

# Real-Time Dispatching

---

## Benefits & Considerations

Real-Time dispatching is defined as keeping your dispatching software synchronized with the Pick Up and Drop Off events as they happen. There are two main ways of doing this – using Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) or Computers (MDC) in the vehicles, and Drivers reporting to Dispatch via radio or cell phone each Pick UP and Drop Off as they perform them.

One of Mobilitat's longtime customers, Gold Country Telecare in Grass Valley California, began real-time dispatching in January of 2010. Since they do not have MDT's in the vehicles this involved additional training from Mobilitat on Easy Rides features and techniques that were not previously used, and of course a change in operating procedures by Drivers and Dispatchers.

Often times transportation providers who have not tried real-time dispatching imagine that it will be too difficult to implement. Concerns include increased radio traffic, increased demand on dispatch staff (answering more radio calls and handling trip tickets) and spotty radio coverage (preventing timely calls), all of which contributes to an overall sense of increased workload for everyone.

Since the implementation was planned and scheduled, we had an opportunity to collect and analyze trip and route data using Easy Rides and compare the numbers to measure the results. Comparison was made in two ways – the first six months of real-time dispatching compared with the same period last year, and the first six months of real-time dispatching compared to the previous six months. The results were very similar and consistent.

## Dispatcher Impressions

- It was smoother than expected to transition to real-time dispatching
- It's nice to know where the Drivers are.
- It would be nice to have dedicated dispatchers like larger organizations.
- We can catch mistakes easier.
- We know when we're running behind now.

## The challenges of implementing real-time dispatching for this operation

- Drivers forgetting to call in when they're supposed to.
- More difficult to manage phones & radios.

## Benefits gained from using Easy Rides to dispatch real-time

- Up to the minute recording of trip and route/Driver/vehicle status
- Pick Up and Drop Off time stamps recorded automatically by Easy Rides, eliminating the need for a staff member to enter time values from Driver's manifests/logs at a later time
- Ability to tell at a glance which Routes are running behind or late, allowing for faster recognition of problems or potential problems and taking corrective action
- Pseudo Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) Map of all vehicle's last reported position with one click of the mouse (Live tracking if using MDT/MDC with onboard AVL equipment and wireless data connectivity)
- Trip tickets are displayed in a more organized manner on dispatch board, reducing time and effort to properly track all trip statuses
- Greatly increased ability of Management, Supervision or relief Dispatchers to quickly assess field operations and on-time performance as it's occurring
- Drivers have a better feel for what's going on with other Drivers and can offer assistance, improving teamwork

Measured gains in Passengers per Revenue Service Mile and Hour, On Time Pick Up Performance, as well as significant decreases in No Shows, Refusals, and Missing Trip Data support the effectiveness of real-time dispatching through gains across the board. These improvements hold true in two measured periods where demand both decreased and increased. Even if only one or two of these categories showed significant improvement and considering some of the benefits listed above, real-time dispatching would likely be worth implementing for many organizations.

## Results of Real-Time Dispatching Using Dispatch Software

