

Improving Workplace Health with Renewable Diesel and Electricity

By: Keith T. Kerman

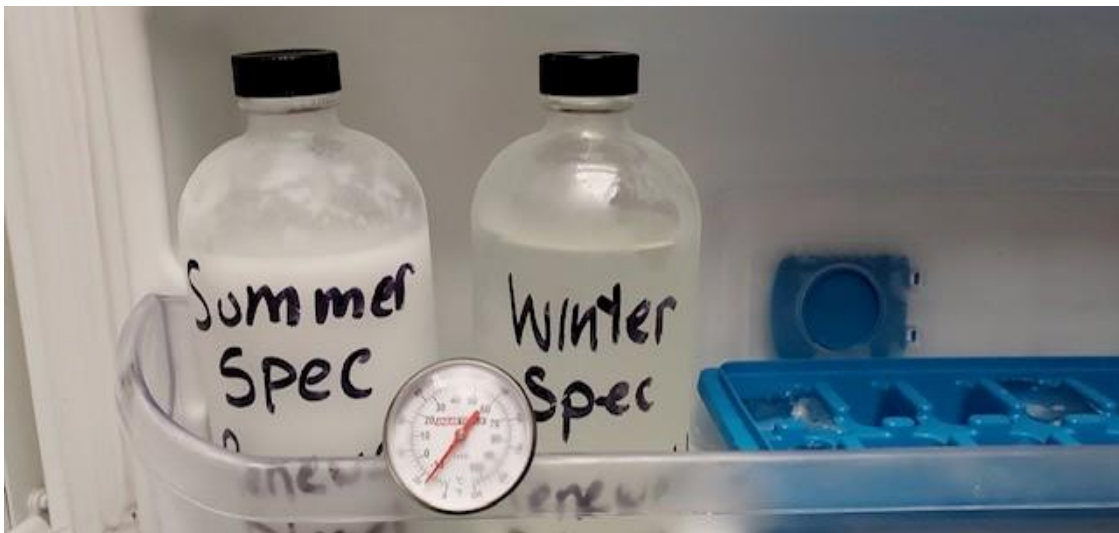


This week's fleet newsletter discusses the benefits of alternative fuels like renewable diesel and electricity. Reducing greenhouse gases, lessening harmful air quality emissions, and reducing maintenance costs are significant themes and motivating goals of our green fleet program.

Along with the broader air quality benefits, there is a real-life, immediate, and daily benefit that we haven't discussed as often. These alternatives remove the distinct, usually unpleasant, and always harmful odors and smells associated with fossil fuels. Diesel emissions include carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide,

particulate matter, and hydrocarbons. The distinct and pungent odor you smell with diesel fuel derives from volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which can be [harmful](#) when inhaled. These smells can dominate garage and parking areas and follow the trucks as they operate. It's not just an issue of smell but of workplace safety and health.

As we announced in November 2023, DCAS is transitioning to all renewable diesel and away from fossil diesel for the City fleet. At this time, City agencies, including Sanitation, Parks, Transportation, Environmental Protection, and Correction, are only using renewable diesel for their on and off-road fleets. Fire and police are transitioning, and it will be completed by June 30, maybe earlier. The City fleet has used nearly 8 million gallons of renewable diesel since September 2023, when the rollout began. This is close to 50% of our annual diesel use for the fleet. The fleet also completed its first winter using solely biofuels in our trucks. Renewable diesel met the cold weather requirements of our contract specifications, solving a long-standing cold weather issue associated with biodiesel.



One well-received benefit is that diesel fuel's strong and poor smell is disappearing from the garages and parking areas. Renewable diesel is colorless and odorless, a significant departure from fossil diesel. At DCAS, the Bureau of Quality Assurance (BQA) developed a smell test to help show the difference: two jugs of diesel fuel, one fossil, and one renewable diesel, with perforated caps allowing the smell to emerge. The effects could not be more stark - one is putrid and has no real smell to mention. The latter is renewable diesel. Visit us at the Fleet Offices at the Municipal Building and take the test yourself.

Just about everyone dislikes the diesel smell. However, some say that gasoline smells different, even a somewhat attractive and sweet smell. While smell can be a matter of taste, the aroma of gasoline is driven by the chemical benzene,

identified as a cancer-causing [agent](#) by the American Cancer Society. Fully electric vehicles are a lot simpler and admittedly boring on this topic. There is no tailpipe, emissions, or smell outside of a new car smell.

Anthony Bianculli, DSNY Chief of Support Services, provided an important perspective in a discussion at the NY Auto Show last week: “23 years ago I first started with DSNY. When all the trucks were started at 6am, you couldn’t even see across the garage due to the diesel smoke and it was difficult to breath until all of the smoke dissipated. Skip forward to today with the total transition over to renewable diesel, at morning roll call you can’t even tell the trucks are running. What a difference it makes. Ultra-low sulfur diesel made a difference as well but the renewable is a game changer. Any implementation that keeps the DSNY workforce healthy and safe is much appreciated and needed.”

Spring is upon us; as they say, we can go out and smell the flowers. That will be much easier as we get the vehicle fuel odors out of the way. It's the smell of things to come.

**RENEWABLE VERSUS FOSSIL DIESEL
SMELL THE DIFFERENCE**

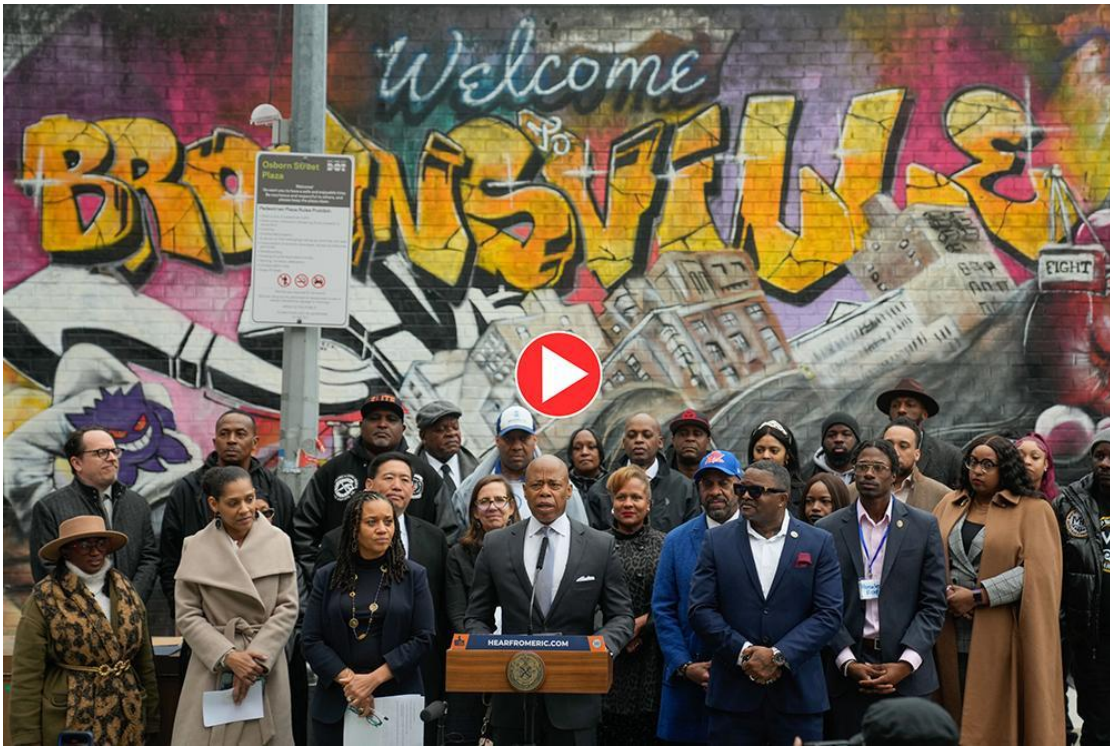


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Week In Review: March 24 - 30



"Jobs NYC" will bring public- and private-sector job opportunities to the communities that need them most. Our investments in subway safety have the ability to protect New Yorkers from violence and provide support for those living with severe mental illness. We signed laws to keep New Yorkers in their homes as we extended our rent stabilization laws. And we celebrated the women who built New York City.

Check out past editions of the Fleet Newsletter

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 451, March 22, 2024:](#) **DCAS Registers First Electric Ride and Car Share Contracts**

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 450, March 14, 2024:](#) **Fleet Spotlight: Lauren Milazzo, FDNY Fleet Services**

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 449, March 1, 2024:](#) **DCAS Completes Largest Fast Charging Public Hub at Parks World's Fair Marina**

[NYC Fleet Newsletter 448, February 16, 2024](#): **Mayor Adams Signs Executive Order Increasing Safety for City and Contractor Fleets**

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