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Telematics Cuts 200-Truck Fleet Annual Fuel Spending by Nearly \$200K

By Daryl Lubinsky



Through a wireless vehicle management system, BLS Trucking can track vehicle locations, forestall vehicle theft, and reduce idling times.

For BLS Trucking, which transports lumber for about 60 stores in seven states, preventing its drivers from taking the company's trucks home at night has been a major task.

Josh Zimmet, executive administrator for Dayton-Ohio based BLS Trucking, said closely tracking its trucks can mean millions of dollars toward a company's bottom line, especially in these days of record-high gasoline prices.

"A truck going just 10 miles out of the way every night to someone's home could cost me thousands of dollars over the course of a year," said Zimmet, who supervises a 210-truck fleet, primarily International and Freightliner models. In addition to preventing unauthorized use and unnecessary idling time, he also wanted to combat the company's increasing occurrence of truck thefts.

In 2006, BLS implemented a wireless vehicle management solution. By eliminating unauthorized use and unnecessary idling time, BLS saved \$188,539 in fuel consumption alone during the first year, amounting to more than \$900 in savings per vehicle.

Curbing Unauthorized Use & Idling

BLS drivers often drove their trucks home after the workday, hoping management wouldn't notice. Since the company installed the vehicle management solution, Zimmet said some drivers now test the system.

"Sure enough, we call them and say, 'Hey, you need to at least report this.' A truck that gets seven miles a gallon doesn't take much with today's prices to start incurring significant dollars. We've saved some serious fuel dollars over the course of the last year and a half by putting a stop to these trucks going home," Zimmet said.

Zimmet uses a new product that sends instant alerts to his cell phone when a truck is speeding, operating outside a certain area, or idling too long. Any time a truck idles for more than 30 minutes, a text message is sent to Zimmet's phone and e-mail.

Theft & False Claim Documentation Offered

Three BLS trucks were stolen in the year prior to the implementation. Since installing the GPS vehicle management system in its trucks, the company has experienced only one vehicle theft, and the system helped recover the vehicle within 24 hours. "We pulled it up on the system and saw where the truck was. The truck was parked without anybody in it when the police showed up," Zimmet recalled.

BLS Trucking can now document a truck's location in response to a report of a problem involving a company truck. A BLS driver was recently accused of hitting a parked car, but through GPS technology, BLS proved the truck was at another location at the time of the accident. "Probably three times in the last six months I've been able to use it to basically prove we weren't at a scene," Zimmet said.