

# Transport Topics

Business

Technology

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## Fleets Take Do-It-Yourself Approach to Solar-Panel Installation



*Holland Enterprises Inc.*

Solar panel manufacturers said they have worked to make their products easy to deploy, and several fleets said they have opted to install the panels themselves.

Christenson Transportation Inc. installed solar devices from Orbcomm Inc. on 430 units in less than 90 days, said Donald Christenson, the fleet's president. Each installation takes around 10 minutes.

“These just glue down and you take a self-tapping screw and tether it to the top rail of the trailer, just in case,” Christenson said.

Solar panels from Carrier Transicold come with industrial-strength adhesive backing and can be installed on the roofs of trailers, truck bodies and refrigerated rail cars, the company said.

“The charge controller is securely mounted to the frame inside the refrigeration unit with wiring connections completing the installation,” said Jason Forman, a sales and marketing manager at Carrier Transicold.

Solar-based trailer tracking devices from SkyBitz are 2 inches wide and 22 inches long and install on the front of the trailer as close to the top as possible. On intermodal containers, they fit in the corrugation of a container. Installation takes less than 15 minutes.

“We can do multi-trailer deployments in a matter of months versus years,” SkyBitz President Henry Popplewell said, adding that installations can be done either by the customer or through a third-party installer. SkyBitz also has installation agreements with several truck stops.

Solar panels from eNow can be installed at the factory or on an aftermarket basis. Installation takes one to three hours, and requires installing the panel and running a cable. “We’re making it as simple as possible so you don’t need an electrician,” said CEO Jeff Flath.

Spireon offers a solar option for its FleetLocate system. Untethered installation takes less than 15 minutes, and tethered installation takes about 30 minutes, said Roni Taylor, vice president of industry relations for the company.

Installation is available via a bracketless nose mount or bracketed roof mount.

“All you need is a ladder and screw drill gun,” Taylor said.

Typically, solar devices from Thermo King are installed on new equipment but can be retrofitted as well.

“It takes about half an hour to install and we tried to make it so easy you don’t have to be a technician to install it,” said Paul Kroes, solar business development manager for the refrigeration units supplier.

Richard Houska, director of maintenance for Holland Enterprises Inc., which is based in Fargo, N.D., said the fleet is installing solar devices from Carrier Transicold itself. Each installation takes about an hour. “You just read the directions, hook them up and route the wires where you want them,” he said.

<http://www.ttnews.com/articles/fleets-take-do-it-yourself-approach-solar-panel-installation>