

Networkfleet helps U.S. Marine Corps reduce operating costs and improve productivity

Summary

In late 2003, the Southwest Region Fleet Transportation (SWRFT) organization of the U.S. Marine Corps began to equip their fleet vehicles with Networkfleet, Networkcar's wireless fleet management solution, at the Miramar Air Station, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, San Diego Recruit Depot and Twentynine Palms Air Ground Combat Center. Thousands of drivers use fleet vehicles on and off the bases in Southern California, including the Marines, Navy and Civil Service employees and contractors.

The Criteria

SWRFT sought a wireless fleet management solution to monitor vehicle performance and increase driver safety on bases.

The Solution

Affordable Monthly Fees

The Networkfleet wireless fleet management solution consists of an in-vehicle hardware unit and a web-based software package/service. Networkfleet's monthly service fees are almost half those of other vendors.

Easy Deployment

With its plug and play design, Networkfleet requires no wire splicing or drilling of holes in the vehicle. Unlike other systems, installation time is less than 30 minutes per vehicle. Since the Networkfleet software is completely hosted by Networkcar, SWRFT does not have to worry about downloading the application. All managers using the software simultaneously from various locations since the Networkfleet application is accessible via the internet from any computer, 24/7.

Robust set of features

Even though the Networkfleet system is user-friendly and easy to navigate, its robust functionality provides a comprehensive set of vehicle diagnostics data in addition to location data. With this special functionality, SWRFT can receive alerts whenever a vehicle has a diagnostic trouble code or is due for scheduled maintenance. It also will allow fleet managers to obtain valuable idle-time, mileage and fuel efficiency data for each vehicle. In addition, Networkfleet is able to provide actual speed data, which aids in improving driver safety.

The Benefits

Increased Vehicle Utilization

Networkfleet's value to SWRFT's fleet managers is clear. SWRFT assigns vehicles based on monthly minimum mileage usage and also makes vehicles available from a vehicle pool via an automated check-out terminal for drivers that do not meet minimum mileage requirements. Previously, SWRFT could not easily collect daily mileage data to evaluate the accuracy of reported mileage. Based on the data that Networkfleet provides, SWRFT has been able to reduce the size of its assigned vehicle fleet and reassign drivers who underutilize their vehicles to the check-out pool.

With Networkfleet, fleet managers can review the mileage of their vehicles on a more detailed basis to ensure proper utilization. "The number of man-hours it would take to make this determination previously would have outweighed the purchase value of the vehicles we would have cut. With Networkfleet, we have this information at our fingertips. This feature will help us manage our fleet size more effectively, and most importantly, reduce costs," said Bill Martine, Camp Pendleton fleet manager and regional maintenance coordinator.

With thousands of vehicles to manage, locating missing vehicles is often a challenge for military fleet managers. In the past, some vehicles were never recovered and replacement vehicles needed to be purchased. In one example, a vehicle was found covered in dust in the same spot that it was left three years earlier (and two years after SWRFT was forced to replace the vehicle with funds from a lean budget). In several cases, Networkcar-equipped vehicles have been located and recovered, both on- and off-base, saving the government significant replacement costs.

Safer Driving

Since SWRFT has deployed the Networkfleet solution, there has been a cultural shift on bases. Networkfleet monitors real vehicle speed directly from the engine computer to ensure accurate data and reports that information every two minutes of driving. Fleet managers receive daily reports showing if any vehicles exceed the speed threshold set by the facility.

"If a vehicle is tracked and is somewhere it shouldn't be or is going too fast, the driver's supervisor will receive a printed report for disciplinary measures," said Vince Sablan, motor transport fleet manager for MCRD San Diego. In the first three months of installation, over-speed incidents dropped by more than 30 percent.

"Networkcar's fleet management system helps us increase safety and security on the bases," Martine said. From the beginning of the program, in order to deter misuse and increase safety, notification stickers have been placed on vehicles so drivers know they are being monitored. "People are taking better care of their vehicles and are being more responsible," he continued.

Better Maintenance

In addition, Networkfleet notifies fleet managers via email when vehicles are due for maintenance, based on mileage or on the detection of a trouble code present on the vehicle. This enables fleet managers to bring their vehicles in from the field on a timely basis for maintenance and repairs. "The system helps us improve maintenance since we now have up-to-the minute information on the operating condition of each vehicle," Martine said. By identifying any issues early, Networkfleet allows fleet managers to proactively fix vehicle problems before they escalate into larger issues.

GSA Fleet, the federal organization that SWRFT leases from, requires that accurate odometer readings be collected and reported back on a monthly basis, which for their distributed fleet, has been a manual, labor-intensive process. Networkfleet automates this process and eliminates reporting inaccuracies. In addition, SWRFT saves on the labor costs involved with tracking down vehicles when a reading is not reported or if the reported information is incorrect.

Conclusion

To date, more than 1,000 SWRFT vehicles are equipped with Networkfleet. Networkfleet has significantly impacted SWRFT's fleet operations strategy, helping the organization increase driver safety on the bases and improve fleet vehicle utilization and maintenance.

About Networkcar

Networkcar (www.networkcar.com) is the leading provider of services for remotely monitoring the performance and location of fleet vehicles. Networkcar's wireless in-vehicle technology merges patented remote diagnostic systems with GPS-based Automatic Vehicle Location technology. Networkcar's wireless fleet management solution, Networkfleet, helps fleet operators reduce operating costs and improve productivity by providing remote online access to detailed vehicle information ranging from vehicle location to fuel efficiency trend data. The company recently received a 2004 Technology Leadership Award from Frost and Sullivan for Remote Vehicle Diagnostics and a 2005 Telematics Update Magazine Award for Best Commercial Vehicle Solution. Networkcar is headquartered in San Diego, CA.