



Using Networkfleet® the Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center Boosts Vehicle Utilization to 93% and Improves Safety

Summary

When the Wichita-based Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center needed to improve vehicle utilization and offer faster roadside assistance to its fleet, it turned to Networkfleet.

Problem

The Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center in Wichita, KS provides monthly transportation to more than 500 veterans and to hospital staff on job-related work assignments. The hospital's engineering department maintains a fleet of 45 vehicles that includes cars, vans, light trucks, an ambulance, bus, and RV. If a vehicle breaks down, getting help quickly is critical, especially if the vehicle is carrying a disabled veteran or delivering staff and supplies to one of the hospital's six community-based outpatient clinics.

To prevent reductions in fleet size and services, the hospital is required to document vehicle usage. "We have to show that every government-leased vehicle is regularly used and not sitting in a parking lot," said Danny Schepis, vehicle manager for the engineering department. "The vehicles that we own are donated by veterans' organizations for veterans, so maintenance is also a concern. We want to extend the life of these vehicles and make sure they don't break down while transporting patients."

Solution

To meet its needs for reliable roadside assistance, accurate data for monthly utilization reports, and better diagnostic capabilities, the VA Medical Center installed Networkfleet's wireless fleet management system. Designed by Networkfleet's experienced telematics engineering group and built in the U.S., Networkfleet merges GPS technology with affordable wireless coverage. It also connects with the vehicle's engine computer to provide remote diagnostic information.

Results

Roadside Assistance – Networkfleet is the only automatic vehicle location system that offers emergency roadside assistance to all vehicle classes at no additional cost. The 24x7x365 service (provided through a partnership with Allstate) includes stolen vehicle recovery, towing, locksmith services, battery boost, fuel delivery, and other critical services to get vehicles back on the road.

"This service gives us greater peace of mind," Schepis said. "If a veteran has a medical emergency while en route to an appointment, roadside assistance would immediately contact an emergency medical crew and guide them to the vehicle's location."

Utilization and Safety – Using Networkfleet's online reports, Schepis has seen an improvement in vehicle utilization, which jumped from 70% to 93% after Networkfleet was installed. The report captures starting and ending odometer readings for each vehicle, eliminating the need for manual recording of this data.

"I run a trial utilization report on the 15th day of the month," Schepis said. "If we are approaching our utilization goal for a vehicle, we start using a vehicle that has traveled fewer miles for the rest of the month. In addition to spreading out usage, this report has saved me an immeasurable amount of time."

Schepis also uses other reports, such as the speed report, to alert him when drivers exceed predefined thresholds. "The speed report was also an eye opener," Schepis said. "Not long ago, in the middle of a rainstorm, Networkfleet sent me an email indicating that one of the vans was traveling 92 miles per hour. I got on the phone immediately and made the driver aware of his dangerously high speed."

Remote Diagnostics – Networkfleet's diagnostics capabilities have turned out to be a bigger benefit than Schepis expected. He recently received an email alerting him that a "check engine" light had appeared in one of the vehicles. Networkfleet's diagnostic codes indicated a potentially serious problem, so he immediately sent the driver to a dealership for repair.

Other VA Hospitals are similarly benefitting from Networkfleet. Sara Felix, a program specialist for fleet management at the VA Central California Health Care System in Fresno, gave high marks to Networkfleet's roadside assistance and diagnostics capabilities. "We used to wait anywhere from one hour to four hours for roadside assistance, compared to an average of 15 to 30 minutes using Networkfleet. Additionally, every time we use Networkfleet's diagnostics codes, we save between \$60 and \$140, which is what a repair shop would charge for diagnostics."

For more information on purchasing Networkfleet for your government vehicles, visit networkfleet.com or call 866.869.1353. Purchases can also be made through GSA Advantage using Networkfleet's GSA contract number GS-07F-5559R.

Results

- *Provided fast roadside assistance for vehicles carrying patients and staff.*
- *Improved utilization from 70% to 93% and extend vehicle life.*
- *Automatically gathered data required for monthly reporting purposes, such as mileage, usage, and speed.*