

Ford

Ford was the first company to introduce hybrid technology into the SUV market. Its Escape Model has been popular in both consumer and fleet applications. A number of taxi firms are also using the vehicle in high mileage applications. In the US this vehicle with different sheet metal designs has also been sold as the Mercury Mariner and Mazda Tribute models.

Ford has under final development a hybrid version of its Fusion model which is expected to be marketed in 2009. This vehicle will compete with the Toyota Camry and Chevrolet Malibu hybrids. Ford has also developed a number of different test platforms which are not yet in the market such as an E85 fueled Escape hybrid and an Edge Model fuel cell hybrid electric plug-in. Given Ford's strong market share in both SUV's and trucks it is likely that its hybrid platform will migrate to these product areas in order to remain competitive.

In Field Performance

The Ford Escape hybrid fuel efficiency is rated as being significantly better than its non-hybrid counterpart model. The two charts below show the actual performance of 2006 model Ford Escapes operating for over 1.3 million kilometers.

The first group consists of three Escape taxi's operating in the City of Calgary, Alberta. The taxi's operated under all types of weather conditions ranging from + 30 to -30 Celsius. Each taxi is independently owned with service and maintenance at the discretion of each owner.

The results show clearly that when operated in a typical taxi application of idle/start/stop the Ford Escape does perform very close to its actual rating.

The second group is a larger fleet of thirty nine Escape hybrids that operate within BC Hydro's managed fleet of over 3,000 vehicles. Two things are noteworthy about their fleet experience with the Escape.

The first is that about 10 % of BC Hydro's Escapes are outperforming the actual rating for the vehicle. The second is that the fleet average is about 20% higher than the rating which falls within common experience of actual performance vs. ratings. The BC Hydro fleet operates across the province and its highway mileage usage is typically higher than an urban fleet. There are three vehicles in their fleet whose performance is substantially worse than the fleet average and research is underway by BC Hydro to assess whether this is a function of the operational circumstances for these vehicles or related to the vehicles themselves.

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