

# Choosing an ELD Solution: What to Ask



**GEOTAB**  
management by measurement

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## Top Qualities to Look for in an ELD Solution

Choosing the right electronic logging device (ELD) is critical. By making the right decision, you can simplify compliance, increase safety, and boost efficiency. However, make the wrong decision and you could end up with unreliable technology, added costs or unexpected fees, and the possibility of starting the process all over again.

This guide outlines the key factors to consider. By going beyond price and looking at added features and security, you can find the right fit for your needs and one that will last for the long run.

### 1 One Device for any Class of Vehicle

In any fleet, there could be many types of vehicles: Light-Duty, van, box truck, bucket truck, or even tractor truck. Fleets can also include alternative fuel and electric vehicles (EVs).

Look for a device that can be used for any class of vehicle. Finding a universal solution will reduce your costs in several ways. First, your drivers and personnel won't have to learn multiple systems or types of installs. Second, having one device in all vehicles reduces the overall complexity of the entire solution.



**?** What to Ask: Will the same device work in any type of vehicle?

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### 2 Easy Installation

The speed of installation can affect the overall ELD rollout. A complicated installation can be time-consuming and potentially costly to your budget. Be sure to ask how quick the installation procedure is and costs involved. A plug-and-play solution simplifies the process, even getting you up and running in minutes, not days and hours.

**?** What to Ask: What is the installation procedure and how long does it take?

### 3 Affordable Price

How much does an ELD cost? Many ELD solutions on the market are expensive, ranging up to \$2,500 for an enterprise-grade solution. When you consider hardware, professional installation, and the monthly recurring charge (MRC) for each vehicle, costs can add up. On the other hand, an inexpensive solution may not include all the right features to suit your needs.

Look at your ELDs as an investment rather than an expense. A good ELD solution will offer far more benefits and opportunities for fleet savings than costs in the long-term. For example, saving yourself one form-and-manner violation may result in an ELD solution paying for itself. You can also reduce costs by choosing an ELD solution that can be used with an existing mobile device, eliminating the need to purchase new equipment.

**?** What to Ask: How much does the device cost and what are the ongoing fees?

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### 4 Simple to Operate

An ELD application that is intuitive to use is essential. Drivers have many other responsibilities when they're on the road. They need a solution that makes it easy to update their status, complete vehicle inspections, and swiftly provide a compliance report during roadside inspections. Administrators need robust data collection and reporting so that they can easily monitor Hours of Service (HOS) compliance and violations. A confusing user interface or complicated workflow may jeopardize your compliance program.

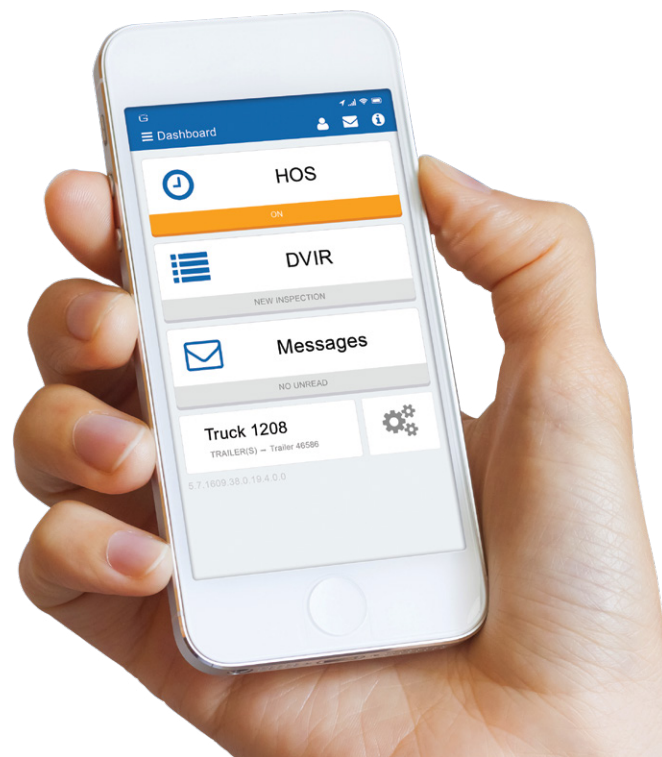
**?** What to Ask: Is the ELD easy to use?

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### 5 Compatible for Use with Smartphones

Compatibility with a smartphone or tablet adds convenience since mobile devices can be used for many different purposes. For drivers who are already comfortable with using a phone or tablet, this gives them a headstart on learning the technology.

**?** What to Ask: Does the ELD support iOS and Android? Can the ELD be used with off-the-shelf devices?



## 6 Event-Based Solution

It's quite common to find solutions that are time-based, meaning they periodically ask the device to provide information on where it is and how fast it's going, and record that information. You could also call this a time ping rate. Depending on the frequency, the polling could occur from every one to fifteen minutes. Then they take a scientific guess as to what happened to that vehicle during the time when there was no communication.

Many things can happen to that vehicle in between those pings. That's why you should look for an event-based solution that records and transmits data every time there is an event change (location, speed, harsh braking, harsh acceleration, harsh cornering, engine diagnostics, etc.). Having access to accurate and updated data will enable your fleet to make the most intelligent business decisions.

 What to Ask: Is the ELD solution time- or event-based?

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## 7 A Solution that Evolves with Changing Regulations

As regulations change and new regulations come out, you want a product that has the ability to evolve. When the ELD mandate was released, the providers of AOBDRD solutions had a choice whether to work towards ELD compliance or not. Responsiveness is key. If tomorrow, the government releases something else, you want to ensure the provider you've chosen is going to be on top of it.

 What to Ask: How will you ensure the solution remains compliant?

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## 8 Easy to Upgrade

Look for an ELD solution that will grow with you. Your needs tomorrow might be very different from your needs today.

 What to Ask: What types of rate plans do you offer? How easy is it to switch?

## Robust and Cloud-Based

Your Hours of Service data is critical to your business. That's why you should put reliability at the top of the list when considering solutions. An ELD solution that leverages cloud computing is more reliable and robust. Even if something happens to the smartphone or tablet, a cloud-based solution ensures your data is safe and secure.

Take the Geotab solution as an example. Here's how it works: the Cloud ELD interconnects the Geotab GO telematics device and the MyGeotab fleet management software with a mobile device running the Geotab Drive app. Vehicular and positional data recorded by the Geotab GO device is sent to a MyGeotab server over a cellular connection. The aggregated data is organized and presented through a user-friendly interface in various forms (reports, maps, and notifications). MyGeotab data can also be extracted for any number of uses via an API.



### Why Cloud ELD Is Better:

- **More Reliable and No Back Office Intervention** — If the mobile device malfunctions for whatever reason, the Cloud ELD will not lose any data, nor will it impact the driver's logs. As soon as the mobile device starts working again or the driver receives another mobile device and logs in, they will have a full history of their logs. No back-office intervention is needed to fill in logs during this period.
- **No Pairing Process** — The system does not rely on device pairing through wireless technology which may not be reliable enough for this critical circumstance. No pairing means you avoid other problems like compatibility issues with wireless chipsets or wireless interference from other electronics.
- **Reduces Power Consumption for Longer Battery Life** — The Cloud ELD simply triggers the mobile device to wake up when a notification to the driver is needed, instead of the application running in the background. As a result, the mobile device uses a fraction of the power so batteries are not depleted quickly.
- **Compatibility** with different platforms (Android and iOS)
- **Compliance** — Drivers can maintain accurate logs even when operating several different vehicles.
- **Consistency of Coverage** — Even if the vehicle is going in and out of cellular coverage, a Cloud ELD like Geotab Drive picks up and stores data whenever connections are made throughout the day.



What to Ask: How robust is the solution? Is it a Cloud ELD?



## Added Value to Look for in an ELD

### 10 Pre and Post-Trip Inspection

Regulations specify that a post-trip inspection must be completed after each trip, but many companies would also like their drivers to complete a pre-trip inspection. Look for an ELD solution that tags inspections as pre or post, and can send alerts for inspections not completed.


 What to Ask: How does the ELD handle vehicle inspections?

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### 11 Goes Above and Beyond the ELD Mandate

Although not required by the ELD mandate, support for rulesets and exemptions will make the driver's life easier. Having a solution that calculates all the driver's hours, and shows exactly how much time they have remaining is a huge benefit and helps ensure they stay compliant with the Hours of Service regulations. There are many exemptions out there to the rulesets, so it's smart to choose a vendor that has the ability to update the solution with new exemptions as they are required.

Future proof your investment by choosing a solution that can be upgraded with other advanced features such as Driver Vehicle Inspection Reports (DVIR), IFTA support, routing, risk management, driver safety, and third-party add in solutions like cameras, temperature sending and tire pressure monitoring. With extra features, you can leverage your ELD for greater efficiency and potential cost-savings. For example, optimizing your routes can help you deliver on-time, saving you time and money and increasing customer satisfaction. Go beyond HOS and look at how the telematics solution can support other aspects of your business.

 What to Ask: What other advanced features does the ELD offer? What rulesets and exemptions are supported?

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### 12 Accident Reconstruction

When a large truck is in an accident, it is typically assumed they are at fault. Having a solution that can provide accident reconstruction with telematics data is extremely valuable in helping understand the events that occurred before, during, and after a collision. Ask about this important feature.

 What to Ask: Can the solution provide data for accident reconstruction?



## 13 Expandability

Don't overlook the importance of having unfiltered access to your data. A free Software Development Kit (SDK) and open APIs opens up possibilities and makes it easy to share data with third-party vendors if necessary. Another advantage is integration with third-party solutions such as fuel cards, cameras, temperature sensors, and TMS applications.

 What to Ask: Do you offer an SDK and APIs?

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## 14 Customer Customization

No two fleets are exactly the same or have the same needs. You may determine you need a report, dashboard, rule or some other pertinent piece of data that is unique to you and would help you better manage your fleet. In some cases, a vendor may ask you to submit a special request and state your business case. In other words, you must convince the vendor to help you. When and if they fulfill your request depends on how important it is to them, not to you the customer. Bottom line, your request could take months or result in extra charges. Ask up front about how flexible the vendor is for customization.


 What to Ask: Can I customize the ELD solution? What is the process?

## Other Considerations

### 15 Vendor Experience and Reputation

Beware of flash in the pan vendors who make big promises. Look to the vendor's experience and their reputation in the industry as evidence of reliability. To get the most out of your investment, you want an ELD provider that will act as a partner, listen to your needs, and is capable of customizing the solution to your requirements. A vendor with a broader offering of solutions and services can provide more long-term value than one that only sells one product.

What is their track record? Find out who their top clients are and how long they have been with the company. A commitment to research and development and innovation, online marketplace with third-party partner solutions, and a strong security program are hallmarks of a good company.

 What to Ask: How long has your company been in business? Ask if they have offered an AOBRD product before.

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### 16 Security

The National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA) has advised motor carriers to show preference to ELD solutions from major telematics providers that are based on existing secure platforms. Ask your provider about their security measures across the board, from manufacturing, to hardware and software, data transfer, and data storage.

 What to Ask: How secure is the ELD?





# Geotab Drive — All-in-one Driver Compliance Solution

Geotab's electronic logging device (ELD) solution — Geotab Drive — is an affordable, expandable and very flexible solution that streamlines Hours of Service, Driver Vehicle Inspection Reporting and Driver Identification, saving time and money. This smart mobile app works with the Geotab GO telematics device to help you meet compliance regulations, keep your fleet productive and your drivers safe.

## Key Features:

- FMCSA compliant
- User-friendly dashboard
- Hours of Service reporting
- Automatic duty status changes
- Alerts for violations and drivers not logged in
- End-to-end vehicle inspection workflow
- Driver Identification
- Plug-&-Play installation
- Over-the-air (OTA) software and firmware updates
- Compatible with off-the-shelf Android and iOS devices (BYOD)\*
- Open and flexible solution for adding applications or integrating with other systems

Download Geotab Drive free on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.



Learn more about ELDs at:  
[www.geotab.com/eld](http://www.geotab.com/eld)

Questions? Please email:  
[testdrive@geotab.com](mailto:testdrive@geotab.com)



## About Geotab

Geotab securely connects commercial vehicles to the internet, providing advanced web-based analytics to better manage your fleet. Geotab's MyGeotab open platform and Marketplace, offering hundreds of business solution options, allows both small and large businesses to automate operations by integrating vehicle data with a company's other back office software and data assets. As an IoT hub, the in-vehicle device provides additional functionality through IOX Add-Ons including FMCSA ELD compliance. Processing more than 1 billion data points a day, Geotab leverages big data and machine learning to improve productivity, optimize fleet asset utilization and total cost of ownership, enhance driver safety, and achieve a more integrated compliance strategy. The company's products are represented and sold worldwide through its Authorized Geotab Resellers. To learn more, please visit [www.geotab.com](http://www.geotab.com) and follow us [@GEOTAB](https://twitter.com/GEOTAB) and on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/geotab).

Comments or questions related to this white paper can be emailed to: [testdrive@geotab.com](mailto:testdrive@geotab.com)

For more fleet tips and best practices, go to [www.geotab.com/blog](http://www.geotab.com/blog)

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