



## **Chief Express uses VIACHAIN's truck management and tracking solutions, fully integrated with McLeod Software's LoadMaster®**

North-Carolina carrier gets a big efficiency boost, improves operations and makes life easier for its drivers with VIACHAIN and McLeod.



# The challenge

Chief Express, a carrier with 75 trucks and 300 trailers, hauls dry-van freight across 34 states. The company is based in Seagrove, North Carolina, and it handles more than 35,000 loads each year. Here are some of the business challenges it faced:

**Drivers were frustrated with the workflow product from a different telematics provider:** Before choosing VIACHAIN®, Chief Express used a solution from a different telematics vendor. Victor van Kuilenburg, director of safety and human resources for Chief Express, says, “It wasn’t a good product. Drivers were wasting time dealing with too many screens. They had to punch too many buttons, then they had to sit there and wait for the device to respond. Too often, it didn’t respond.”

**Data on trailer pools was unreliable:** Without trailer tracking technology, Chief Express struggled to maintain accurate records on the locations of trailers. “Sometimes the wrong trailer number would be entered into the system,” van Kuilenburg says, “so the system thinks a trailer is in use when in fact it’s still sitting in the yard.”

It doesn’t take much of this before all of the trailer pool records are a mess and unreliable.”

**The user interface was complicated and undependable:** The mobile communications platform Chief Express previously had was not user-friendly. “It was cumbersome for both the drivers and the office staff,” van Kuilenburg says. “We couldn’t count on it to perform consistently.”

**Drivers and dispatchers had no simple way to quickly assess a driver’s available hours:** Hours of Service (HOS) regulations present their own sets of challenges. Drivers must determine the optimal times to take various breaks so they can get loads delivered on time. In similar fashion, dispatchers must choose the right driver for each load in terms of the driver’s available hours. Neither the drivers nor the dispatchers had tools to help them manage these calculations, so they had to spend too much time trying to work out the details manually.





# The solution

"What really drew my eye to the VIACHAIN solution is that the system is geared toward driver convenience and simplicity," says van Kuilenburg. "The simpler you make something, the better results you're going to get."

Chief Express was already using McLeod's LoadMaster® when they started the search for a new telematics provider. "I could see VIACHAIN had a very good product, but they weren't integrated with McLeod at the time," van Kuilenburg says. "They assured me they could build the integration piece, and they did, which was great."

Chief Express uses VIACHAIN's truck management solution, including a FMCSA-certified Electronic Logging Device (ELD), to streamline dispatch operations and comply with HOS regulations. Additionally, the carrier has deployed VIACHAIN's trailer tracking solution on all of its trailers to accurately pinpoint location and monitor status. HOS data from the ELD, engine data from the electronic control module (ECM), and data from the trailer are all transmitted to McLeod's LoadMaster. The HOS data makes it possible to use LoadMaster's Driver Feasibility tool, and truck location data is used by McLeod's Detention module. "If you have a correct arrival and a correct departure, McLeod does the rest of the work for you when it comes

to tracking detention," van Kuilenburg says. The integration with McLeod also enables geofencing, so arrivals and departures are recorded automatically when a truck enters or exits a specific location. Engine data is used to monitor driver behavior, such as idling time and driver anticipation (the time between releasing the throttle and putting on the brakes). This data makes it possible for managers to determine which drivers need coaching on how to improve fuel economy and safety.

VIACHAIN's management portal delivers an easy way for fleet managers to access analytics, reports and all other data collected by the VIACHAIN devices. "I have everything at my fingertips in the VIACHAIN portal," van Kuilenburg says. "VIACHAIN also pushes all of the pertinent information through LoadMaster, making it easy for dispatch staff to see everything they need right from a single interface. It's ideal." The driver is the focal point for VIACHAIN, in van Kuilenburg's view. "VIACHAIN sees everything through the perspective of the actual end user, which is the guy in the cab behind the wheel," he says. "In the process of doing that, they've made everything easier for the rest of us too. It's great to work with a company who thinks about something other than their bottom line. It's clear they care about the person who's actually trying to punch the buttons on the machine."



# Results

According to van Kuilenburg, Chief Express is gaining these valuable advantages from the VIACHAIN and McLeod solution:

**We're wasting less time because it's easier for drivers:** "With the VIACHAIN driver workflow, our drivers don't have to go through as many screens, they don't have to push as many buttons, and they don't have to sit there and wait for a machine to respond. We're definitely wasting less time."

## **Dispatchers gain from the efficiencies of workflow:**

"The driver workflow automates the exchange of information between drivers and dispatchers. Previously dispatchers needed to make more phone calls, so now they have more time to devote to other important tasks."

**A quick-working tablet helps with recruiting new drivers:** "Whenever I speak with recruits, just about everyone asks, 'What do you use in the cab?' They





are always happy when they see we have a quick-working tablet in our vehicles. That's huge."

**The VIACHAIN portal can be customized to fit the user:** "The VIACHAIN portal gives us access to advanced fleet and driver reports and allows us to create profiles for different people within the company. Users can customize their views so they see exactly what's relevant to their particular jobs. The reports are easy to get, and they're easy to format. I'm very impressed with the portal."

**McLeod's Driver Feasibility helps dispatchers choose the right driver for each load:** "LoadMaster pulls the HOS data from the VIACHAIN ELD and uses it to show how many hours each driver has available with the Driver Feasibility feature. This helps dispatchers see quickly which driver is best suited to get a load delivered on time."

**VIACHAIN's Hours of Service Advisor makes it easier for drivers to choose the best timing for their required breaks:** "The VIACHAIN ELD has a tool that lets drivers see various options for taking their required breaks and how many hours they will have available in each scenario. I've never seen a feature like this anywhere else. It's very convenient. Drivers don't have to sit there and calculate. The device will tell them what their options are."

**VIACHAIN's trailer tracking takes the guesswork out of locating trailers:** "Part of our business is dropping trailers at many locations. Now that we have the GPS data through VIACHAIN's trailer tracking, we can see exactly how long each trailer has been sitting where. In the past, we often needed to send someone to a location to determine which trailers were there. Now we can go into the VIACHAIN portal and see immediately what's there and what's not, which is very convenient. It takes the guesswork out of it."

**We have accurate records for trailer rental customers:** "Customers may ask us to drop equipment on their lots and are willing to pay weekly rent for that. Our trailer tracking data ensures we have the records we need to bill correctly for this service."

**We can locate stolen trailers:** "We like where the VIACHAIN device is mounted. Potential thieves don't see it, so they don't remove it. Once the trailer's pigtail is connected, the trailer tracking unit pings us. We can see the trailer is moving and where it is. If it's being stolen, we know right away and can alert the authorities."

**We can detect unauthorized use of trailers:** "We've had other carriers pull our trailers without our permission and drop them in locations without our knowledge. Once we viewed the GPS data, we were able to see that they were somewhere we hadn't sent them, and we were able to reclaim them."

**We can track idling and work to improve fuel**

**economy:** “VIACHAIN captures ECM data about idling, and we use this to see if we need to speak to any of our drivers about wasting fuel. We started using APUs so drivers wouldn’t need to idle as much, but sometimes the APU goes out and the driver fails to let us know. This data helps us uncover the problem.”

**Safety data helps target the drivers who need**

**coaching:** “The ECM data also records the time between taking your foot off of the accelerator and putting it on the brakes. This metric tells you how

well the driver is staying aware of the road ahead and anticipating the need to slow down or stop. A related metric we follow is harsh braking. Both of these pertain to safety, as well as fuel economy. We use reports on these metrics to know which drivers need to be coached. Being able to speak to drivers one-on-one is much better than trying to offer blanket instructions to a large group, especially when many of them don’t need to hear the message because they’re already doing a great job. This allows us to personalize our focus on helping individual drivers.”

## A Driver’s Perspective

Vince McCullough has been driving trucks for 42 years and works both as a driver and a driver trainer for Chief Express. “I’ve used other systems,” he says, “but I like the VIACHAIN system the most.” Here are some of his reasons why:

**VIACHAIN has a better response time:** “VIACHAIN’s incab unit is really good and the system works as it should. About 99% of the time the unit processes transmissions almost instantaneously. I don’t have to sit around and wait for it to decide to work. There are also very few places that are dead areas without a connection. It works almost everywhere I go.”

**It’s less frustrating for the driver:** “I can’t speak for all drivers, but for most of us, the last thing we want to do is sit around and wait for a piece of machinery to decide it wants to work. Once we’re loaded or empty, we want to know where we’re going and what we’re doing to get reloaded, because in most cases, you earn your money while you’re loaded and rolling down the road.”

**VIACHAIN’s workflow makes life easier for drivers and helps them make more money:** “I have days when I don’t even have to talk to dispatch, because driver workflow gives me access to all of the

information I need to know where to go to pick up and deliver my loads. I go into the system, do what I need to do, and move on. I can see ahead, so I know exactly where I’m going for the next trip once I get empty from the current trip. It’s not just good for the driver. It’s good for the company, because you have less down time and less fuel consumed while you’re idling and waiting for information. This really does help over-the-road drivers make more money.”

**Inspections are simplified:** “When I need to do a pre-trip or post-trip inspection, VIACHAIN makes it easy. It already knows my tractor number, and it retains the last trailer number I entered. I can do a post-trip for one trailer and a pre-trip for the next trailer and it takes only a minimal amount of effort.”

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**Signing logs is a snap:** “Every morning I go into the Driver Summary screen on the VIACHAIN ELD. It pulls up the last 10 or 12 days I’ve driven, and if I haven’t signed off on yesterday’s hours yet, the record of those hours will be listed in red. I touch that and it asks me to sign it. I hit another button to sign and the red turns to green. I’ve signed my logs for the day before and I’m good to go. It takes 10 or 15 seconds.”

## **VIACHAIN and McLeod Provide the Tools Trucking Companies Need**

VIACHAIN’s truck management and trailer tracking solution enables complete visibility and control of freight operations for improved efficiency and proven ROI. Advanced HOS management helps fleets maximize driving time, comply with ELD regulations and better coordinate the assignment of jobs to drivers to ensure on-time delivery of shipments. Additionally, GPS-based location tracking allows trailer operations to improve asset utilization, deter theft and significantly reduce unauthorized trailer use.

For more information about our technology or to book a demo:  
Email: [sales@viachain.io](mailto:sales@viachain.io) | Call: **1-800-672-2666**

Visit our website [www.viachain.io](http://www.viachain.io)



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