



Fence Line Security with Yard Management Software

Moving Security to the Fence Line with Yard Management Software

Companies should consider using flexible yard management software to improve security for coverage to the fence line. Focus on security is at an all time high and most likely this focus will continue for the foreseeable future. A number of challenges can be overcome and economic, operational and customer service benefits can be realized by integrating existing systems and processes with the right yard management software.

Will Federal Initiatives On Ocean Cargo Move Inland?

Many new federal initiatives concentrate on Ocean Cargo security. These include C-TPAT, CSI, FAST, the Homeland Security Act, the Trade Act of 2002 and the U.S. Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. Some believe that once our ports are more secure, tighter inland security regulations will follow. (For more information on these initiatives with web links see the end of this article.)

Yard Management as an Information Hub and Portal

Yard management software can be the hub where information comes together to manage all equipment and non-employee entrance and exit activity at a facility. The right yard management solution works with existing processes, systems and procedures rather than being a separate database burden. Software that uses Microsoft .net technology for example can provide online access to container owners and carriers that would allow them to "see" where their equipment is physically located. Companies who use paper or spreadsheet based systems gain historical look up ability to aid security investigations or any other company or customer directed search.

What Information Can Be Integrated?

Operations vary and your situation will call for a tailorable and customizable solution to mirror your process and procedures. The yard management software must be flexible to adapt to your operational needs and requirements. Integration can include communicating with existing or built in appointment and advance shipping notice (ASN) processes. This allows handheld or keyboard data entry at the guard house by keying in only an appointment number or an ASN and confirmation that the equipment or visitor is positively identified. Where volume is heavy this minimal data entry method reduces inbound and outbound bottlenecks, keeps equipment flowing and minimizes data entry errors. Traditional yard management features such as directing equipment to the proper docks, parking areas or locations may also be incorporated.

How Big Is The Expense?

An integrated solution can be found for \$25.00 a day. Companies spend far in excess of this amount hunting lost equipment on the yard, performing physical inventories, re-keying data into disparate systems, producing redundant reports across departments, telephoning and faxing information over and over to in-house and outside parties and paying detention charges.

Yard Management Is the Next Logical Step in Streamlining After WMS and TMS

Many companies have been and are focused on Warehouse and Transportation Management Systems and rightly so. Streamlining these parts of the supply chain is critical to compete with

agile competitors and to satisfy demanding customers. The next logical step is to streamline systems to provide total coverage from the walls of the warehouse to the fence line.

What Other Benefits Can Be Expected With Yard Management Software

Your benefits will vary with your industry and your operation, but examples might include:

- Simple cost saving benefits from reduced trailer rental expense may be as easy to find as looking at a report that shows certain trailers have not moved in weeks.
- Awareness that activity is being recorded and analyzed may improve productivity.
- For companies that use trailers to store raw materials and finished goods yard management software can supplement their inventory system so they know where and how long product has been stored outside the warehouse.
- Key Performance Indicators such as dock out times or gate out times become automated and where service levels are being reviewed problems are more easily identified and solved.
- Time spent on physical lot checks can be greatly reduced by confirming or correcting equipment position rather than creating new lists each day.
- Carrier equipment commitments can be quickly assessed.
- Warnings that equipment detention is imminent can help you schedule the right unloading and return sequence.
- Online capability for Carriers and Customers to see equipment status rather than calling or asking for periodic fax updates.
- Visibility on how long equipment has been out of service, at a vendor repair facility or parked at a customer or store location.
- Helps to avoid delays in receiving inbound loaded trailers that are dropped and possibly overlooked.
- Ability to tag equipment or loads as “hot” to help you meet the ad campaign in store deadline.

Having an equipment and load centric database allows you to capture and query the information you need to have better decision making capability.

Summary

You can inexpensively tighten and increase security levels wherever you have personnel doors by simply improving current rules compliance and through better employee awareness of risks and procedures. Moving security to the fence line is another matter, and the right yard management software will tie everything together.

Recent Federal Security Initiatives

- Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT)
 - Requires importers, carriers and custom brokers to document security procedures. Accepted companies qualify for expedited processing and exemption from physical inspections. www.customs.ustreas.gov
- Container Security Initiative (CSI)
 - Places US Customs inspectors overseas to identify high risk shipments. www.customs.ustreas.gov
- Free and Secure Trade (FAST)
 - Participants in C-TPAT, working with Canada's Partners in Protection (PIP) receive unique identifiers that make them eligible for expedited processing at the US-Canada border. Carriers and Drivers must be pre-approved. www.customs.ustreas.gov
- Homeland Security Act
 - Creates the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and brings the Coast Guard, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and US Customs under the DHS. <http://thomas.loc.gov>
- The Trade Act of 2002
 - Along with giving the President "fast track" authority to negotiate trade agreements, also requires exporters to submit shipping documents no later than 24 hours after cargo has been delivered to a marine terminal, and at least 24 hours prior to a vessel's departure. Also requires exporters and importers to file electronically. <http://tomas.loc.gov>
- U.S. Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002
 - Requires the Coast Guard and other port security committees to conduct vulnerability assessments. Authorizes the Coast Guard to deny entry to vessels from countries that do not meet security standards. Mandates background checks and I.D. cards for some personnel. Orders the development of standards for container seals and locks as well as cargo tracking, identification and a screening system. <http://thomas.loc.gov>

About Cypress Inland Corporation

Cypress develops YardView yard management software, including YardView Light an economical spreadsheet and manual tracking alternative.

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