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TECHNOLOGIES

Plugging the Profit Leaks:
**Your 2025 Guide to
Mastering Non-Freight
Events in Trucking**

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Are you looking to improve operational efficiency and cut costs?

Many trucking companies are focused on reducing direct freight-related expenses to survive the soft freight market. In this effort, closely tracking and analyzing cost per mile **(CPM)**, cost per hour **(CPH)**, and operating ratios **(ORs)** is standard practice.

Are you tracking expenses tied to non-freight-related **(NFR)** events? These include drivers' planned and unplanned stops or detours between pickup and delivery locations. These, too, significantly impact your bottom line. Without visibility of NFR events and the associated costs, your operations have leakage—the unintentional or unauthorized loss of money.

This guide explores how trucking companies of all sizes can benefit from technology advancements that simplify the tracking and managing of NFR events. Discover how greater visibility of load planning details, including NFR events, will help prevent leakage and increase profitability.

Imagine managing every stop and detour with precision

Why Focus on Non-Freight-Related Events?

Transportation management systems **(TMS)** have traditionally used static, grid-style load planning screens to assign drivers and equipment to orders. This process overly simplifies load planning, treating the process as A-to-B movements without accounting for non-linear activities contributing to each load's cost and revenue.

Examples of non-linear activities, hereafter called NFR events, include activities such as:

- Planned and unplanned vehicle maintenance
- Fuel stops
- Driver home time
- Picking up or dropping off trailers at customer and non-customer facilities
- Hours-of-service rest breaks
- Detention at shipping and receiving facilities
- Routing points
- Terminal/ office visits

NFRs can seem insignificant, but many are inevitable. Unfortunately, many legacy TMS platforms do not have an easy way to plan for and track these events. Trucking companies benefit from including NFR events in the load-planning process to reduce fuel consumption, increase productive drive time, and meet customer delivery deadlines, among other necessities.

By adopting a TMS that provides visibility into NFR events, companies can optimize routes, reduce unnecessary mileage, and ensure that every minute and mile are accounted for, leading to more efficient operations and better profitability.

The Need for an Advanced TMS

Modern TMS solutions are evolving to include features that track and manage NFR events effectively. With enhanced data capabilities and visual planning tools, these systems provide greater visibility into all aspects of a route, not just the freight-related ones.

Below are five everyday NFR events that cause leakage if not adequately tracked and managed from load planning through payroll and invoicing:

One

Maintenance Costs:
The Hidden Drain on Resources

According to the American Transportation Research Institute **(ATRI)**, maintenance costs remained steady at $0.202 per mile in 2023. Still, these costs quickly escalate unless carefully managed and planned with preventive maintenance, whether at your facilities or external shops. Poorly planned maintenance events result in excessive downtime, lost revenue, and additional miles.

Do you consider every minute vehicles spend off the road as lost income?

Using a TMS that tracks the time and mileage associated with maintenance events can help you plan better stops for drivers and equipment to get inspections and preventive work, minimize downtime, and avoid the additional costs associated with unexpected repairs and delays.

Two

Fuel Stops:
Beyond the Pump

Fuel stops are more than a tank refill. Each stop includes the added time of getting there, fueling, and returning to the planned route. This contributes significantly to overall costs when you factor in additional mileage, idling time, and potential delays. Fuel can make up a substantial portion of a carrier's operating costs, but the inefficiencies associated with fueling can add even more to the total.

Do you know the actual cost of your fuel stops?

A TMS that tracks drivers' time spent at fueling events can help identify poor performers and determine the best locations and times for refueling to minimize detours and idle time.

Three Trailer Pickups: Smart Selection

Managing trailer assignments adds a high degree of complexity to load planning. For example, drop-and-hook operations require strategic decision-making. If a driver drops a loaded trailer at a consignee, where can you send the driver to pick up an empty trailer for a live load? Making the right choice is essential to minimize deadhead miles, reduce fuel costs, and optimize driver schedules.

Can you quickly find the best trailer option?

A modern TMS can simplify this process by narrowing the options for making trailer assignments in advance. For instance, a map visualization can show the nearest trailer pool locations. From there, users can choose specific trailers for drivers based on empty or loaded statuses.

By visually representing trailer locations on a map and integrating status details, planners at any experience level can use a TMS to understand spatial relationships better and reduce unnecessary time, mileage, and fuel.

On average, **fleets waste 30 miles each time they send drivers to a location to pick up a trailer that is not available,** according to a study by trailer telematics provider SkyBitz.

Four

Required Driver Breaks:
A Necessary Disruption

While essential for safety and regulatory compliance, required driver breaks can disrupt schedules and increase costs if not well-managed. Federal and state regulations mandate these breaks, leading to extended workdays, additional non-revenue miles, and higher labor costs.

Are you optimizing your routes around required breaks?

With an advanced TMS, you can plan routes that accommodate these breaks without sacrificing efficiency, ensuring drivers remain compliant while minimizing disruptions. Furthermore, a fully integrated driver mobile app can give driver managers real-time updates to know where and when drivers plan to take rest breaks to project accurate ETAs, ensuring loads arrive safely on time.

Five Deadhead Miles:
Moving Without Earning

Deadhead miles, or those driven without cargo, represent a direct cost with no revenue offset. Research suggests that nearly 35% of all truck miles are empty. These empty or deadhead miles directly increase fuel consumption, vehicle wear and tear, and labor costs without generating income.

Can you afford to drive empty?

A TMS that tracks all events, including deadhead miles, helps identify opportunities to reduce these costly trips, either by better route planning or by finding backhauls to fill the empty legs.

Leveraging Technology
to Manage NFR Events

Modern TMS platforms like the Magnus Platform can provide comprehensive visibility and control over all aspects of trucking operations, including NFR events. **Below are a few recent advancements that enable fleets to incorporate NFR events in the load-planning process and beyond:**

- NFR Event Tracking: Built-in map visualizations allow users to add planned NFRs to driver routes with drag-and-drop features. This enables automated recording, monitoring, and analysis of NFRs to uncover hidden costs and inefficiencies.

- Intelligent Trailer Selection: Interactive maps help users find the best trailers and plan stops, reducing delays and minimizing deadhead miles.

- Cost Visibility: Powerful business intelligence tools help identify operational leakages and provide insights for improving profitability.

- Cross-Departmental Collaboration: In addition to load planning and operations staff, the platform can provide valuable NFR event information to billing, payroll, and other team members to enhance communications and decision-making.

Preparing for the Future of Fleet Management

Managing NFR events is not just about cutting costs; it's about taking a holistic and cohesive approach to fleet management to eliminate leakage. Solutions must go beyond grid-style load planning systems and cater to experienced professionals and a new generation of tech-savvy employees.

A system with intuitive features for load planning and expense management can deliver rapid ROI from:

- Comprehensive Visualization: Advanced mapping and planning tools provide intuitive route optimization and real-time decision support.

- Next-Generation Ready: An intuitive interface appeals to younger employees while preserving the knowledge and experience of seasoned staff.
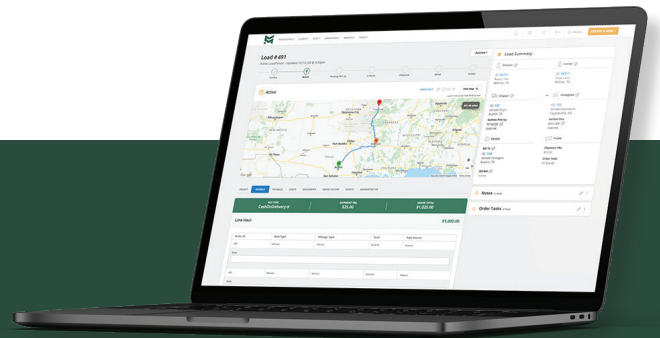
Finding a TMS that accounts for every aspect of a trucking route, including NFR events, can propel your business forward by giving users all the tools they need to improve your bottom line. The Magnus Platform provides groundbreaking tools and full-scale visibility to manage all load events effectively. This ensures more accuracy and automation in load planning and other back-office functions to eliminate leaks and recapture lost revenue.

Isn't it time to stop the leakage and optimize every mile and minute of your operations?

By leveraging an advanced TMS like the Magnus Platform, you can ensure that every aspect of your operation is managed efficiently, from freight-related tasks to the hidden costs of NFR events.

Visit www.magnustech.com to learn about the latest advancements in the cloud-native Magnus Platform for trucking fleets.

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