the city's number of sites to three, Mayor Adams' office said Tuesday.

The stations, called Asylum Application Help Centers, are part of the city's expansive but sluggish effort to get tens of thousands of migrants out of shelters and into New York's workforce.

The two new centers are located in Harlem and lower Manhattan, City Hall said. Another center at John Jay College of Criminal Justice on the Upper West Side is set to open in the coming days, the mayor's office said.

Immigration attorneys and application assistants staff the sites, according to City Hall. In the summer, the city opened its primary Asylum Application Help Center,

at the American Red Cross in Greater New York's headquarters in Hell's Kitchen.

Asylum seekers can make appointments for consultations. The new stations represent part of the state's \$2 billion financial commitment to the city to handle the crisis, which has been burning through city and state coffers for almost 20 months.

Adams, a moderate Democrat, coupled the announcement of the new help centers with continued pleas to Washington for more support.

"New York City continues to do its part to support asylum seekers," Adams said in a statement. "We hope the federal government will join us in these efforts."

Many of the city's migrants poured into the U.S. and headed to New York after fleeing political and economic upheaval in Central and South America. **Tim Balk**



wound up being a visit with the French national police hostage unit.

Banks, the deputy mayor, formally approved the trip, Adams' spokeswoman Kayla Mamelak said Tuesday.

Correction Department spokesman Frank Dwyer said Molina and senior staff were "invited" to visit the French and British jails and meet with their leadership. Discussions included the thorny issue of housing gangs together and adapting older buildings for modern jail needs.

In addition to Singer, Molina brought his aide-de-camp Davelle Williams, an assistant deputy warden, his head of training Robert Gonzalez, and his acting assistant chief Charlton Lemon, the records show.

He also brought three assistant commissioners — Danielle Davis, who worked with Molina in Las Vegas, Antoinette Cort and Sonya Harvey, the records show.

Dwyer said no one on the trip earned overtime.

The trip occurred amid the continuing crisis at Rikers Island and the city's other lockups.

In the two months since the trip, detainee Manish Kunwar died of a possible overdose just seven days after he landed on Rikers Island — the ninth jail death in

2023.

A K-9 unit dog named Ryder died after she was left in a vehicle on Rikers Island all day. Correction Officer James Internicola was charged with pocketing \$171,000 in overtime while vacationing in Aruba and the Jersey Shore.

On Nov. 5, the city agreed to pay \$2.25 million to the family of Kevin Bryan, who was able to hang himself in the jails in September 2022 due in part to staff inattention.

The federal monitoring team tracking violence at Rikers and other city lockups reported Oct. 5 conditions had worsened in recent months and called the Correction Department's efforts to fix problems "limited and ineffective."

"All security and violence indicators remain alarmingly elevated," the monitoring team wrote.

On Nov. 8, the monitoring team said it had "no confidence in the accuracy" of the agency's stabbing and slashing figures. And on Nov. 19, the U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan filed a letter arguing control of the jails be taken away from the city and turned over to an outside receiver, along with a 100-page motion filed by the Legal Aid Society seeking a receiver.