

# DRIVING DOWN DETENTION

Ralph Moyle, Inc.

Uses McLeod's

Detention Module

to Improve

Scheduling,

Facilitate

Detention Billing,

and Make Life

Better for Drivers

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SHUTT  
ONLY  
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hen drivers are detained at loading docks, all sorts of problems can arise.

Even though it's not always possible to eliminate detention entirely, there are ways to minimize the problems. At Ralph Moyle, Inc., we decided it was time to improve the way we managed detention, and McLeod's Detention module gave us the tools we needed to make life better for our drivers and reduce the difficulties detention was causing for our business.

We haul food and beverage primarily for food shippers in the Midwest and although having our trucks detained on occasion is an unavoidable part of doing business with some customers, it was clear that detention was disrupting operations in several ways. If a truck is detained, our scheduling for subsequent loads can be thrown off, complications around drivers' hours of service may arise, and our drivers justifiably get frustrated.

We had no easy way to address detention issues with shippers, because we didn't have a good way to track detention events efficiently. Customer contracts included charges for detention, but we weren't billing for all of the occasions when our drivers were detained, because we couldn't establish exactly when our trucks arrived.

All of this changed once we implemented McLeod's Detention module. Now we're managing detention with less labor, making it easier for our drivers, and billing for detention as it happens. We can schedule loads more accurately and manage capacity more precisely.



**B**efore we started using McLeod's Detention module, our approach to managing detention was highly manual. A member of our staff spent hours looking at GPS data and collecting messages from drivers. Despite all of the labor invested, the lack of automation meant that there were too many instances when we didn't have all of the data needed to document detention. Here are the main challenges that we faced:

- **We didn't have a dependable method of documenting a driver's arrival time.**

We tried to get drivers to have bills of lading signed when arriving, but this wasn't always possible. In some cases, drivers would be waiting for over an hour before being able to get the BOL signed, so that was not an acceptable means of documenting arrival time.

- **We lost revenue due to inefficiencies.**

We relied on the drivers to notify us when they arrived, but sometimes they forgot. If the driver forgot, the process required more manual labor in the office and we couldn't always determine an accurate arrival time. In these events, detention wasn't getting documented. We're seeing more and more contract agreements that ask for real-time information from our customers and brokers. If we can't get this to them in a timely fashion, our contract agreements may state that we forfeit detention.

- **Detention caused frustration for our drivers.**

Driver retention is a big issue today and we want to be known as a company that looks out for its drivers. Being able to track their detention and

ensuring that they're going to get the most money for their time is extremely important to us. Drivers were particularly frustrated when detention problems would wreck their plans for time off after completing a load. Being able to track, monitor, and predict potential delays allows dispatch to route drivers away from these bottlenecks.

- **Scheduling was more difficult.**

We had to be more tentative about scheduling, not knowing when trucks would be free. Sometimes we had service failures with subsequent loads that had been scheduled. Hours of service headaches increased, because drivers lost valuable time while detained.

- **We couldn't see the entire picture.**

We didn't have the data we needed to evaluate the impact of detention on our business. People could make guesses about which customers were causing the most detention and how much, but it was guesswork, because we didn't have the data at our fingertips.



## RMI'S DETENTION CHALLENGES

- **We can document arrival times.**

By combining the Detention module with McLeod's Symphony Mobile Communications module, we have integrated our in-cab mobile communications system with LoadMaster. This capability means that we have an easy way to know precisely when a truck arrives to be loaded or unloaded. The mobile comm unit can transmit GPS data and a time stamp to LoadMaster, so we can document our arrival times.

- **We've gained metrics that give us the visibility we need.**

Previously we lacked the metrics we needed, so we had little visibility into the losses that were being caused by failing to detect and document detention. Now we can see everything and know exactly when we're being detained and for how long.

- **We can analyze data and access reports with ease.**

The LoadMaster system is rich with data, and the Detention module helps us analyze that data to reveal detention patterns. We can run reports that present the data in formats that are clear and easy to interpret.

- **We can share information easily with anyone we choose.**

The Detention module makes it easy to send detention information through e-mails to customers, brokers, or anyone within our company. For example, an e-mail to a customer can show the scheduled arrival time, the actual arrival time, and when the grace period ends. They can see it all in a nutshell. When a load comes from a broker, LoadMaster has

the ability to automatically e-mail the broker to notify them that the driver has been detained. No intervention from personnel is needed so labor is saved.

- **We have a complete history of detention for every delivery and pick-up location, so we can see the problem areas and respond as needed.**

Without the Detention module and the ability of LoadMaster to calculate average load and unload

# HOW MCLEOD'S DETENTION MODULE ALLOWED RMI TO MASTER THESE CHALLENGES



times, we could never get an accurate picture of detention at every stop, but now we know with certainty who the worst offenders are. We can choose either to manage the problems or to avoid certain locations entirely. If you can anticipate a seven-hour delay, you can make some efforts to work around it. You make sure the driver you send there will arrive fully dead on hours, so he can get some sleep and something to eat. Our ability to use the Detention module to gain visibility into our detention patterns gives us the opportunity to make this situation work.

- **We can define detention rules for each customer.**

The Detention module makes it easy to define and track detention separately for each customer. For example, we can say whether it applies to the pick-up or the delivery. We have a few customers that have a two-hour grace period for loading, but four hours for unloading, because they know it takes much longer at that end.

the manual labor that was once required. The person who has managed detention can handle everything in less than half the time it took previously and now has time to concentrate on other valuable tasks.

- **We've made life easier for our drivers.**

We have around 70 drivers, and they're not just anonymous numbers to us. Before having the Detention module, we asked our drivers to transmit information back to our office by entering data manually several times for a single load. They had to deal with the arrived-shipper form, the loaded-shipper form, the arrived-stop form, and the empty form. If they were taking their two-hour break, they might need to wake up at exactly two hours and send us a message. Now they don't have to do any of this, because the data is transmitted automatically. They're able to sleep, eat, exercise, do whatever they need to do, and have one less thing to worry about. They know that they're working for a company that cares about them. We take the responsibility for tracking detention away from the driver. They have enough to worry about. They love the fact that they don't have to bother with sending us the messages. That was a pain for them. Being able to track their detention and



- **We have the ability to bill automatically for detention.**

We have the hard data now, so we can bill for detention whenever it occurs. The Detention module has the ability to send an e-mail out that explains the detention charges and to attach this information to the bill.

ensuring that they're going to get the most money for their time is extremely important to us.

- **We spend less time managing detention.**

By automating the work of recording when drivers arrive at loading docks, we eliminated a large part of

- **We can schedule more accurately.**

With better visibility into detention, we can monitor problems and respond as needed. We can also use the analysis and reporting capabilities to detect patterns and anticipate scheduling issues. In this way we manage capacity more precisely and keep on top of HOS issues for our drivers. We have fewer service failures, better equipment utilization, and happier drivers.

- **Create a standard work flow process.**

Take the guesswork out of managing detention by defining every step of the process. Then use the software tools to execute the process the same way every time.

- **Warn the customer.**

The Detention module allows you to send out warning e-mails to the customer before detention charges start. These can be sent five minutes, ten minutes, or an hour ahead, whatever you choose. This allows the customer to look into the situation and determine why the driver hasn't been allowed to unload.

- **Keep your office staff in the loop.**

You want your billing department and dispatch to know about any detention events. Dispatch definitely needs to know, because their next load may be in jeopardy.

- **Get clearly-defined agreements set up with all of your customers.**

Is it a two-hour standard grace period? Are you charging \$10, \$20, \$100? It can depend on how often detention occurs and how important the customer is and what they're willing to agree to.

- **Use a detention administrator.**

You need to assign someone to be in charge of monitoring everything concerning detention. For example, every time a new customer is added, it would be the detention administrator's responsibility to add that customer's detention definition to the system.

- **Be willing to say "No" to certain**

- lanes that cause excessive detention.**

Some lanes cause severe bottlenecks. You're better off finding a new lane with minimal detention problems. We've declined to haul freight for some customers, so that we can avoid loads that deliver to problem locations.

# LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT MANAGING DETENTION





# MCLEOD GIVES US THE TOOLS

**N**o one likes detention, but it's an unavoidable aspect of the business for carriers whenever a driver needs to leave a location with the same trailer that was used to make the delivery. The question is whether you let it get out of hand and cut into profits from multiple angles, or you rein it in and manage it effectively to give yourself a competitive edge.

Implementing McLeod's Detention module has given us the tools to transform the way we manage detention. We have visibility into detention patterns, we can document and bill for detention when it occurs, we can schedule our fleet and manage our drivers more precisely, and we've reduced the burden on our drivers. We have fewer service failures, better asset utilization, and happier drivers.

Those are powerful benefits that make us more competitive and more profitable, and that's what we've come to expect from McLeod Software.

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