

New generation tracking

Vehicle tracking started in South Africa when Netstar was launched in 1994. This was followed in 1996 by Matrix and then Tracker. The first systems were quite simple but today the services have branched out into vehicle and driver management tools which result in less abuse, lower operating costs, greater security and safety and tighter management.

The latest addition to these systems is the ability to log journeys for record keeping purposes. One use is an easy logbook to hand over to SARS for tax purposes (anyone claiming a travel allowance needs to present a detailed logbook to SARS), another is to differentiate between private and business travel, or allocate trips to different budgets.

The unit has the ability to automatically generate a logbook and once set-up, through the Matrix Vehicle Tracking website, a logbook can be generated that will contain the date, location and distance per trip.

A more sophisticated system records how the vehicle has been driven and can adjust

the service intervals to suit the unique usage of that vehicle. The system allows you to monitor how the driver operates his vehicle and so change behaviour, if required.

Tracker has a system for the management side of vehicle monitoring called Skytrax. When using this system's logbook facility, you can opt for a pay-as-you-drive policy through Hollard Insurance where you are charged for the distance travelled each month.

The C-track Secureplus product from Digicore includes a logbook facility and is very comprehensive. It is more a management tool than just a tracking service. Netstar also plans to add a logbook facility.

These systems cost about R200/month and approximately R3000 to install. Prices vary, so investigate which provider would best suit your needs. Compare contract requirements, including the duration of the contract and check with your insurer if they approve of your proposed vehicle management system as this could reduce your premiums.