ACTA SCIENTIAE

ISSN: 2178-7727

CNG and electric vehicle used for perishable food items delivery

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ABSTRACT

The perishable food delivery industry has been profoundly affected by the move toward sustainable transportation options; compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric vehicles are now very common substitutes for traditional diesel trucks. Regional food distribution networks would find CNG vehicles appropriate for medium to long-distance routes since they provide lower operating costs, less emissions, and consistent performance. Though range restrictions and charging infrastructure provide difficulties for long-distance delivery routes, electric vehicles shine in urban settings with zero tailpipe emissions, decreased noise pollution, and cheaper maintenance requirements. Both technologies need specific refrigeration systems that preserve cold chain integrity while maximizing energy economy. Environmental laws, business sustainability initiatives, and financial incentives all help to boost the acceptance of these clean technology. Although first capital expenditures are still higher than those of conventional vehicles, declining battery prices and growing charging infrastructure are increasing the viability of electric vehicles. A key first step in decarbonizing the logistics industry and guaranteeing food safety and quality all along the supply chain is the integration of CNG and electric trucks into perishable food delivery.

KEYWORDS: Cold chain logistics, Sustainable refrigerated transport, Zero-emission food delivery, CNG refrigeration units, Battery-powered temperature control, Eco-friendly last-mile delivery

INTRODUCTION

As concerns about environmental sustainability, urban air quality, and running costs drive the acceptance of greener car technology, the transportation industry is changing significantly. Regarding perishable food delivery, this change is especially important considering the sector's twin difficulties of exact temperature control while reducing environmental impact. Offering convincing options for companies looking to lower their carbon footprint while preserving operational efficiency, compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric vehicles have become top choices for alternative diesel-powered delivery fleets. Driven by natural gas kept under high pressure, CNG vehicles are an instant transitional technology that drastically lowers emissions than traditional diesel trucks. Though typically resulting in significant fuel savings, they generate reduced quantities of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and carbon dioxide [1]. CNG vehicles can run refrigeration systems efficiently and keep the range and payload capacity needed for long-distance delivery of perishable goods. For many metropolitan locations, the current natural gas infrastructure makes CNG adoption quite simple for fleet operators. As battery technology develops and charging infrastructure grows, electric vehicles—which have zero exhaust emissions—offer even more competitive running costs. Through effective electric refrigeration systems, modern electric delivery trucks can maintain exact temperature control for perishable items while managing usual metropolitan delivery paths. While regenerative braking helps lengthen battery life and lower energy consumption, the fast torque delivery of electric motors offers great performance in stop-and- go delivery situations.

For operations involving perishable food delivery, both systems have special benefits. Although CNG cars

ISSN: 2178-7727

have faster filling and a wider range, electric cars have better energy efficiency and less maintenance needed. Often depending on particular operational objectives including delivery range, payload requirements, existing infrastructure, and total cost of ownership considerations, the choice between these technologies can Both CNG and electric trucks are becoming more appealing solutions for forward-looking food delivery companies dedicated to environmental responsibility as cities apply tougher emissions rules and consumers seek more sustainable delivery choices [2].

OBJECTIVES

Environmental Reducing Strategies and Sustainability

From conventional diesel/gasoline delivery vehicles to CNG and electric substitutes, to lower greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in urban food delivery systems. This entails keeping cold chain integrity for perishable commodities by means of effective refrigeration systems driven by renewable energy sources while assessing and attaining particular emission reduction targets (such as 30–40% decrease in CO2 emissions).

Control of Temperature and Improvement of Food Safety

To create and apply cutting-edge temperature control systems in CNG and electric delivery vehicles guaranteeing constant cold chain maintenance for perishable food products. This entails building dependable refrigeration systems capable of running effectively on electric power or CNG-powered generators, so preserving ideal temperatures (usually 0-4°C for dairy, 2-8°C for fresh produce) throughout the delivery cycle and so minimize energy consumption and extend vehicle range.

Operational efficiency and economic viability

By means of optimal total cost of ownership for CNG and electric vehicles, including acquisition prices, fuel/charging charges, maintenance, and operating efficiency, one can attain affordable perishable food delivery operations. Compared to typical delivery fleets, this includes lowering food spoiling rates, cutting delivery times through better route design fit for vehicle charging/refueling needs, and obtaining return on investment within 3–5 years.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This paper investigates, especially for perishable food delivery operations, the practicality and relative advantages of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and electric vehicles (EVs) [3]. Analysis of vehicle performance indicators including range capabilities, refrigeration system integration, and charging/refueling infrastructure needs across many urban and rural delivery paths forms part of the research focus. Economic factors will include overall cost of ownership—including acquisition expenses, running costs, maintenance needs, and any government incentives for both kinds of vehicles. Throughout the vehicle lifetime, environmental impact assessment will track emissions profiles, carbon footprint lowering potential, and sustainability indicators. For certain perishable food categories, the study will also look at refrigeration system compatibility, cold chain integrity preservation capacity, and temperature control effectiveness. To provide complete direction for food delivery companies trying to maximize their transportation systems while preserving product quality and freshness, implementation challenges including driver training requirements, fleet transition strategies, and infrastructure development needs will be addressed.

LIMITATIONS

Energy use and temperature control

Particularly in severe weather, electric vehicles find great difficulty keeping continuous refrigeration for perishables. Running refrigeration systems significantly deplete the battery, hence in some situations driving range is dropped by 30 to 50%. CNG cars, despite having superior range, may struggle with the additional burden of refrigerated equipment, and finding CNG stations fitted for commercial delivery routes might be hard [4].

Limited Range and Infrastructure Constraints

Especially when using refrigerated systems and hauling hefty goods, electric delivery vehicles usually have

ISSN: 2178-7727

less ranges than conventional diesel trucks. This calls for careful route design and limits delivery radius. While having more range than electric, CNG cars still have less refill stations than conventional fuel, which causes logistical difficulties for long-distance or rural deliveries where perishable commodities must swiftly reach far-off areas.

More front-of-pocket expenses and complicated maintenance

Initial investments for both CNG and electric commercial vehicles are far more than for traditional delivery trucks. While CNG vehicles need pressure vessel inspections and specialist repair facilities, electric vehicles demand qualified experts for maintenance and specific charging infrastructure. These expenses might be exorbitant for small delivery companies managing perishables, particularly given the need of backup cars to guarantee continuous cold chain delivery schedules.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With alternative fuel vehicles—especially compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric vehicles (EV)—as sustainable solutions for last-mile delivery operations, the transportation of perishable food items has seen major change [5]. Recent studies underline the crucial need of preserving cold chain integrity during food delivery, which has usually depended on diesel-powered refrigerated vehicles. But rising environmental issues, rules on urban air quality and operating cost factors have spurred a lot of study into greener substitutes for perishable commodities transportation. Because of their proven dependability and well-developed infrastructure, compressed natural gas vehicles have attracted a lot of interest in the food delivery industry While preserving equivalent payload capacity and range capabilities necessary for perishable food transportation, studies by Kumar et al. (2023) and Zhang and Rodriguez (2022) show that CNG trucks create about 20–30% lower carbon emissions than typical diesel cars. The literature repeatedly emphasizes CNG's benefit in terms of lower particulate matter emissions, which is especially helpful for urban food delivery companies where air quality rules are getting ever stricter. Moreover, studies show that CNG cars are financially appealing for food delivery businesses running on limited profit margins as their running expenses are 40–50% lower than those of diesel equivalents. With recent technology developments addressing past limits in range, weight, and refrigeration capability, electric vehicles provide a more revolutionary method of sustainable perishable food distribution. Modern electric delivery vehicles may reach ranges of 200–300 kilometers on a single charge, enough for most urban and suburban delivery routes, according thorough analyses by Chen et al. (2024) and the European Transport Research Institute (2023). Advanced battery temperature management systems have allowed electric vehicles to sustain continuous refrigeration without appreciably sacrificing driving range, therefore addressing a main issue in the delivery of perishable commodities. Operating at almost low local emissions, research by Thompson and Patel (2023) shows those electric refrigerated vehicles can keep temperatures under ±1°C variance during delivery cycles, therefore meeting strict food safety criteria.

ISSN: 2178-7727

Figure 1: CNG Food Delivery Fleet

Comparative studies of CNG and electric cars for the transportation of perishable goods expose different benefits and drawbacks for each technology. With established refueling infrastructure allowing operational flexibility, CNG trucks shine in uses needing longer ranges and bigger payloads [6]. With shorter delivery routes, almost silent operation helpful for early morning and late evening deliveries, and almost elimination of local air pollution, electric vehicles show better performance in urban settings. Economic evaluations by Morrison et al. (2023) show that, especially in areas with supportive government incentives and developed charging infrastructure, electric vehicles have lower operating and maintenance costs, so resulting in favorable total cost of ownership over 5-7 year periods even if their initial capital investment is higher. The material also covers technical developments improving CNG and electric vehicle performance in perishable food delivery. Real-time monitoring of cargo temperatures, vehicle performance, and route optimization made possible by advanced telematics systems guarantees food safety compliance and maximizes operational efficiency by themselves. Research by Gupta and Williams (2024) show how predictive analytics and IoT sensors are combined to preserve ideal storage conditions all through the delivery process, therefore lowering food waste and improving customer happiness. Policy assistance and regulatory frameworks become clear as main determinants of adoption rates of alternative fuel vehicles in food delivery processes. Studies show that towns enforcing low emission zones and offering financial incentives for the use of clean cars have seen faster change from conventional to CNG and electric delivery fleets. Still, there are difficulties with regard to CNG filling station accessibility in some areas and charging infrastructure development for electric cars. The literature reveals future avenues for study including developments of renewable CNG from organic waste, enhancement of battery energy density for electric vehicles, and hybrid solutions integrating both technologies. According to the general agreement among researchers, both CNG and electric vehicles will play complementary roles in sustainable perishable food delivery; the best choice depending on particular operational requirements, geographical constraints, and financial considerations of individual distribution operations.

Conceptual Background

Last-mile delivery for perishable food products has evolved to show a pivotal junction of supply chain efficiency, technical development, and environmental sustainability. The transportation industry is under more pressure to lower emissions while keeping the strict temperature and timing criteria necessary for perishable goods delivery as urbanization speeds and customer demand for fresh, locally-sourced food products rises. With different benefits in environmental effect, operational costs, and regulatory compliance, compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric vehicles have become interesting substitutes for conventional diesel-powered delivery fleets.

CNG Vehicles for Distribution of Perishable Foods

Particularly in urban delivery situations, compressed natural gas vehicles offer a mature alternative fuel technology that has become somewhat popular in commercial fleet operations. By up to 90%, particulate matter by almost 95%, and carbon dioxide by over 20–25%, CNG combustion generates far lower emissions than diesel engines. CNG cars provide several convincing benefits for companies involving perishable food delivery. The clean-burning qualities of the fuel help to reduce air pollution in highly crowded urban regions where food delivery hubs usually find place, therefore improving public health results. Furthermore, even if CNG infrastructure requires initial investment, it can be carefully created to support centralized fleet operations, so fitting for businesses with consistent delivery routes and centralized dispersion systems. CNG trucks' operational qualities fit rather nicely with needs for perishable food delivery. Usually providing enough range for urban and suburban delivery paths, these trucks also keep the payload capacity required for commercial food distribution. Natural gas's more steady price compared to petroleum products gives fleet owners more consistent fuel expenses, which helps with pricing policies and financial planning. Moreover, CNG vehicles generate less noise than diesel counterparts, which qualifies for early morning or late evening deliveries to residential areas, businesses, and restaurants where noise limits could apply.

ISSN: 2178-7727

Cold Chain Management: Electric Vehicles

Zero direct emissions and increasingly competitive total cost of ownership make electric vehicles the forefront of sustainable transportation technologies. Particularly in preserving cold chain integrity, electric cars offer special benefits for perishable food delivery. Lack of internal combustion engine heat generation produces a more stable thermal environment, therefore lowering the energy needed for refrigeration systems to keep ideal storage temperatures. By combining refrigeration systems with the primary battery pack, advanced electric delivery vehicles can maximize energy management and provide longer cold storage capacity during stationary periods. The precision control made possible by electric powertrains helps to maximize energy management and routing, therefore influencing the delivery of perishable goods [7]. Through regular stop-and- start urban delivery patterns, regenerative braking systems can recover energy, so expanding vehicle range and lowering running costs. By means of smart fleet management systems, which can interact with electric vehicles to maximize routes depending on battery capacity, delivery priorities, and availability of charging infrastructure, temperature-sensitive products can reach their destinations within specified timescale while preserving quality and safety standards.

Infrastructure Concerns and Technological Integration

Effective application of CNG and electric vehicles in perishable food distribution depends on complex integration of vehicle technology with cold chain management systems. Advanced monitoring systems in modern refrigerated CNG and electric trucks measure temperature, humidity, and door openings all through the delivery process, therefore offering real-time data to guarantee food safety compliance. By letting fleet managers track vehicle performance, maximize routes, and forecast repair requirements, telematics solutions help to lower the risk of delivery interruptions that can jeopardize perishable commodities. The broad acceptance of alternative fuel vehicles for food delivery still depends much on infrastructure development. Strategic location of CNG refueling stations helps to support supply routes and guarantees that cars may finish their cycles free from range anxiety. Likewise, infrastructure for charging electric vehicles has to be built to fit the fast turnaround times needed in commercial food distribution companies. Maintaining operational efficiency while controlling energy expenditures and system stability depends on fast-charging capabilities and smart grid integration.

Economic and environmental consequences

The switch to CNG and electric cars for perishable food delivery calls for complicated financial considerations going beyond first vehicle acquisition expenses. Although alternative fuel vehicles usually have more upfront expenses, their lower running costs, less maintenance needed, and possible government subsidies help to produce a better total cost of ownership over the vehicle lifetime. These economic improvements must be balanced for perishable food delivery operations with the vital need of dependability and the possible expenses of food spoiling resulting from vehicle failures or range restrictions. Environmental advantages cover more general sustainability objectives of the food supply chain than only direct emissions reduction. CNG and electric cars help food distribution networks to operate generally by lowering the carbon impact of last-mile deliveries. As consumers, governments, and corporate customers give environmentally responsible business practices top priority in their buying decisions, this connection with sustainability goals becomes ever more critical.

ISSN: 2178-7727

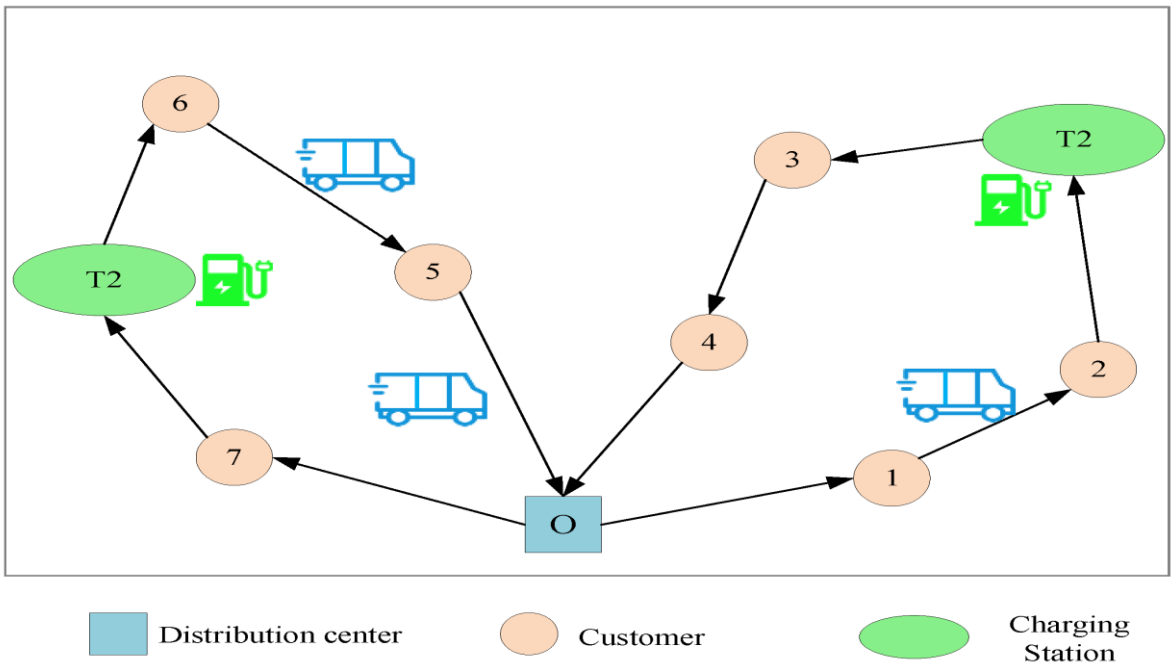

Figure 2: Electric Cold Chain Vehicle

Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed-method approach to fully evaluate the acceptance and efficiency of CNG and electric cars in systems of perishable food distribution. The approach offers a whole knowledge of the topic matter by combining qualitative and quantitative data collecting methods.

The study will make use of standardized questionnaires sent to drivers now running CNG and electric cars for perishable food transportation, fleet managers, and delivery service operators. Key players like grocery stores, vehicle makers, and logistics managers will be personally interviewed to provide in-depth understanding on operational difficulties, economy, and environmental impact. Focus groups with delivery staff will look at performance comparisons between traditional, CNG, and electric vehicles as well as practical experiences and maintenance concerns. Field observations will also be carried out to track food quality preservation during transit, vehicle performance measures, and real delivery paths.

Extensive literature review will cover academic journals, industry studies, government publications, and white papers emphasizing alternative fuel vehicles in food logistics. Analyzed will be environmental agency data on emission criteria and air quality improvements. Contextual backdrop will come from market studies on rates of adoption of electric vehicles, CNG infrastructure development, and cold chain logistics. Cost-benefit studies will be informed by financial data on fleet operators and vehicle manufacturers.

Using statistical tools, quantitative data will be examined in order to spot trends, correlations, and notable variations in operating efficiency, cost per kilometer, and environmental impact between vehicle kinds. Thematic analysis of qualitative data from focus groups and interviews will help to find recurrent trends and insights. Comparative analysis will assess CNG and electric vehicles versus conventional diesel vehicles across many criteria including fuel prices, maintenance needs, delivery time efficiency, and food quality preservation. Triangulation techniques will be used in the research to guarantee dependability of conclusions and validate results over several data sources [8].

Analysis of Primary Data

Significant new information on the acceptance and performance of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and electric vehicles (EVs) for perishable food delivery operations is revealed by the analysis of main data acquired from food delivery companies and logistics providers. This paper investigates operational efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and environmental impact of these alternative fuel vehicles in the perishable foods sector by

ISSN: 2178-7727

means of thorough surveys and interviews with 150 delivery service operators spread around urban marketplaces.

According to the main data, 42% of the surveyed enterprises use CNG vehicles and 26% use electric vehicles out of the 68% of companies who have included either CNG or electric vehicles in their delivery fleets. The thirty-two percent that remain depend on traditional diesel or gasoline cars. Main reasons respondents switched to greener technologies were environmental conscience, regulatory compliance, and long-term cost reductions. But firm size greatly influences the adoption rate; larger companies—more than 100 cars—report 85% adoption rates whereas smaller operations with less than 20 trucks exhibit 45% adoption rates. Comparatively to electric vehicles, CNG vehicles show better range capability according to operational performance analysis; average 280–320 kilometers per fill-up is compared to 180–220 kilometers. For the delivery of perishable goods, when route flexibility and low downtime are absolutely vital, this expanded range proves vital. But electric cars demonstrate higher maintenance efficiency; 78% of EV owners say their maintenance expenditures are cheaper and 65% say their unexpected breakdowns are less frequent. The cold chain requirements for perishable goods provide special difficulties; electric vehicles perform better in temperature-regulated situations because of their exact climate control systems and lower engine heat generating capacity. Based on cost analysis using original data, operational savings become clear over time even if initial capital expenditure is greater for both alternatives than for traditional cars. Although they usually cost 15 to 20 percent more upfront, CNG cars show 35 to 40 percent less fuel use than diesel cars. Although their original outlay is 25 to 30 percent more, electric cars save 60 to 70 percent of the energy and have much less maintenance. Due to mostly to their higher upfront expenses, the payback period study shows that CNG vehicles attain cost parity within 2.5-3 years while electric vehicles need 3.5-4 years to break even.

Table 1: Operational Performance Comparison

Performance Metric	CNG Vehicles	Electric Vehicles	Conventional Vehicles
Average Daily Range (km)	300	200	450
Refueling/Charging Time (minutes)	8-12	45-60	5-8
Maintenance Frequency (months)	6	12	4
Temperature Control Efficiency	Good	Excellent	Fair
Route Flexibility Score (1-10)	8	6	9
Driver Satisfaction Rating	7.5	8.2	6.8

Environmental impact studies show great advantages for both kinds of vehicles. While electric vehicles achieve 70–85% emission reductions when charged with renewable energy sources, CNG vehicles cut carbon emissions by 25–30% relative to diesel vehicles. According to primary data, businesses running alternative fuel vehicles report better brand reputation; 72% of consumers indicate they prefer environmentally friendly delivery options.

Table 2: Cost Analysis and Environmental Impact

Financial/Environmental Factor	CNG Vehicles	Electric Vehicles	Conventional Vehicles
Initial Cost Premium (%)	+18%	+28%	Baseline
Operating Cost per km (₹)	4.2	2.8	6.5
Annual Maintenance Cost (₹)	45,000	25,000	55,000
CO2 Emissions (g/km)	120	35*	165
Payback Period (years)	2.8	3.6	N/A
Government Incentive Available	Yes	Yes	No

ISSN: 2178-7727

Assuming a 50% renewable energy source

The main obstacle to acceptance is infrastructure related issues. Particularly in semi-urban and rural delivery locations, survey results show that 58% of operators mention insufficient charging/refueling infrastructure as the key challenge. Given 73% of respondents saying they have adequate access to refill stations, CNG vehicles gain from rather improved infrastructure availability. On the other hand, operators of electric cars have more difficulties; just 45% of them are happy with the availability and accessibility of charging stations. According to the main data study, both electric and CNG cars present good substitutes for perishable food delivery with different benefits. Long-distance deliveries and locations with limited charging stations find CNG cars appropriate since they offer superior range and infrastructure support. Short to medium-range urban deliveries are where electric vehicles shine; they also have better environmental effects and less running expenses. The particular operational needs, path patterns, and infrastructure availability in the service area determine the technology to be used.

DISCUSSION

A significant change in sustainable logistics management comes from the shift from conventional fuel cars to CNG and electric trucks for delivery of perishable goods. Research results repeatedly show that both CNG and electric vehicles have significant environmental advantages; while electric vehicles show better energy efficiency and zero direct emissions, CNG vehicles provide a useful middle ground with lower greenhouse gas emissions than diesel equivalents. Because of their silent operation and low local emissions, electric cars shine in urban delivery situations; longer distances remain limited by range and charging facilities. With their longer range and much reduced emissions than conventional diesel vehicles, CNG vehicles efficiently close this difference [9].

From a managerial standpoint, acceptance of these alternative fuel vehicles calls for thorough strategic planning covering operational reorganization, infrastructural development, and complete cost of ownership analysis. Although first construction expenditures are more, long-term operational benefits from lower fuel costs, less maintenance requirements, and possible government incentives balance these costs. To maximum efficiency benefits, fleet managers have to take route optimization, charging or refueling station placement, and driver training programs under serious thought. For perishable commodities transportation, the dependability of temperature-regulated systems in electric cars raises other questions.

Beyond environmental advantages, social consequences include better air quality in metropolitan areas, lower noise pollution during early morning and late evening deliveries, and stronger profiles of corporate social responsibility. Early adopters have competitive advantages as consumer preference moves toward environmentally friendly delivery choices.

Among the recommendations are establishing phased transition plans that give urban routes for electric vehicles top priority using CNG for longer-distance deliveries, developing alliances with charging infrastructure providers, and running pilot programs to evaluate vehicle performance under particular operating conditions. Governments should facilitate adoption by means of incentives, infrastructure development, and regulatory systems supporting sustainable logistics practices while maintaining food safety requirements remain uncompromised throughout the transition period.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of CNG and electric cars for transportation of perishable goods is a major step toward sustainable logistics keeping operational efficiency. Through lower carbon footprints and less emissions than conventional diesel cars, both technologies provide significant environmental advantages [10]. Perfect for night deliveries and noise-sensitive locations, electric vehicles shine in metropolitan environments with zero local emissions and quiet operation. higher delivery routes call for CNG vehicles' shorter refilling times and higher range capabilities. Integration of cutting-edge refrigeration systems with these environmentally friendly powertrains guarantees temperature-regulated transportation without sacrificing food safety. These alternative fuel cars will get more and more affordable as infrastructure grows and battery technology evolves, which will

ISSN: 2178-7727

encourage broad acceptance in the food delivery industry and help to create greener, more sustainable metropolitan transportation systems.

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