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MOBILE INFORMATION EXCHANGE

## Vehicle and asset tracking - why it's vital for all fleets

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# LEADING PROVIDER OF FLEET AND MOBILE ASSET SOLUTIONS

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Telematics can help ease the burden related to high fuel consumption, driver safety concerns, costly maintenance requirements and much more.



***Telematics solutions offer a variety of benefits for fleets including making them safer on the road, increasing their productivity, reducing their environmental impact, providing them with measures to meet compliance requirements and preventing loss through increased security. And these are just a few examples.***

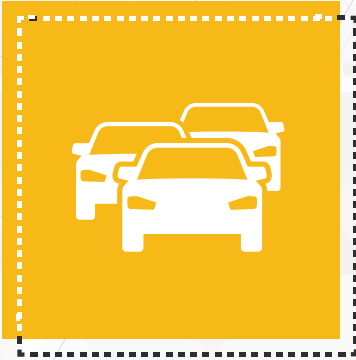
Ultimately all the benefits that telematics is now able to provide stems from its ability to track the precise and constant location of vehicles and other assets through the use of GPS, GSM and other technologies. Not only does tracking relay location but it also communicates a variety of statistics about vehicles and other assets such as average speed, fuel consumption, idling time, engine hours and so forth.

Tracking can be passive or active. Passive tracking stores information in the on-board computer throughout the day and once the vehicle or asset returns to a predetermined location, the data is downloaded for evaluation. Active tracking collects the same information but the data is transmitted in real-time via cellular or satellite networks. The vast majority of telematics solutions nowadays use a combination of both passive and active tracking so you get the best of both worlds.

It's also good to note how reliable tracking has become since its inception. Most experts agree that it is accurate to within three meters. Some systems can even track to within less than one meter. Of course, this depends on certain factors. It becomes more difficult to track a vehicle or asset when it's outdoors and when it's in an area densely populated with other devices. However, the prevalence of satellites, sensors, cellular and wireless technology is increasing by the day so tracking will continue to become more and more accurate.



Here's a look at some of the tangible value that vehicle and asset tracking brings to any type fleet, no matter the industry it operates in or its size:



### Recovering stolen vehicles or assets

The thought of having one of your vehicles or assets stolen might be unpleasant but it is something that all fleet managers, owners and supervisors must be cognizant of. Alongside having insurance and putting anti-theft measures in place within your vehicles, tracking can also help to lessen the impact of potential theft.

As soon as, for example, a vehicle is stolen, you can track that vehicle's location on a map in real-time.

You can hand over that information to law enforcement to help them track down the culprits and hopefully apprehend them. Having access to tracking data can lessen the amount of time it takes to trace a stolen vehicle. This will not only help you get the vehicle back quicker but also reduce potential vandalism and damage to the vehicle.

There is obviously the likelihood that the thieves might locate the tracking device within the vehicle and destroy it to cover their tracks. Luckily, many telematics companies (such as MiX Telematics) have developed their on-board computers to be tamper-proof making it difficult to remove without authorization.

It can also be helpful to add signage or something similar to your fleet vehicles to show that a tracking system is installed. In some cases, the mere idea that a vehicle or asset is being "watched" can serve as a deterrent against would-be thieves.



### Detecting misuse by drivers and/or operators

Tracking can help you see exactly which paths your vehicles take on a daily basis and at which locations they stop. If a vehicle is making unplanned stops at unapproved or even restricted locations, it can be seen on a map and the driver can be questioned about the reason behind the stop. It may be an one-off thing but if it happens frequently, they may be using the company's vehicle for personal reasons.

Telematics can also track the movements of mobile or fixed assets, such as excavators or generators, within a site. By combining a geo-fencing feature alongside tracking you can restrict the movement of an asset to a particular area. Should the asset be moved outside of that area, a notification or alert will be immediately sent to the relevant parties and the unusual movement can be investigated. The same geo-fencing and tracking combo can be applied to vehicles.



## Reducing insurance costs

When you consider that the annual accident rate for commercial fleets within the US is around 20%<sup>1</sup>, it is absolutely vital to have insurance. Not to mention, it's illegal not to have it. Since you have no choice, you might as well get the most out of it.

The majority of insurance companies now know about telematics solutions and

the benefits that they can provide. Because of this, companies are more likely to provide incentives in the form of a discount to fleets that have a tracking solution installed.

Now, this is not always a given so it's best to have an open discussion with your current or prospective insurance provider about this before assuming they'll give a discount. A lot of insurance companies will first want some assurance that the installation of a tracking solution has made a notable difference in the safety of your fleet. For this you will need to provide data on your fleet's accident rate before and after the implementation of tracking. Luckily, a telematics solution can collect and store this type of data for you and generate a report that you can show your insurer to prove that a decline in accidents has indeed occurred.

The savings you get from spending less on monthly insurance premiums can be funnelled into other areas of your fleet that may need attention.



## Improve overall efficiency

Tracking can help optimize the way your fleet operates. As has been mentioned before, tracking helps you monitor the routes your drivers take to get to certain locations, the amount of time that it takes to get from one location to another and how long the driver stopped at each location. Luckily, a telematics solution (like MiX Fleet Manager) can provide customized reports on each of the aforementioned so you don't have to do so manually.

Using this data, you can pinpoint what areas need to be improved upon. If you determine that a regularly used route is particularly traffic heavy on certain days and at certain times, you can plan jobs around this or find a less busy route to take. Driving on routes that are traffic heavy leads to increased idling, fuel consumption and vehicle wear and tear, and all of that increases fleet costs.

If a driver is regularly stopped excessively long at locations (in comparison to other drivers), it might be worthwhile to find out why that is. The longer a driver is parked at a location, the longer it takes them to get to their next destination. This can then result in that driver not completing all their given tasks on time, which decreases efficiency.



It can also lead to customer dissatisfaction if your fleet operates within an industry that works one-on-one with customers regularly.

Real-time tracking is helpful for seeing where a driver is at any given moment so that as soon as a new job comes in, the nearest available driver can be dispatched to that location. This means less wasted fuel and the driver is likely to arrive at the job much quicker.

You can also use tracking to determine vehicle or asset inactivity. This is very important to know because you want the equipment you've invested money in to be used to its fullest capacity. If a vehicle or asset has been stationary for a period of time, you might need to reassign it to a different site where resources may be scarce or it might help you determine that you don't need that additional vehicle or asset at all.



## Conclusion

There are a lot of additional benefits you can get from tracking your fleet than what we've mentioned but there's no doubt about it that it's essential for increased safety and productivity. One of the best, overarching benefits of tracking though is that it facilitates real-time decision-making and can help you be more proactive instead of reactive.

## Sources

1. Antich, Mike. (2018, May 25). Commercial fleet accident rate reaches 20%. Retrieved from <https://www.automotive-fleet.com/303123/fleet-safety-metrics-reverse-negatively-accidents-increase>.



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## About MiX Telematics

