



FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN RECOVERING RENTAL VEHICLES

Vehicle telematics technology provides crucial support to rental operators faced with a lost or stolen unit. Here are several strategies operators need to know when dealing with this potential pitfall.

Plug in. Connect. Go.





“We’ve helped recover \$1.5 million in inventory year-to-date as of August. Dozens of vehicles have been recovered, and we’ve gathered hundreds of thousands of data points.”

– Chad Caswell, Zubie CEO.

RENTAL VEHICLE THEFT: THE COST OF A STOLEN UNIT

While vehicle thefts have been declining in recent years, according to FBI data, it remains a problem in certain areas of the U.S. The metropolitan area of Bakersfield, Calif., had the highest vehicle theft rate in 2020. It was followed by Yuba City, Calif.; Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, Colo.; Odessa, Texas; and San Francisco-Oakland-Berkley, Calif., according to data from the Insurance Institute of Highway Safety.

Less sophisticated thieves may try to remove the telematics device, while savvier criminals and theft rings use an array of techniques, including key fob hacking, GPS or cellular jamming systems, or specialized data on certain OEM brands with weaker security protocols.

A typical fleet loses around \$22,000 per vehicle per year in theft-related expenses. Without vehicle tracking, only 44% of businesses who reported a vehicle stolen have been able to recover it in usable condition. Emergency response time is reduced by 50% with connected car tech.

VEHICLE TRACKING REDUCES THEFT

Knowing the location of a vehicle is the fastest, and simplest, way to reduce theft.

Telematics devices, including OBD-II plug-in modules, collect data around vehicle location (turn by turn and route history) and the ABCs of driver behaviors – acceleration, braking, and cornering. The systems can also collect data around fuel level, idling, and maintenance needs – diagnostic trouble codes are fed to the rental operator in the form of alerts.

Monitoring telematics data will help you notice recurring patterns that lead to a theft. Perhaps the vehicles are always being taken to a certain location. You may notice erratic driving behaviors, such as high-speed driving. You may notice longer trips and vehicles not being turned off to refuel.



**“IT’S IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT THE LONGEVITY OF THE DATA OVER SEVERAL DAYS,” CASWELL SAID.
“WE LIKE TO FOCUS ON EARLY DETECTION, BUT THE DATA NEEDS TO BE IN THE RIGHT CONTEXT.”**

Geofencing is an important way rental operators can prevent or deal with vehicle theft. Operators can set up map overlay zones that send alerts if the vehicle enters or leaves the pre-set area. Operators can set up these geofences for high-theft locations such as known chop shops or the Mexican border.

Connected car tech reduces loss by providing information on illegal behavior, theft, and insurance claims. This helps rental operators recover the vehicles more quickly and reduce the drain on resources and distraction from rental operations.

Even with these benefits, as many as 80% of rental fleet operators haven’t implemented vehicle tracking.

