

Using Telematics Data to manage your fleet



What is Telematics?

Telematics refers to data captured by devices installed in your vehicle, some as original equipment installed by manufacturers, others added after delivery of the vehicle. Think of them as the equivalent of an airplane's "black box" but for cars or trucks. Telematic units capture specific data with most requiring a monthly subscription.

Data Captured by Telematic Systems.

Telematic systems capture a variety of data. The most common include vehicle location, speed, fast starts, hard braking events, and lane deviation. Some can be tied to electronic logging devices (ELDs) for larger trucks. Depending on the complexity of the system, fuel economy from vehicle operation and any needed upcoming maintenance for a vehicle can also be tracked. Some systems can even identify if a driver is wearing a seat belt.

The data gathered depends on the device or system used.

What's useful to your company?

Telematics provide *data to your company* to help identify a problem with your fleet that you're trying to solve. Problems range from vehicle efficiency to maintenance costs to driver behavior and vehicle speed to documentation for a possible claims defense.

Some companies use data generated as a performance measure for an individual driver by use of a scorecard with data from the telematic system included as performance elements.

Other companies use data to help establish rates for transport and more efficient routes.



What do you do with the data?

If you have a telematic system installed in your vehicle(s), how often are you reviewing the data captured? At a minimum, data should be reviewed once a month.

Telematic systems are used to improve ongoing driver performance while on the road. Safe driving is not a periodic activity. It's an everyday activity and a *behavior!*

From review of the data, are trends arising by driver or by a certain type of incident, such as speeding? Are you seeing favorable trends, such as no speeding by drivers or no fast starts/hard braking events?

Positive reinforcement, coaching, or discipline?

From the periodic review, drivers who have no common events need to receive positive reinforcement to reinforce safe driving behavior.

Drivers who continually have speeding violations, hard braking, or fast starting events need coaching OR discipline. Use of coaching or discipline depends on the frequency and type of violations an individual driver has sustained. Any existing disciplinary systems need to be used for drivers with frequent speeding violations, hard braking, or fast starting events.

Be sure to document any coaching or discipline used on an individual driver.

Not using data generated to manage your drivers hurts your overall fleet safety program and claims defense. With telematic systems becoming more common, lawyers will inquire if these systems are installed in vehicles, especially post-accident.

Summary

Telematic systems monitoring vehicle location, speed, fast starts, or hard brakes are becoming more universally used and user friendly. Systems have also expanded capabilities to include vehicle or cargo security. Managing your fleet using data from telematic systems provides direction to improve your operations, including fleet safety, security, and vehicle maintenance costs.

Contact your West Bend loss control representative for more information on fleet telematic systems.

