



Combining Telematics and Trailer Tracking for Complete Fleet Visibility

Your telematics system helps you obtain useful information about your logistics operations, mostly revolving around truck location, routes, and driver behavior. This helps ensure the safe and timely delivery of goods to their final destination. However, telematics is not designed to provide full visibility to your trailers and its contents, leaving you largely blind to any tampering or changes in condition. It can also be difficult to ensure that drivers leave with the correct trailers and products, and that nothing is left behind at any given stop. Luckily, you don't need an entirely new system to gain these added insights. All you need is a trailer tracking solution that can integrate with your existing telematics and fleet management systems.

Why Not Stop at Telematics?

Since you likely already have a basic telematics system in place, at first glance, it might seem unnecessary to invest in another tracking system. After all, it's far easier to embrace a functional status quo than it is to learn a new system, regardless of its benefits. And perhaps this would be a reasonable concern, if not for one key factor: you don't necessarily need a whole new system to enhance your telematics, simply a supplement.

By embracing a trailer tracking system built to integrate with your telematics, you gain all the added benefits without any of the hassle. Once the system components are set up, the data it collects can be viewed alongside your telematics data. The effect is less like learning an entirely new system, and more like running a helpful upgrade on a system you already use daily in order to gain improved control over daily operations and more robust data that can be applied for trend analysis and problem solving.

Added Benefits of Trailer Tracking

By finding a trailer tracking system that integrates with your telematics, you gain a number of benefits to visibility. You can take advantage of this enhanced visibility to better understand and control your company's daily operations, making data-based decisions that can help you save both time and money while building a reputation for reliability. The primary added benefits of this integration include:

Visibility of Disconnected Trailers

Trailer tracking integrations expand your trailer visibility to disconnected and unpowered trailers. Telematics can provide limited trailer visibility when the trailer is connected to a powered-on truck, but most incidents of missing trailers



and cargo theft occur when the truck is turned off. By adding an independently-powered trailer tracking system, fleet managers have a record of where trailers are even when they're disconnected from a power source. This helps expand visibility into yard management functions, allowing operators to keep reliable records of trailer usage, location, and allocation in order to ensure proper utilization and maintenance patterns. This prevents trailers from experiencing excessive wear-and-tear while ensuring that resources are being used as efficiently as possible. These systems can also be equipped with sensors that alert managers to door tampering when the truck is powered off, helping to address security breaches as they happen and prevent cargo theft.

Visibility of Trailer Contents

Trailer tracking integrations also provide visibility for your trailer's contents, which your telematics system alone is not equipped to do. Telematics systems are, after all, truck-centric; trailer data is largely limited to overall trailer condition and what trailer is connected at that time. This precludes the need for unit-level cargo monitoring. By monitoring cargo on the level of the pallet or container, drivers can better ensure the condition of their cargo and receive assurance that the correct cargo is loaded at any given time. For instance, individual asset tags on pallets can be used to monitor shock, which can alert the driver if cargo has been jostled to a dangerous

degree. Upon receiving this alert, they can pull over and check on the cargo to prevent any further damage. This also enables pallet-level temperature monitoring, which can provide notifications if perishable items drop out of their critical range. Using trailer tracking to expand visibility to trailer contents also ensures that trucks leave with the correct, properly loaded trailer, with digitally-designated boundaries set up around loading premises triggering alerts that send custody data back to the fleet manager as soon as the truck leaves the facility.

Scope of Data Collection

One of the biggest benefits of integrating trailer tracking with your existing telematics is how it enhances your ability to collect data about your operations. Telematics already provides data about routes, fuel consumption, and driver behavior. With trailer tracking, you can also gain data on load size, asset conditions, dwell time, and more. When it comes to data collection, more is always better. After all, the more data you have access to, the more you can understand about your operations at a glance. That data can then be applied to make meaningful changes to improve business performance and to deal with unexpected day-to-day challenges. Incorporating trailer tracking unlocks a whole new range of data that can be combined with your existing telematics data for even greater benefits.



Tracking Your Trailer's Journey With and Without Trailer Tracking

Based on the data and visibility given by telematics, your trailer's journey looks fundamentally different with and without the inclusion of trailer tracking. Not only do they start and end in different places, but there are blind spots that occur when traveling with telematics alone. Let's take a deeper look at both.

Telematics Alone

When tracking your trailer's journey with telematics alone, your journey starts when the trailer is hooked up and the truck turns on to leave the facility. You'll be able to confirm that the truck has successfully hooked up to the trailer and what driver is behind the wheel. If your trailer is refrigerated, you'll be able to view the ambient temperature of the trailer. As you continue on your journey, you'll have access to location and route information, and driver behavior data will be stored in order to ensure road safety and indicate the need for any training initiatives. When the driver stops to rest, you lose visibility for the duration; when they set off again, you regain that visibility. At the end of the journey, when the trailer is disconnected, it is confirmed to no longer be with the truck, which can then move on to the next destination.

There are some clear gaps in the journey when using telematics alone. First, there is no

insight into the trailer's status prior to hook-up, and no way to confirm the identity of the specific trailer through the system. This makes it easy to mistakenly connect and leave with the incorrect trailer. Additionally, visibility is lost whenever the truck is turned off. This is a problem because these stops are when theft of cargo is most likely to occur. You will also note that while there is visibility into the ambient temperature of refrigerated trailers, a telematics system cannot account for the actual temperature of products, limiting visibility of perishable items. There's also no way to confirm the trailer's location once the truck leaves it behind.

Telematics and Trailer Tracking Combined

When you combine telematics and trailer tracking, your trailer's journey starts in the lot. When the trailer has received necessary maintenance, yard management can easily add it into rotation for pick-up. Once the truck arrives and leaves with the trailer, the system will provide an update of which trailer is leaving, what truck it's connected to, and what cargo and equipment it contains. For the duration of the journey, you receive updates on product conditions at the pallet-level, as well as notifications if they sustain any trauma or any critical conditions fall out of range. Whenever the truck is turned off, you will continue to receive updates at an established interval, as well as any updates about trailer tampering and open doors. When you reach your final destination, you maintain



visibility of the trailer and receive notification that the unloaded cargo and the truck are no longer traveling with it. Since telematics remains part of the solution, you also retain detailed location, route, and driver information at each stage.

By combining telematics and trailer tracking, tracking your trailer begins earlier in the process. This opens your system up to a wider array of uses, with applications in improving utilization, yard management, and maintenance rotations. It also provides a more granular view of your trailer's contents, allowing drivers to respond if critical conditions are not met. Also, the addition of trailer tracking provides a method of maintaining visibility even when the truck is turned off for tonight, allowing for continuous monitoring of product conditions and tampering. And at every stage of the transportation process, you can confirm custody by checking what trailer has what products while traveling with a given truck and driver. This ensures that nothing is left behind or misplaced, and provides a level of operational control that telematics cannot provide on its own.

Integrate Your Telematics with AirFinder Everywhere

AirFinder Everywhere is a trailer tracking solution designed to integrate with your existing telematics system to provide a more robust data library and enhanced process control. We provide granular visibility for both your connected and disconnected trailers, facilitating full operational visibility and reinforcing your telematics by offering unique capabilities. If you want to learn more about how AirFinder Everywhere and Link Labs can provide added value by integrating with your telematics system, [visit our website today!](#)