



## Surgical Couriers NZ Ltd

### Delivering surgical supplies just in time

If you're booked in for hip replacement surgery you might be surprised to learn that the medical equipment needed isn't necessarily sitting in storage in the hospital. The medical instruments are held by medical supply companies and arrive only a couple of days before the surgery takes place. And its companies like Surgical Couriers NZ Limited that get these deliveries done.

Auckland-based Surgical Couriers delivers vital medical instruments across Auckland, Whangarei, Hamilton, Tauranga and Rotorua. Owner Noel Burgess says that the suppliers operate a "just in time" type model, and Surgical Couriers transports the instruments to the hospital in time to be sterilised before the operation.

"We transport every conceivable instrument required for the operation, whether they use them or not doesn't matter, we deliver," says Noel. "We transport them from the supplier to the hospital and when the operation has been completed we transport the instruments back to the supplier."

The instruments which are packed for transport in customised transport boxes, are often highly specialised, delicate and expensive. There can be up to \$100,000 worth of equipment in a box.

#### Stalking the scalpels

With expensive medical equipment to transport and drivers spread across the upper North Island, Noel needed to know exactly where all the vehicles were. Three years ago he had GPS fleet management system Teletrac Navman installed. Vans are tracked with Qube tracking devices and there are MNav in cab messaging units in the cabs to communicate with the drivers. Noel can see the whole fleet using the DIRECTOR fleet management software.

#### Integrating for efficiency

Surgical Couriers already used freight management system iCOS LIVE, which allows customers to place orders by phoning or booking online. When Teletrac Navman was installed, it was fully integrated with the iCOS LIVE system.

"About 50 per cent of our customers book online through iCOS LIVE, and this allows them to see the progress of the order from inception to delivery. Of course, some of our customers prefer to phone us, and that's fine. We offer an old fashioned service, so if you phone Surgical Couriers, you always talk to a real person."

Noel says that one of the biggest benefits of the integration is removing paper handling.

"We are now paperless and that's due to Teletrac Navman and iCOS LIVE together," says Noel. "We're very internet focussed. In fact, we don't even have a cheque book. All the invoicing is done through iCOS LIVE straight through to Xero, then the invoices are emailed to the customers. I ask my suppliers to email me their invoices as well."

#### HERE'S HOW SURGICAL COURIERS HAS BENEFITED FROM INSTALLING TELETRAC NAVMAN TECHNOLOGY

- Having an overview of the whole fleet
- Integrated systems for increased efficiency
- Hands free technology and monitoring improves safety
- More effective dispatching

## Health and safety benefits

Surgical Couriers quickly realised the safety benefits of the GPS tracking system.

"Drivers are now safer not having to talk on the phone, they aren't distracted anymore. We send the job through the MNav, the driver presses go, then the MNav can direct the driver straight to the destination," says Noel.

*"We are now paperless and that's due to Teletrac Navman and iCOS LIVE together."*

"Using Teletrac Navman as a management tool we monitor our staff's driving habits 'live'. This enables us to take, immediate, proactive measures to improve driver behaviour. This ability is much more effective as there is no room for argument."

Surgical Couriers regularly uses the vehicle and driver activity reports as well as driver time sheets (which notify when the ignitions are on or off). These tools allow the dispatcher to keep an eye on the driver and make sure he's ok.

"A van was coming back from Whangarei for example, we noticed it had been stopped for five minutes, and wondered what was up. It turned out he'd been pulled over at a routine police stop. The point is, it allows us to make sure our drivers are ok, and we're up with what was going on," says Noel.

## Less demanding dispatch

GPS fleet management makes things much easier for the dispatcher, according to Noel.

"There is no longer a constant need for the dispatcher to stand by the telephone. And as our dispatcher can now see where everyone is, this has saved a lot of time in the back office. This led to a less stressful (and much quieter) environment."

For a specialised company like Surgical Couriers, turning to technology has had significant benefits in both efficiency and safety. If you or someone you know is to undergo surgery, rest assured, the equipment necessary is well taken care of.



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**Noel Burgess**

Director, Surgical Couriers (NZ) Ltd