



Editors note: Teletrac Inc. and Navman Wireless are now merged as a global telematics powerhouse. This content was created prior to the unification of both brands.

CBH Group reaps benefits from partnering with Navman Wireless to improve driver safety

- Grain cooperative installs Navman Wireless fleet management solution across its entire fleet of 240 vehicles to improve driver safety
- The investment follows a remote, late-night vehicle collision involving some of its most senior executives
- Navman Wireless solution includes satellite tracking option for drivers operating in remote locations
- It quickly demonstrates value when CBH is able to provide rapid assistance after a driver falls asleep at the wheel
- CBH reduces fuel bills, maintenance costs and infringement notices while six-figure insurance premiums are down more than 10 per cent. Accident claims are also 25 per cent lower year-on-year.
- It expects to drive further advantages from the ability to accurately track vehicle usage for fringe benefit tax
- Journey management with a focus on tackling fatigue over longer trips is also on the agenda

Introduction

What if? This is a question that drives business innovation and helps protect against potential hazards. It's a question that CBH Group's Board of Directors needed to ask when some of its most senior executives were involved in a remote late-night collision as they travelled back from meeting with grain growers.

What if this had been one of our delivery drivers travelling on their own?

The answer to this question was unnerving and caused CBH to rethink its approach to fleet management. The investment in GPS vehicle tracking technology across its entire fleet greatly improved driver safety, which was the primary objective, but also delivered a number of other benefits including greater fuel efficiency, reduced maintenance requirements and lower insurance premiums.

An overview

CBH Group is Australia's largest co-operative and a leader in the Australian grain industry, operating almost 200 sites across Western Australia stretching from Geraldton in the north to Esperance on the State's south east coast. It has total assets of more than \$2 billion and about 1,100 permanent employees.

Three-quarters of its 240-vehicle fleet are cars and utilities. A variety of trucks, ranging from five-tonne flat-tops to semi-trailers, make up the remainder. This mixed fleet covers huge distances of between 700,000 and 800,000 kilometres a month.

Perhaps surprisingly, it was an incident involving members of the senior management team that made CBH rethink its approach to driver safety. As they drove back from a meeting with growers one night, one of their cars was side-swiped by a vehicle heading in the other direction and ran off the road about 100 kilometres east of Perth. Luckily, no one was hurt and they were travelling in a three-vehicle convoy so everyone was able to get back home safely without too much inconvenience.

Although no real damage had been done, the incident highlighted a number of safety issues. There was no mobile coverage at the location, which meant somebody travelling alone would not have been able to call for assistance. There wasn't even drinking water in the vehicle to keep them hydrated had they become stranded. CBH has lots of drivers who frequently travel alone over great distances. If one of them ran off the road it could be hours before anybody knew. Management realised it was time to invest in technology that provides timely alerts in order to improve driver safety standards.

The solution

Following an assessment of available products and services, including a number of trials, CBH settled on Navman Wireless fleet management technology and in-vehicle navigation systems. This provided the coverage CBH required, including a satellite option for people travelling in remote areas with no access to cellular networks. "We wanted something that was easy to install but gave us online access to all the data we needed on vehicle location and driver behaviour," CBH's Group Manager, Shared Services, Ron Silvestri says.

As with any major investment, there will always naysayers who think it's unnecessary. In this case these objections were quickly overcome when a CBH driver fell asleep at the wheel and rolled off the side of the road. Vehicle tracking meant CBH was able to identify that it had other staff nearby who could lend support within five minutes. This was a powerful demonstration that the system worked.

Providing feedback on driver behaviour was another major benefit. A month-long trial of Navman Wireless technology showed some vehicles being driven for more than five hours without a break. All five vehicles in the trial also spent 10 per cent of their time travelling in excess of 110 kilometres per hour.

"We ran a report after we'd had the devices installed for a year, which showed a dramatic reduction in the number of instances where drivers had exceeded the speeding parameters we'd set," Silvestri says. "These had run into hundreds of pages every month but, once we started sending them directly to drivers, they quickly dropped off to a couple of pages."

CBH now tracks other metrics like harsh braking or cornering and has also seen these starting to fall. Managers regularly have safety discussions with individual drivers. Although improving driver safety was the main goal for CBH, its Navman Wireless dashboards have also had a positive impact on fuel costs, infringement notices and maintenance schedules. Accident claims are down 25 per cent year-on-year and its six-figure insurance premiums have also been reduced by more than 10 per cent.

"We've gone through the initial implementation and drivers are now seeking more information about their own performance," Silvestri says. "Our vehicles aren't being serviced as often or needing breakdown recovery."

CBH expects to achieve further advantages through tracking fringe benefit tax. Drivers now login to record commercial or private use before every trip, which makes it easy for the finance department to accurately track vehicle usage.

Where to from here?

CBH has only tapped into a relatively small percentage of the device capability since partnering with Navman Wireless but has plans to extend its usage. Journey management is definitely on the radar. Drivers already advise when they are going on trips and when they're due to arrive, but management is keen to automate more of this process.

It also wants to look at further improving driver behaviour and minimising the risk caused by driver fatigue on long journeys. This could see fleet managers putting alerts out through in-vehicle navigation systems asking drivers to take a break. It may also introduce additional reporting requirements around fatigue management. The primary objective is to put a mechanism in place to manage any situation where a driver runs into difficulty.

"We're putting together a plan to embrace some of these initiatives during the next couple of years and further improve the performance of our drivers," Silvestri says. "Fatigue is a key focus – how often drivers take breaks and the distances they cover each day. We'll do everything we can to make sure our drivers get home safely from every journey."