



## Increasing Efficiencies through EMS Responder Tracking

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In the EMS field, where just a few minutes can make a difference in saving a patient's life, efficiency is of vital importance. Technology is changing the way EMS first-responders work and is creating improved methods that save time throughout the entire first-response process—from the initial 9-1-1 call through record-keeping.

This article will explore how Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and GPS tracking technology is transforming the industry, and how EMS companies can leverage the latest trends to increase efficiencies, ultimately leading to time savings, reduced costs and improved patient care.

**Reaching the National Standard**

While there is no official national standard for emergency call response time, it is generally accepted within the EMS community that an ideal response should be within eight minutes from the time of the 9-1-1 call to arrival on-scene, ninety-percent of the time. Of course, this is much easier to accomplish in metropolitan rather than in rural areas, where first responders have to drive long distances.

In both rural and urban areas, CAD software technology can help to significantly reduce response time to get closer to the national average. And in some cases, CAD technology has been shown to decrease response times by 2 to 4 minutes bringing it well below the national average.



Advanced GPS tracking technology allows dispatchers to accurately track all of their units - whether fire, police, EMS, and even medical aircraft. In the past, dispatchers would send the unit assigned to the base that is closest to a call. But, they can now send the unit that is physically closest to the *actual call* regardless of first due assignments. Accurate GPS tracking allows dispatchers to see if a unit is at a meal, posting, en route back from another call, or even if a unit from another zone might be the closest available unit.

In addition, technology helps dispatchers to work more efficiently. For example, they can not only dispatch the units that are closest to the scene, but can also preemptively place more units in areas that are projected to be busy based on historical data analysis. GPS tracking allows dispatchers to look back at incident data and analyze where a higher predominance of calls have come from to predict what areas and even what times of day will statistically have the greater likelihood of calls.

This allows them to preemptively place units more strategically in these areas, thereby reducing response time and ultimately improving patient care.

### **Putting the Patient First**

GPS tracking technology also allows more advanced coordination among units, and among different companies.

Traditionally, dispatchers would send the closest crew, regardless of their crew level. For example, they might send a BLS crew even in cases where a more advanced service was needed. The BLS crew would then need to wait at a decided upon location or landmark, which is not always convenient or time sensitive, for an



ALS crew to arrive and transfer the patient to definitive care. With real-time GPS tracking, however, the ALS crew can meet the BLS crew on the roadside en-route to the hospital, vastly reducing wait-time. In some cases, those few minutes are critical, and can save a patient's life.

As technology continues to improve, companies and agencies will be able to work together more efficiently to save time and provide better patient care.



## Accurate Reporting

For most systems, there has been no real method in place for automatic mileage completion, and the crew was in charge of keeping track of odometer readings themselves. When responding to an emergency, mileage tracking is often the last thing on the crew's mind and it can easily be forgotten, leading them to guess the mileage when completing records later on.



However a best guess is not good enough and inaccurate mileage reporting can have serious consequences. If the mileage is recorded as lower than the actual, this will cost the company money. And, more importantly, if the mileage is listed as more than actual, the company could technically be committing insurance fraud.

Organizations can eliminate this worry by using GPS tracking technology, which automatically tracks mileage and enters the values with time stamps into the patient care report. This is valuable on multiple levels—it can generate new revenue with more accurate mileage and eliminates insurance liability as well as saves the crew a time-consuming administrative step, leading to safer driving and more focus on the patient.

By integrating accurate, timely, and effective asset communications and tracking with CAD technology, first-responders can ensure that they are meeting their objective of reaching or exceeding the national response time goal, while improving the level of patient care they provide.

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