

MEETING THE DEMANDS OF FSMA AND BOOSTING ASSET UTILIZATION

**Sharp Transportation Uses FleetLocate from Spireon
Integrated with LoadMaster from McLeod
to Solve Reefer and Dry Van Business Challenges**



The Challenges

Sharp Transportation operates out of Wellsville, Utah and hauls freight across the country in both dry van and refrigerated trailers. Two of their business challenges are common to trucking companies that run reefers and dry vans—managing reefer temperatures for food freight and keeping their dry vans turning. In both cases, the integrated technologies of Spireon and McLeod help Sharp meet these challenges by providing timely access to the actionable data needed to make informed decisions.

- **MONITOR AND DOCUMENT REEFER TEMPERATURES FOR FOOD FREIGHT**

LoadMaster® updates automatically with real-time, Carriers hauling food that must be temperature controlled have always needed to be diligent about monitoring the temperature in the trailer. However, without temperature monitoring technology in the trailers, this was difficult. Drivers could take a reading of the reefer temperature manually from the reefer unit while stopped, but there was no mechanism for monitoring the temperature constantly during transit.

For a variety of reasons, such as a reefer unit that became low on refrigerant, the temperature inside the trailer might climb out of range before reaching the destination. The result could be that the freight would be rejected by the consignee after it was discovered upon arrival that the correct temperature range had not been maintained.

The Food Safety Modernization Act raises the bar even further for refrigerated carriers. Carriers need to be able to monitor and document the temperature in the reefer for the entire time that the food is in transit. In order to meet this requirement, carriers need technology that records and transmits temperature readings from the reefer at regular intervals.

- **IDENTIFY UNDERUTILIZED DRY VAN TRAILERS AND INCREASE TURNS**

Many carriers enter into agreements with shippers to use a pool of trailers. Carriers drop and hook—a full trailer is unhooked and left at the yard, and then

an empty trailer is picked up. This allows the shipper to unload the freight on their schedule without detaining the driver.

The problem that can arise is that trailers end up staying in the yard and not circulating. Sometimes the shipper uses some of the trailers for additional storage space. For the carrier, this puts pressure on the bottom line, because trailers are assets that cost money to acquire. Poor asset utilization translates into more capital tied up in assets than is necessary.

The challenge is keeping track of the location of each trailer. Dispatch records may indicate where trailers should be, but there are several difficulties with this approach. One problem is that there is no simple way to view all of the relevant trailer location data and see quickly where all of the trailers are located. Another problem is that some of the data could be inaccurate, and the only way to ensure accuracy is through the labor-intensive, costly, and error-prone method of having someone walk through the yards frequently to document which trailers are where.

The Solution

Sharp Transportation solved all of these problems by integrating Spireon's FleetLocate technology into McLeod's LoadMaster system. Sharp started using FleetLocate for trailer tracking in 2012, but at that time, they used a different dispatch system which didn't integrate with Spireon. This meant that operations staff had to go out of the dispatch system to access data from Spireon. Once they added



LoadMaster, Spireon data was easily viewed within the dispatch screens.

"We can access everything in McLeod," says Kevin Boydston, Sharp's director of operations. "The integration is seamless. The dispatch screen shows

the tractor location from our mobile comm system and the trailer location from Spireon, so we can look at that easily to be certain that the right trailer is moving with the right tractor. If we want to look at our trailer pools, Spireon makes it easy to see where each trailer is located."

In 2016 Sharp had Spireon's FleetLocate Temperature Monitoring (FL14) installed on all of their reefers. "The FL14 records the temperatures of the return air," Boydston says. "We get an update on the reefers every four-to-six minutes."

The trailer data is transmitted through a cellular network. "As long we're within the range of a cell tower, we can receive

data," Boydston says. "The data goes to the Spireon website and then LoadMaster is reaching out to Spireon and pulling in that information."

The Benefits

- **WE'RE FSMA COMPLIANT.**

Sharp now has the ability to monitor and document reefer temperatures when transporting food. "It's easy to pull up a history of time-stamped return air temperatures in LoadMaster," Boydston says. "If three months from now, someone questions whether or not we maintained the freight at the correct temperature, we can refer to this record to prove we did everything right."

- **WE CAN CREATE EASY-TO-READ GRAPHS.**

"With just a click, we can create a graph that shows the data in a visual format. The actual temperature recorded and transmitted by the Spireon FL14 appears as a yellow line between the maximum temperature—a red line—and the minimum temperature—a blue line."

- **WE CAN MONITOR REEFER TEMPERATURES AND PROACTIVELY RESPOND TO TEMPERATURE FLUCTUATIONS.**

If the temperature goes out of range in a reefer, dispatchers can see that immediately through color alerts in LoadMaster screens. McLeod's Rapid Alert Notification System also makes it possible to have texts and emails sent out whenever a temperature range is breached. "Having the Spireon technology integrated into McLeod has helped us reduce these occurrences," Boydston says. "We've got data flowing to our screens repeatedly in short time intervals, so we can respond immediately to any problems. We can call the driver and he can stop and take a look at it. We can detect borderline problems and take action before they become serious."

- **WE KNOW WHERE OUR TRAILERS ARE.**

"We know exactly where each trailer is located. FleetLocate gives us the location and it's time-stamped," Boydston says. "We can see when the trailer arrived and how many days it's been sitting there."

- **WE CAN TALK TO OUR CUSTOMERS AND GET OUR TRAILERS TURNING.**

"Having location data with the time stamp helps us turn our assets," Boydston says. "If a trailer's been sitting at a shipper's yard for too long, we can speak to the customer. Without Spireon, we wouldn't be able to say with certainty where each trailer was or how long it had been there. Now we can."

Trailer Temperature and Location Data at Your Fingertips

Reefer and dry van carriers need timely access to accurate and actionable data. Monitoring and documenting the temperature in reefer trailers that transport food is critical both for avoiding damage to the freight and to meet the FSMA requirements. With dry vans, accurate location data is essential for finding those trailers that have been kept too long at a shipper's yard. The integration capabilities between Spireon and McLeod make it possible to put the FleetLocate temperature and location data right at the fingertips of LoadMaster users. This empowers operations staff to take the actions that ensure food safety with the reefers and maximize utilization of the dry vans. These are just two examples of the ways that Spireon and McLeod offer solutions that meet the challenges of carriers today.



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