



<b>Publication</b>	Trade Arabia	<b>Circulation</b>	0
<b>Market</b>	United Arab Emirates	<b>Page No.</b>	N/A
<b>Language</b>	English	<b>Size</b>	0
<b>Section</b>	Main	<b>AVE</b>	\$3250.00

## Mirak installs vehicle tracking technology

August 22, 2009

A leading UAE-based producer and distribution company is cracking down on dangerous driving by installing a new tracking and monitoring technology in its vehicles to help improve driver behaviour.

The Mirak Group, a major producer and distributor of fresh flowers, fruits and vegetables, has recently installed the fleet management system from Telargo, a US-based provider of mobile assets management solutions, in a number of their fleet vehicles.

"As well as helping to improve driving behaviour and safety, the initiative can also cut down on fuel wastage and increase efficiency," said Chris Wiener, solutions architect at Dubai-based Arab:IT, the certified Service Provider in the UAE for Telargo's advanced tracking and telemetry fleet management systems.

A total of 1,056 people were killed on the UAE's roads in 2007 according to a recent report by the World Health Organisation - a death rate of 37.1 for every 100,000 people compared with a global average of only 18.8.

"Studies have found that driver behaviour is at fault and not the condition of the UAE's often excellent roads or their traffic rules," said Wiener.

"Apart from the obvious safety perspective, no matter how efficiently we operate our vehicles, they will perform poorly with an irresponsible and inefficient driver behind the wheel," said Nejdeh Ghadimi, assistant managing director at Mirak Group.

"Studies clearly show that aggressive driving and excessive speeding are major contributing factors in fatal crashes."

The driver score system monitors and assesses the driver providing an index that evaluates the driving pattern of each trip and gives a single score on a scale from 1 to 100.

The vehicle is monitored every second. The driver's behaviour including speeding, harsh acceleration, and hard braking are recorded and at the end of each trip, the average driving score is calculated.

"This information enables our fleet managers to evaluate, track and compare the driver's performance on the road and helps to change driver attitudes by encouraging better driving practices," said Ghadimi.

"It is our corporate social responsibility to ensure that our employees are driving safely. With the benefit of the Telargo system we can now identify and educate those drivers who need additional training as well as reward better drivers," Ghadimi added.

"Other benefits include the reduction in fuel consumption and carbon emissions, optimisation of the fleet and streamlining administrative functions reducing the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) ? not to mention that we can guarantee our produce is delivered fresh from point to point."

Telargo is also an effective tool to save on maintenance costs by reducing engine idling and together with proof of safer driving may be used to negotiate lower insurance rates.

Combining established technologies from global positioning system, wireless communication, digital mapping and hosted as well as mobile applications, the system can provide performance reports, route and time planning (automated to take into account traffic flow) and alert management if a vehicle runs behind schedule.

"In essence, the system allows fleet operators to control their fleet by knowing what their vehicles and drivers have been doing at all times," Wiener added. "With systems such as this, fleet managers can identify bad drivers both from both a safety and cost perspective."

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