



Implementing a system that works to meet the needs of your fleet, will not only benefit your organisation in terms of delivering a cost-efficient operation, but it will enable your drivers and vehicles to stay operational, minimising Vehicle-Off-Road (VOR) time.

## A guide to why you need effective Fleet Management Software

**As a fleet or transport manager operating in the 'Essential Fleet Sector' you have a requirement both legally and financially to ensure that you are operating a safe, efficient and compliant fleet.**

Micro-management is not possible within large and diverse fleets and so making the right decision on which Fleet Management Software (FMS) to implement will prove invaluable.

Many vehicles operating within the 'Essential Fleet Sector' as you know, are not returned to base and are parked at, or near to an operative's residence overnight, so there is a real need for cohesive remote monitoring and in a digital format.

Implementing a system that works to meet the needs of your fleet, will not only benefit your organisation in terms of delivering a cost-efficient operation, but it will enable your drivers and vehicles to stay operational, minimising Vehicle-Off-Road (VOR) time.

Most FMS will have key elements that address and manage different issues these include, monitoring driver behaviour, asset tracking, monitoring vehicle health, helping with

compliance and route optimisation.

FMS will enable you as fleet or transport manager to have in effect 'eyes everywhere' and if real-time monitoring is enabled this will help improve the delivery of your services, with more effective or increased response times that meet your customers' needs - helping to maintain a valued corporate image.

Preventive maintenance will help to minimise vehicle repair costs. By using the diagnostic data gained with the use of FMS, vehicle health can be remotely monitored, alerting you to schedule a repair before a vehicle develops a more costly fault. Vehicle usage is also monitored, and the FMS uses this data to schedule routine maintenance to ensure your vehicles stay compliant out on the road.

Being able to track and monitor your vehicles and therefore drivers, also helps a fleet or transport manager to get a clearer picture of an individual's driving behaviour. Monitoring can help identify for example, when a driver was, going too fast, braking harshly, missing appointments and idling.

As it is the driver who controls the vehicle, as a fleet or transport manager you have to rely on their ability to drive efficiently and in a way that protects the assets of the business. Efficiency

is therefore in the hands of driver behaviour. This can be rewarded as well as penalised to encourage a safe and cohesive driving culture within an organisation. The data from the FMS provides a greater insight into a driver's behaviour and ability and can flag areas that need further improvement or training. It must be remembered though that the key to delivering improvements is to act upon the data generated.

Vehicle tracking also helps you to know where your vehicles are at all times. Some systems also offer geofencing which alerts you when for example, a vehicle has left your operational area, or entered a low-emission zone. It is also used to locate vehicles needing recovery.

With fuel costs rising daily, having the ability to make full use of route optimisation is crucial. Having operatives in the right place at the right time in an efficient manner, is so important. Without effective route planning, operatives could be sent from one end of their operational area to the other, missing service visits that could be scheduled en route.

If you are thinking of opting for a new system or one to replace an existing paper-based system, it is important to trial potential FMS before implementation to ensure that it is robust enough

to meet your needs. It is quite easy to lose sight of your needs when exposed to the huge variety and range of features offered by many software packages. Investment in FMS can be costly, so ensure the system you choose is scalable and that it can be upgraded as technology advances.

Another important consideration is how the data generated from your FMS is protected, does it meet with your organisation's data privacy policy.

Finally, you need to think about what support is offered, what happens if the system crashes for example, is there a helpline with technical help offered?

FMS is designed to help you to operationally automate your fleet management tasks and strengthen communication between all stakeholders enabling your operations to work efficiently on a large scale and over a wide operational area. It is therefore vital to use and interpret the fleet data generated during your fleet operations to make full use of your investment.

This article is meant as a general overview to FMS and there are many providers out there with systems offering different levels of complexity.