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TRANSPORTATION

AmeriPride fleet monitoring devices save company $500k in fuel and truck costs

Determined to quell speeding, idling and truck accidents, Minnetonka-based AmeriPride Uniform Services started installing high-tech monitoring devices across its entire fleet 20 months ago. The move is now paying off with safer driving, improved fuel efficiency and lower truck and delivery costs.

Officials at the linen and uniform servicing company say the firm won big when it installed a high-tech truck monitoring device called "inthinc" in more than 1,800 vehicles, at an estimated cost of roughly $50 per truck. The idea, which has been embraced by large trucking firms nationwide, was to promote safe driving among its 1,500 drivers and service managers through real-time monitoring and voice coaching.

The device installed in each AmeriPride delivery truck is activated by radio-frequency identification (RFID) cards carried by each driver. The device's "Safety Driven Telematics Units" collect information about the driver's behavior — such as speeding, seat belt usage, harsh braking or idling — and verbally coaches the driver in real time. The system also alerts managers back in the office of any unchecked safety violations or accidents and provides daily performance reports.

Months later, the full fleet is outfitted and the data is in:

• $500,000 reduction in fuel and maintenance costs in first 12 months

• 99 percent decrease in speeding events since implementation. "We were hoping for 50 percent," said Ben Saukko, AmeriPride communications director .

• 71 percent decrease in aggressive driving events (hard stops, hard acceleration, hard dips)

• 8 percent reduction in crashes per 100,000 miles driven in second half of 2015

• 95 percent reduction in idling (approximately 35,000 gallons of fuel saved in 2015)

"The safety of our employees and others out on the roads is a priority for us," said AmeriPride Fleet Manager Banny Allison. "This new telematics technology allows us to monitor driver behavior and proactively modify unsafe habits so we can reduce accidents and the many related expenses that go along with them."

DEE DEPASS