



# **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **Vehicle Tracking Protocol**

**Guidance on the use of the corporate  
vehicle tracking System**

## **Vehicle Management System**

### **Introduction**

Flintshire County Council have taken the decision to fit vehicle tracking devices to all Council fleet vehicles and some items of plant, in order to protect staff and Council assets, the Council agreed the introduction of a Vehicle Management VMS (VMS) for its operational fleet and high value items of plant.

The introduction and the development of the VMS will also assist the authority to achieve a number of efficiency savings and therefore this is linked directly to the Council's Corporate Value for Money Framework and Environmental Commitments.

### **General Principles for Use of VMS**

The Council have agreed with Trade Unions, to install a VMS in the Councils fleet of vehicles and high valued items of plant.

The VMS will be installed and operated in all current vehicles and high value/ high risk items of plant and to all new vehicles.

### **Why has the Council installed a Vehicle Management VMS?**

The Council, as an employer, has a duty to its employees to protect their Health and Safety whilst at work, this includes the legal requirement to take breaks and adhering to standard road safety, the VMS will help to actively monitor this.

The benefits of deploying a VMS can be broken down into four distinct areas, which are listed below:

#### **1. Employee Benefits:**

The VMS will:

- Provide added security for lone workers – panic buttons relay directly to a 24/7 call centre where the emergency procedure will be escalated, should this be required, emergency services will be given an exact location of where the driver/vehicle is;
- Ensure compliance with working-time directives statutory requirement;
- Allow managers to be able to identify where staff are in emergencies for a more rapid response;
- Provide drivers with information to improve driving techniques and increase driver awareness through driver training this will thereby improve efficiency and safety.
- Provide information on accidents to protect the interests of the Council and employees / drivers;
- Highlight when staff are entering known dangerous locations by sending an alert to specified telephones.

The Council has a duty of care to all its employees, therefore they have agreed to the significant investment in the VMS from which the fundamental requirement for all directorates will be to ensure the safety of drivers/ employees whilst also delivering greater customer focused effectiveness and helping to deliver major organisational efficiencies.

The installation of the VMS is also linked to the on-going review of a number of operational and management arrangements that are being considered and implemented to improve the performance and financial stability of departments across the council.

The VMS will provide improved security for items of stock and equipment as well as the vehicles; if a vehicle is stolen the VMS can track the vehicle and assist in its recovery.

The VMS will allow departments to implement improvements that will increase efficiency and make significant reductions in non-productive time and thereby save money.

In line with other Council wide initiatives the VMS is viewed as key tool to ensure that customer service is maximised.

### **What information can the VMS provide?**

The device in the vehicle is a GPS based VMS that can pinpoint the location of the vehicle to an accuracy of 5 metres. The status of the vehicle can be measured in terms of but not limited to:

- Time and location of stops and starts;
- Length of time at specific locations;
- Speeding and violent breaking events;
- Excessive idling;
- Vehicles leaving authorised areas;
- Vehicles entering no-go areas;
- Unauthorised usage and out of hours usage;
- Driver identification, who is driving the vehicle at any given time;
- Vehicle location and status information can be obtained from:
  1. A full screen map which can be zoomed down to street level;
  2. A live journey list which shows the vehicle location and status in real time;
  3. A journey replay screen which enables historical journeys to be replayed;
  4. Any one of 30+ detailed VMS reports.

## **2. Accident Investigation**

All employees within Flintshire County Council who have been approved to drive certain types of vehicles will be issued with a unique “driver identity key”. The individual employee will be wholly responsible for the key’s safe custody and usage; this key must not be shared with any other driver. The driver key will need to be presented to a dashboard-mounted keypad before each use of the vehicle in order to enable the vehicle. There is a cost each time a key is to be re-issued and the replacement cost shall be borne by the individual employee unless the key has been stolen (without neglect). This key must not be kept with the vehicle ignition key or left in the vehicle and should be kept with the driver at all times.

Each unit fitted to the vehicle has “black box” accident recording technology, which enables the investigation of data to provide evidence or challenge fraudulent and bogus liability claims, and because the VMS automatically logs the identity of the driver through the driver key all road traffic violations can be accurately investigated and notified to relevant enforcement / regulatory bodies.

## **3. Vehicle utilisation, fuel and carbon emission savings**

By knowing the location of a vehicle at any given time, the department will be able to identify and plan where vehicles are and thereby provide a more efficient and effective deployment of services which will improve customer service.

The VMS will be used to accurately record vehicle efficiency usage. The department will be able to make best use of the existing fleet without the need for costly spot hire of vehicles. The information the VMS provides will be used to establish the optimum number of vehicles required by directorates in the future. The VMS will provide data of non-productive scheduling and vehicle routing, with the improved routing and scheduling greater efficiency savings in fuel and carbon emissions can be realised.

The VMS provides immediate information with regard to excess idling. The department will be aware of vehicles being stationary with the engine running for long periods of time. This information will be used to counsel individuals in the department's commitment to make efficiency savings.

The VMS will allow the department to set "No-go" areas and the VMS will automatically send a text message to the employee's line manager to notify them in the event a "no-go" area is entered.

#### **4. Attendance and Productivity Management**

All employees of the Council are contracted to work in any location of the Authority, as instructed from time to time. By definition, all Flintshire County Council Employees may be required to work in varying locations throughout the day.

The VMS will be used as an aid to verify and monitor attendance and productivity, in addition the VMS information will be used by the department to manage attendance on the various sites, job locations etc. and will be used to verify claims made by employees; managers may use the information to authorise and validate claims, discrepancies shall be dealt with under normal procedures and under the Council's disciplinary procedures if required.

In summary the Vehicle Management VMS will:

- Provide transparent management control of the operational fleet;
- Improve protection of individuals and Council assets;
- Eliminate non productive time and excess fuel costs;
- Provide evidence for accident investigation and road traffic violations;
- Manage attendance and productivity;
- Maximise efficiency and improve service delivery;

Following the issue date of this protocol there will be "a settling in period" of 3 months where individuals will be counselled on operational and traffic infringements arising from the VMS reports, after that date cases of repeated infringements will be dealt with under the Councils relevant Policies.

The Department reserves the right of addressing any issues which are considered to constitute significant risk to the Council or individuals, where the reputation of the Council or the Directorate are disparaged or where Health and Safety Regulations and Traffic Regulations are disregarded, in these cases the normal course of action will be taken under the relevant Council Policies.

### **Protocol for Managers and Staff and Emergency Procedures**

#### **Managers**

Only authorised officers / employees will have access to the VMS and its information. This will be strictly controlled in terms of cross directorate / departmental information, i.e. Public Building Maintenance will not be able to view Highways, Cleansing and Parks information and vice versa. If information relating to another department is required a Senior Manager may request the information from the Transportation & Logistics Section.

Authorised users will be issued with a unique user name and password. This password should be treated the same way as any other IT password and kept secure at all times.

Passwords should not be shared with anyone else and should be kept secure inline with the Councils ICT policies.

All of the Fleet vehicles are fitted with the VMS and drivers will be made aware that the hardware has been installed on their vehicle and training will be given on operating the system and issued with a copy of the VMS protocol.

Authorised users will be given comprehensive training to ensure responsible use of the VMS. An audit trail of who has logged in to the VMS can be obtained. Unreasonable use of the VMS system will result in the access to the system being suspended.

**Managers will ensure that:**

- 1) The VMS is not being used for minor transgressions i.e. excessive idling or harsh braking, where these could be dealt with through developmental processes / training. These incidents should be referred to Transportation & Logistics Section who will determine if additional training is required. However it should be recognised that each instance will be taken on its own merits and could result in disciplinary action being taken if necessary, in addition should repeat offences occur it may be determined that formal action is required.
- 2) VMS is not used to make any changes to productivity agreements between the union and the Council without prior consultation;
- 3) At no time (without the express authority of the employee) should such information from the VMS be provided to an outside authority or authorities unless requested to do so as part of a criminal investigation, or other regulatory body such as VOSA.
- 4) Prior to implementation of the VMS, sufficient training will be provided by the Council to all relevant employees on its use. This training will be treated in the same manner as other formal training.

**Drivers**

A vehicle fitted with a VMS can only be started by using the driver identification key. The ID key is personalised to each driver and must not be shared with other drivers. It will be the driver's responsibility to prove that they were not the driver of a vehicle in the event of any traffic violations or traffic incident, if their driver id is in use at that time.

The driver ID Key will also only allow vehicles that the driver has been authorised to drive to be started i.e. the driver must have had council clearance and hold a LGV licence in order to drive a LGV.

Employees using the VMS will take all reasonable steps to ensure the VMS's correct use, and communicate with supervisors to avoid erroneous alarms by reporting any obvious defects or faults.

Tampering with the VMS will be clearly identifiable both in the cab and on the screen. The VMS does continue to record even when attempts have been made to deactivate the VMS and information will be downloaded once the VMS is reporting again, deliberate attempts to disable the VMS will lead to disciplinary action.

For the purpose of probity, vehicles must not be used for any other reason other than in the execution of Council business. The vehicles must not be used outside of normal business hours subject to a reasonable period of time to travel to and from home and place of work. The only exception being when an employee is using the vehicle for business purposes in the execution of the department's emergency service. In such circumstances the vehicle cannot and must not be used for private business on the pretence that the employee may receive a call to attend an incident as part of this service. Use of a vehicle for personal use could be deemed as gross misconduct and as such will be classed as misuse of council vehicles.

## **Emergency Procedure**

As part of the health and safety benefits of the VMS, all vehicles have been fitted with an in-cab panic alarm button. This will provide lone worker protection; if an employee has a problem in the field they can be located quickly and efficiently. The button must only be pressed in the case of an emergency where urgent assistance is required. Once the button is activated, the following procedure will be managed and executed by the Corporate Alarm Monitoring Centre (CAMC).

On activation of the panic alarm button the control room will receive the alert message and will take the appropriate actions dependant upon the time of day in line with the procedures in place.

It should be noted that lone worker protection is an important part of the VMS protocol and that the activation of the panic alarm will be treated seriously in all cases. A cost will be incurred should the incident be escalated whereby the CAMC need to contact the relevant Supervisor / Manager to attend. In a real emergency this is considered appropriate, as it will be difficult to activate the alarm accidentally, all instances of activation shall be investigated and any instances of nuisance activation shall be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

# Driver ID Fob Fact Sheet

## Drivers should be aware that:

- Driver ID key fobs **must not** be left in the vehicle.
- Driver ID key fobs **must not** be kept on the same key ring as the vehicle ignition key.
- Driver ID key fobs **must not** be shared; it is your responsibility for the security of your driver ID key fob.
- Replacement Driver ID keys will be charged for.  
Immediate replacements £25  
Replacement within 24 hours £15

**Lost or stolen key fobs must be reported to the  
Transportation & Logistics Office immediately on  
01352 704657 or workshop 01352 704687**

ID Key Fob Number Allocated .....

Signed .....

PRINT .....

Date .....