

The Big Benefits of ELDS for Truckers

It's not uncommon for commercial truck drivers to be resistant when the prospect of an electronic logging device roll-out first arises. This is a new technology, after all, and it brings greater accountability to everyone working within Hours of Service compliance constraints; it records a driver's time while on duty or driving, and makes everything more transparent.

But, once drivers start using E-Logs, it's hard to find one that would consider returning to their old paper logbooks.

There are lots of stories circulating about ELDs for truckers that drum up fear and mistrust – but the fact is, they can help carriers *and commercial truck drivers* in some pretty big ways.

Here are some of the top reasons why:

1) An ELD leads to more miles on the road, which, in turn, leads to more money

The FMCSA estimates drivers will spend over 20 hours a year filling out paper driver logs and sending those HOS files to their respective carriers.

ELDs, however, help truck drivers:

- Reduce HOS paperwork time by 15 minutes a day
- Add another 5 – 10 hours a week of drive time by rounding to the nearest minute for stops (unlike paper logbooks which require drivers to round up to the nearest 15 minutes)
- Reduce time spent on tedious check-calls and sending hours to dispatch

And, logging miles during those recovered drivable hours can lead to noticeably larger paychecks.

2) ELDs get drivers back on the road faster with expedited inspections

How so? For starters, results are clear for an officer to see. And, that means truck drivers can zip right through those inspections, getting back on the road fast.

Drivers will also no longer have to comb through handwritten paper driver logs trying to find errors or HOS violations.

(The ELD mandate will detail the requirements for sending log-files to inspectors.)

3) ELDs reduce burdensome paperwork headaches

Truck drivers don't choose the open road because they love to fill out paperwork.

And, when it comes to cutting paperwork, ELDs can be a driver's best friend; that's because ELDs automate the HOS compliance process. Just log into the ELD and get rolling. No more paper driver logs or trip sheets to painfully record at each state line crossing.

(Which means drivers gain more time doing the thing they want to do – drive.)

4) ELDs eliminate easy form and manner errors that can be troublesome and expensive

We all know nobody's perfect – and paper driver logs are the perfect place to see our imperfection in action. It's just too easy to draw a line too long, record the wrong time, or enter an incorrect location. Unfortunately, those mistakes can add up. And, the result? How about rising CSA scores and fines. (Now, that's certainly nothing to laugh at.)

Since HOS logs, DVIRs, and IFTA fuel tax reporting are automated by ELDs, proper use ensures driver paperwork will be free of form and manner errors, hours will be correctly totaled, and driver logs will always be signed. That means fewer of those pesky home office calls, demanding information the driver may no longer have or remember.

5) ELDs issue warnings when time is tight

That's right – an ELD will audibly warn truck drivers when time-sensitive events draw near, helping them remain HOS compliant.

So, before earning a violation for missing a required 30-minute break, or running out of driving hours for an 11-hour day, the ELD issues an audible alert – notifications that remind drivers when it's time to pull over...while there's still time to pull over somewhere safe.

6) ELDs build a commercial truck driver's roadside resume

There are more safe, compliant truck drivers on the road than unsafe drivers. And, with an ELD, drivers can provide a documented history of responsible job performance when they interview for a position with their ideal carrier.

And, by tracking Hours of Service compliance, truck speed, and delivery within an ideal window, ELDs provide the data that demonstrates a driver's commitment to safety.

For many commercial truck drivers, that can lead to higher rates, incentive program payouts, and the chance to best their fellow drivers in some friendly competition.

7) ELDs document driver safety in the event of an accident

Most systems that include electronic logging device functionality will also record critical events, including car-truck accidents.

In the case of an accident, these black boxes accurately capture driver and vehicle behavior immediately before, during, and after an accident. And, that means carriers have a simple way to reconstruct accidents and defend against lawsuits where crashes were caused by other drivers—reducing not only the carrier's liability, but the potential for personal liability on the part of the truck driver, as well.

8) ELDs make communicating with the home office easier

Before ELDs, check calls were a major part of the driver's and dispatcher's day. And something as simple as relaying location data or how many hours a driver had left became a series of phone calls that took the driver's attention away from the road.

With ELDs, dispatchers can pull up a driver's location on a map, giving customers accurate location and ETA information without any driver interaction.

With proper tracking, that also means carriers can counter claims from shippers and receivers that their drivers were delayed, when they were, perhaps, waiting at the location and it was the warehouse personnel who weren't ready to load cargo.

9) ELD applications make life easier on the road

From integrated navigation to paperwork reduction tools, ELD providers can make life easier for truck drivers on the road.

How so?

Automated workflows eliminate many of the steps needed to collect the data drivers are required to report each day. And, arrival and departure alerts gather location, time, and customer data that eliminate check calls.

Using a smartphone or tablet as an ELD has the added benefit of also providing plenty of entertainment options, in and out of the cab, when the driver's workday comes to a close.

10) ELDs pave the way for roadside assistance when drivers need it

Even the best drivers can lose their way or break down.

With ELDs, dispatchers can quickly identify a driver's location and help get them back on the right road or direct a nearby tow truck to service their rig.

Drivers can't choose whether or not to comply, but they can choose when to begin

By late 2017, all commercial truck drivers who currently file a Record of Duty Status will need to run on an electronic logging device.

However, when drivers adopt ELDs today, they can roll out the technology at their own a pace. What's more, they'll realize big time saving and efficiency wins right from the get-go.