

WHITE PAPER: SPIREON - 13 BUYING AN ELD QUESTIONS

13 Questions to Ask When Buying an ELD

What to Look for in an ELD Solution

Choosing the right electronic logging device (ELD) is extremely important. By making the right decision, you can improve safety, boost efficiency, and ensure your long-term adherence to Department of Transportation (DOT) compliance requirements. However, make the wrong decision and you could end up with unreliable technology, unanticipated costs or irksome fees, and the possibility of starting the process all over again. This guide outlines the key factors to consider. By going beyond price and looking at added benefits and security, you can find the right fit for your fleet and a solution that will last for the long run.

1) ONE SOLUTION FOR ANY CLASS OF VEHICLE

In any fleet, there could be many types of vehicles: light-duty, van, box truck, bucket truck, or even tractor truck. You may even have trailers, equipment, or vehicles with no regulatory requirement to track. It is important that the solution you choose can be used for all the vehicles and assets in your fleet. Finding a universal solution will reduce your costs in several ways. First, your drivers and personnel won't have to learn multiple systems. Second, having one solution for all vehicles reduces the overall complexity of the entire solution.

What to Ask: Will the same solution work in all my fleet assets?



2) EASY INSTALLATION

The speed of installation can affect the overall ELD rollout. A complicated installation can be time consuming and potentially costly to your budget. Be sure to ask how quick the installation procedure is and all the costs involved. A plug-and-play solution simplifies the process, even getting you up and running in minutes, not days and hours.

What to Ask: What is the installation procedure and how long does it take?

3) AFFORDABLE PRICE

Many ELD solutions on the market are expensive, ranging up to \$2,500 for an enterprise-grade solution. When you consider hardware, professional installation, and the monthly recurring charge (MRC) for each vehicle, costs can add up. On the other hand, an inexpensive solution may not include all the right features to suit your needs. Look at your ELDs as an investment rather than an expense. A good ELD solution will offer far more benefits and opportunities for fleet savings than costs in the long-term. For example, saving yourself one form-and-manner violation may result in an ELD solution paying for itself. You can also reduce costs by choosing an ELD solution that can be used with an existing mobile device, eliminating the need to purchase new equipment.

What to Ask: What are the total costs of getting started? Be sure to ask about the device, implementation, training, and expected ongoing fees.

4) SIMPLE TO OPERATE

Having an intuitive interface is essential to a successful ELD deployment. Drivers have many responsibilities when they're on the road. They need a solution that makes it easy to update their status, complete vehicle inspections, and swiftly provide a compliance report during roadside inspections. Administrators need robust data collection and reporting so that they can easily monitor Hours of Service (HOS) compliance and violations. A confusing user interface or complicated workflow may jeopardize your compliance program.

What to Ask: Is the ELD easy to use?

5) COMPATIBLE FOR USE WITH SMARTPHONES

Compatibility with a smartphone, tablet, or rugged handheld helps reduce upfront costs by eliminating the need to buy and install a dash-mounted single-purpose on board computer. Additionally, for drivers who are already comfortable with using consumer mobile devices, this gives them a head start on learning the technology.

What to Ask: Does the ELD support iOS and Android? Can the ELD be used with off-the-shelf mobile devices?



6) EVENT-BASED SOLUTION

Most telematics solutions are time-based, meaning they periodically ask the device to provide information on where it is and how fast it's going, and then record that information. This is also referred to as a ping rate. Depending on the frequency, the polling could occur from every thirty seconds up to fifteen minutes. Then they take a scientific guess as to what happened to that vehicle during the time when there was no communication.

Many things can happen to that vehicle in between those pings. That's why you should look for an event-based solution that records and transmits data every time there is an event change (location, speed, harsh braking, harsh acceleration, harsh cornering, engine diagnostics, etc.). Having access to accurate and timely data will enable your fleet to make the most intelligent business decisions.

What to Ask: Is the ELD solution time or event-based?

7) A SOLUTION THAT EVOLVES WITH CHANGING REGULATIONS

As regulations change and new regulations are released, your ELD provider needs to be able to adapt to ensure your future compliance. If tomorrow, the government releases something else, you want to ensure the provider you've chosen is going to be on top of it.

What to Ask: How will you ensure your solution remains compliant?



8) ROBUST AND CLOUD-BASED

Your Hours of Service data is critical to your business. That's why you should put reliability at the top of the list when considering solutions. An ELD solution that leverages a cloud architecture is more reliable and robust. Even if something happens to the smartphone or tablet, a cloud-based solution ensures your data is safe and secure.

Take the Spireon FleetLocate Compliance solution as an example. Here's how it works: Spireon's cloud-based platform interconnects telematics device and the fleet management portal with a mobile device running the Spireon FleetLocate application. Vehicular and positional data recorded by the Spireon FL7 device is sent to the server over a cellular connection. The aggregated data is organized and presented through a user-friendly interface in various forms (reports, maps, and notifications). Spireon data can also be extracted for any number of uses via an API.

Why Spireon FleetLocate Is Better:



More Reliable and No Back Office Intervention Required — If the mobile device malfunctions for whatever reason, the cloud-based platform will not lose any data, nor will it impact the driver's logs. As soon as the mobile device starts working again or the driver receives another mobile device and logs in, they will have a full history of their logs. No back-office intervention is needed to fill in logs during this period.



No Pairing Process — The system does not rely on device pairing through wireless technology which may not be reliable enough for this critical circumstance. No pairing means you avoid other problems like compatibility issues with wireless chipsets or wireless interference from other electronics.



Reduces Power Consumption for Longer Battery Life — The cloud-based platform simply triggers the mobile device to wake up when a notification to the driver is needed, instead of the application running in the background. As a result, the mobile device uses a fraction of the power so batteries are not depleted quickly.



Compatibility with different platforms (Android and iOS)



Compliance — Drivers can maintain accurate logs even when operating several different vehicles.



Consistency of Coverage — Even if the vehicle is going in and out of cellular coverage, a cloud-based platform like Spireon FleetLocate picks up and stores data whenever connections are made throughout the day.

What to Ask: How robust is the solution? Is it cloud-based?

9) PRE- AND POST-TRIP INSPECTION

Regulations specify that a post-trip inspection must be completed after each trip, but many companies would also like their drivers to complete a pre-trip inspection. Look for an ELD solution that tags inspections as pre or post, and can send alerts for inspections not completed.

What to Ask: How does the ELD handle vehicle inspections?

10) BENEFITS BEYOND COMPLIANCE

Although not required by the ELD mandate, support for rulesets and exemptions will make the driver's life easier. Having a solution that calculates all the driver's hours, and shows exactly how much time they have remaining is a huge benefit and helps ensure they stay compliant with the Hours of Service regulations. There are many exemptions out there to the rulesets, so it's smart to choose a vendor that has the ability to update the solution with new exemptions as they are required.

Even if right now you only need to be compliant. Make a smart investment by choosing a solution that can be upgraded with other advanced features such as Driver Vehicle Inspection Reports (DVIR), International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) support, routing, risk management, driver safety, and third-party add-in solutions like cameras, temperature sending and tire pressure monitoring. With extra features, you can leverage your ELD for greater efficiency and potential cost-savings. Go beyond Hours of Service and discover at how the telematics solution can support other aspects of your business.

What to Ask: What other advanced features does the ELD offer? What rulesets and exemptions are supported?

11) ACCIDENT TELEMATICS

When a large truck is in an accident, it is typically assumed they are at fault. Having a solution that can provide accident telematics data is extremely valuable in helping understand the events that led up to a collision. Ask about this important feature.

What to Ask: Can the solution provide data for accident reconstruction?

12) CUSTOMER CUSTOMIZATION

No two fleets are exactly the same or have the same needs. You may determine you need a report, dashboard, rule or some other pertinent piece of data that is unique to you and would help you better manage your fleet. In some cases, a vendor may ask you to submit a special request and state your business case. In other words, you must convince the vendor to help you. When and if they fulfill your request depends on how important it is to them, not to you the customer. Bottom line, your request could take months or result in extra charges. Ask up front about how flexible the vendor is for customization.

What to Ask: Can I customize the ELD solution? What is the process?

13) VENDOR EXPERIENCE AND REPUTATION

Beware of flash-in-the-pan vendors who make big promises. Look to the vendor's experience and its reputation in the industry as evidence of reliability. To get the most out of your investment, you want an ELD provider that will act as a partner, listen to your needs, and is in it for the long haul. A vendor with a broader offering of solutions and services can provide more long term value than one that only sells one product, or just recently came on the scene.

What is their track record? Find out who their top clients are and how long they have been with the company. A commitment to research and development and innovation, and a strong security program are hallmarks of a good company.

What to Ask: How long has your company been in business? How many customers and subscribers do you have?

The Spireon FleetLocate Compliance Solution

If you need to stay compliant with all current and future DOT compliance requirements – you need the Spireon FleetLocate Compliance Solution.

This solution is driven by the FL7, a small but powerful device that collects all the data you need to comply with the ELD mandate, and take fleet management to the next level. The FleetLocate Compliance Solution combines all the functionality of FleetLocate Standard and Advanced and adds fully compliant capability to track Hours of Service, conduct Driver Vehicle Inspection Reports and track state miles to simplify International Fuel Tax Agreement administration.



Track Driver Behavior

Allows you to set thresholds and alerts for risky driving like speeding, hard turns, coasting, swerving, gear usage and more. Also allows you to review performance across your fleet, by group and by driver.

View Engine Fault Codes

Let your vehicles tell you what they need by reading and reporting on engine diagnostic codes as simple as tire pressure and battery life to major system alerts.

Simple Installation

The device plugs straight into an OBDII port, removing the burden of complicated installations.

About Spireon

Spireon, Inc. is the industry's leading open connected vehicle company, providing businesses and consumers with powerful Big Data insights to track, manage and protect their most valuable assets. The award-winning Spireon NSpire open platform delivers rich information from any GPS connected vehicle or asset, converting that information into actionable insight. Headquartered in Irvine, CA, Spireon's open connected vehicle platform now supports more than three million active subscribers across the company's growing suite of product offerings for new and used car dealers, lenders and financial institutions, rental car agencies, insurers, consumers, and fleet, trailer and asset management companies.

Headquarters:
16802 Aston Street
Irvine, CA 92606

Date Founded: 2002

Number of Employees: Over 400 Full & Part-Time

Number of Managed Devices: 3.75 Million