

Common Methods Of Vehicle Tracking

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The most common methods of vehicle tracking vary somewhat depending on the size of the vehicle fleet. Large fleets tend to use equipment that is more elaborate because they can afford the greater cost, while small and medium sized fleets generally use less expensive systems that provide less functionality. New technology, however, is rapidly changing the cost effectiveness and quality of tracking systems available to these small and medium sized fleets.

Large fleets

Large fleets that can take advantage of economies of scale typically use some form of GPS tracking and a central base station or dispatch point. The vehicle units can be quite expensive, as can the base station infrastructure and staffing requirements. Only the largest fleets can usually afford the capital investment that is required and the long timeframe that is needed to gain a return on that investment. Additionally, these types of systems require a monthly fee that can quickly become quite expensive.

Small and medium fleets

Most small and medium fleets will use some variation of vehicle tracking that is less costly to implement and maintain. For some this means using radios and a dispatch center, mobile telephones and a central office, or something similar. They may have a computer-based tracking process in the central location or, for very small fleets, they may opt instead for a simple map and manual tracking.

Quite a number of small fleets, in the range of one to ten vehicles, do not use active vehicle tracking at all. This may be due to the costs involved, lack of experience with tracking processes, or lack of awareness of the significant benefits that can be realized by an effective vehicle tracking system.

New technology

The newest technology available has the potential to radically alter the affordability and efficiency of vehicle tracking systems. Pioneered by AutoAlert, this system uses a small unit installed in the vehicle and a web based interface that is accessed by a standard mobile telephone, laptop computer, or PC.

The advantages are many. First, the start up cost of the system is extremely reasonable due to the relatively low cost of the vehicle unit itself. Second, there are no ongoing subscription or maintenance fees, thereby minimizing operating costs. And third, fleet managers can access tracking information from wherever they may be with just their mobile telephone. This allows them more freedom to get out of the office and into the field where their time is best utilized.

What does it all mean?

For the first time, small and medium sized fleets can gain access to an economical and easy to use vehicle tracking system. This means they can start reaping the benefits of reduced driver downtime, more efficient dispatching, field replenishment of supplies, etc. In a competitive business model, the extra edge gained from efficient vehicle tracking can mean the difference between a fleet owner prospering or just getting by. Richard Harris is a vehicle telecommunications expert who has developed an innovative vehicle tracking system. He advises on vehicle tracking, and a range of information can be found at www.autoalert-alarms.co.uk/news_toc.jsp