



Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Pollution Prevention Champion

A1 Plumbing, Inc.
Boise, Idaho
2009

Environmental Commitment

A1 Plumbing provides plumbing and drain cleaning repair services throughout the Treasure Valley. Environmental awareness is a critical part of the work they do helping to save water, preserve the purity of our water supply, and improve internal practices. A1 Plumbing encourages environmental protection through education, training, and commitment to making the local community a better place.

Pollution Prevention Success

Vehicle Miles Traveled and Fuel Consumption Reduction

A1 Plumbing began using a vehicle tracking system program to more efficiently and effectively dispatch and route service fleet to save fuel and reduce air pollution, provide more reliable service, and develop real-time data to measure performance. Prior to using this system, A1 Plumbing dispatched under a “who’s available” system. This meant that when a call came in, it was put on the schedule for a specific day and time, and whoever was available responded to it. No thought was given to the type of job or the current location of plumbers in relationship to the location of the job. A1 Plumbing knew there was a tremendous opportunity to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and improve customer satisfaction so they sought to:

- Know where vehicles were at all times
- Know the location on a map and time of all scheduled jobs for the entire day
- Communicate with technicians to know how long they would be on a job after they had diagnosed the problem
- Classify jobs to be able to send the most qualified person to the job the first time
- Allow call schedulers and dispatchers access to all information so they could plan ahead

A1 Plumbing purchased an upgraded accounting system and a dispatch program that was then integrated into the accounting system. Now a customer service representative takes the call and books it based on the available time slots. The representatives know who is available because all jobs are posted to the schedule in the dispatch system. Jobs are also posted to the dispatch map. This allows the dispatcher to know where jobs have been booked and where technicians are located at any given time, which uses labor and vehicles more efficiently and increases on-time delivery and customer satisfaction.

By investing in this technology, A1 Plumbing has reduced its fuel consumption by 3,000 gallons a year, vehicle miles traveled by 25,000 miles a year, greenhouse gas emissions by 60,000 pounds per year, and saved approximately \$12,000 a year. Moreover, A1 Plumbing’s return on investment was realized in the first year.

Anti-Idling Policy

A1 Plumbing also developed an anti-idling policy to reduce vehicle idling in the field. They continually communicate

with their technicians about this issue to reinforce and encourage this behavior. In 2010, A1 Plumbing plans to invest in a system that allows them to track vehicle idling rates.

Idling for 10 seconds or more uses more fuel than restarting your engine. Idling for 10 minutes a day wastes an average of 26 gallons of gas per vehicle per year. If fuel costs \$4 a gallon, idling for 10 minutes a day costs \$104 per vehicle per year. Even at \$1.50 a gallon, you're still wasting \$39 per vehicle per year.

Vehicle Maintenance

All A1 Plumbing vehicles are maintained and serviced every 3,000 miles or three months. The maintenance includes oil changes, air filter check, tire pressure checks, and other safety checks. Additionally, individual technicians are tasked with monitoring and maintaining their vehicle at all times. Company policy requires technicians to do a safety check, which includes a tire pressure check, at the time of refueling.

You can improve your gas mileage by around 3.3 percent by keeping your tires inflated to the proper pressure. Under-inflated tires can lower gas mileage by 0.3 percent for every drop in pressure of one pound per square inch (psi) for all four tires. Properly inflated tires are also safer and last longer.

For More Information

For more information visit A-1 Plumbing's website at www.a1plumbers.net.

Information on this webpage represents examples of projects undertaken by the organizations only and does not constitute Departmental certification or approval of compliance at this or any other time with federal, state and/or local regulations, but is solely presented as an example of projects undertaken by organizations in order to prevent pollution and/or conserve resources.