Enhancing safety through lighting

FE asked Brett Johnson, president and chief executive officer of Optronics International, what fleets can do to enhance safety through lighting. Here is what he had to say:

"LED lighting is one of the most important advancements in trailer safety. Not only is LED lighting more reliable, its light quality is far superior to incandescent lighting.

"LED illumination approximates the color temperature of natural sunlight, the light the human eye has evolved to prefer.

"The ratio of LED lamp sales vs. incandescent lamp orders by OEM is now surpassing 90% vs. 10%. There is a clear and decisive move toward LED lamps over incandescent lamps across the board in the commercial vehicle arena and this includes tractors, trailers and work trucks.

"The OEM trend toward LED lighting is also driving the replacement market, though the aftermarket is hindered by the fact that many vehicles originally equipped with incandescent lamps are still in service today, and some people don't realize that replacement LED lamps are generally as easy as plug and play.

"As for what you can do to improve safety: on vehicle exteriors, I would suggest a focus on vehicle conspicuity and work lamps.

"I would only use LED stop/tail/turn and marker lamps and if that means converting existing trailers to LED, I would do so. I would not have unreliable incandescent lamps on any vehicle in a fleet I managed.

"For hook-up lamps, work lamps and scene lights, I would only use LED lamps, and I would make sure that any work areas around a vehicle had bright white LED lighting for the work to be done there.

"I would suggest fleets regularly inspect and replace conspicuity tape, as it loses its reflective qualities over time.

"Inside trailers, again, I would use only reliable LED lamps and make sure that each trailer is adequately lit.

"I think that as time progresses, the use of sensor-activated lighting will become the norm. This means that whenever workers are present, lights are on."

each battery to help identify any battery that might be failing.

Fleet managers are increasingly willing to pay more to include a long life TPPL AGM battery in their new trucks. They have found that these batteries usually will last the life of the trucks' service window for the first owner, thus being a net cost savings. In addition, the TPPL AGM helps reduce additional costs associated with unexpected no-starts. The TPPL AGM batteries offer significantly longer service life: generally, 30 to 60 months. The use of pure lead significantly reduces plate corrosion. Additionally, a TPPL battery with tin-plated brass terminals requires no terminal maintenance.

Always be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines for battery care and handling and direct any questions to your battery professional.

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1. Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association, "Battery Technology Changes are on the Way as Vehicle Electrical Demands Increase," March 30, 2017, hdma.org/news/battery-technology-changes-are-way-vehicle-electrical-demands-increase

2. World Health Organization, "Recycling used lead-acid batteries: health considerations," 2017, p. 6, apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259447/9789241512855-eng.pdf;jsessionid=31BA0C2315056E7B2AC8BF94409ACCBD?sequence=1

3. Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (ASSA), "Know Your Parts," "Three Misconceptions About AGM Batteries," knowyourparts.com/technical-resources/blog/three-misconceptions-agm-batteries/, last accessed May 2, 2019.