



AMCS CASE STUDY | PRIVATE FLEET

NEW YORK CONTAINER TERMINAL

Find out more about AMCS Fleet Maintenance

AMCS Fleet Maintenance on the Docks at NY Container Terminal

Charlie Priscu put AMCS Fleet Maintenance software to work at New York Container Terminal. His effort paid off quickly, reining in costs and documenting the company's compliance with critical environmental rules. According to Priscu, even more benefits have accrued since then.

New York Container Terminal (NYCT) is a deep-water container facility on 200 acres on Staten Island in New York Harbor that transfers cargo containers between ocean-going ships and surface transportation modes, including truck and rail. The customer-oriented company also consolidates small international shipments into container loads and operates a large food warehouse.

Charlie Priscu, NYCT's Manager, Power Equipment, maintains a unique array of rolling stock.

An Unusual Fleet

"We have about 330 units. We have 89 yard switchers or hustlers. We have 33 full container handlers and 9 that handle empties. We have about 100 electric and propane forklifts that move warehouse cargo, and we have a 2,000 hp diesel-electric locomotive," he said.

The locomotive moves containers over two miles of track on NYCT's property and to nearby Arlington Yard where loaded container cars are handed off to rail carriers.

Priscu's department also maintains 30 pick-up trucks, as well as two school buses used to move work crews around the property.

When Charlie Priscu was named Manager, Power Equipment, the department ran on paper records and was less than well organized at that.

"They really didn't have a PM program. They might have had one or two Excel spreadsheets around with lists of things they needed to PM, but they weren't keeping track. It was pretty much, okay, we did this group of trucks three months ago; let's do 'em again. That kind of thing," Priscu explained.

Priscu's predecessors had recognized a need and gone shopping for maintenance management software. They had decided on and licensed AMCS Fleet Maintenance, but that's as far as it went.

"They had AMCS Fleet Maintenance on my desktop, but it wasn't being used," Priscu said. "I think they started the project but never followed through. They bought it thinking it was going to make itself work."

Now Priscu needed to know if AMCS Fleet Maintenance could provide what his unusual fleet required.

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Charlie Priscu,
NYCT's Manager, Power Equipment

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"So I took the AMCS Fleet Maintenance training class. I felt it would give me a better idea of what it was capable of doing than having a salesman come here," Priscu said.

He found AMCS Fleet Maintenance was up to the job and then some.

"I decided it was fully capable of doing everything I could possibly want," he said.

Gearing Up to Take Control

With a few additions, including a bar coding module, Priscu was ready to put AMCS Fleet Maintenance to work. His first noteworthy benchmark came before the year was out when he earned an A+ rating from the same outside auditing firm that given his department a thumbs-down the prior year. The problem had been in documentation and control of rolling assets and parts inventory.

"I came in January and they were doing inventory at the end of the year and I inherited the inventory for the next year," Priscu recalled. "At the time I had an assistant in the outer office and he was kind of taking care of it on an Excel spread sheet. It was just a mess. They did an audit and it failed, and they did an audit and it failed again. What we had listed was not what we actually had in the inventory.

"We had way more stuff than we had on paper, which has been my experience in marine terminals. You have \$200,000 or \$300,000 worth of inventory on paper; you've got \$500,000 or \$600,000 in your storeroom—parts that are obsolete, stuff that never got put into an inventory. Maybe you'll use it, maybe you won't. Maybe you don't even know it's there, and you buy another one. You run into all of those issues.

"It took almost a full year to get everything bar-coded and accounted for," Priscu said.

Overcoming Inventory Problems

"The first 50% or 60% of inventory is very easy. The parts are clearly labeled. But the parts that have no labels you pick up and say, well I know this is an alternator, but no number, no history, no manufacturer. Accountants take a dim view of it when you say, well, I think it's worth about \$75. They want it to be accurate one way or another," Priscu recalled.

"We had to trace all these parts back, which was very time-consuming. Some of the parts we never found a home for we scrapped out. Others we would get someone to quote. An accountant will take that quote from a vendor. You don't necessarily have to buy it at that price, but it's a realistic, legal quote so you can put it in your inventory. We spent a lot of time bar-coding everything," he said.

The payoff — easy access to information and accountability for parts and assets — showed in the next audit.

"We went from the bottom to the top in one year," Priscu said.

"My inventory crept from about \$300,000 to about \$550,000. I didn't add anything. That was just reclaiming things already here that nobody had accounted for," he noted.

Now NYCT's parts inventory is attuned to actual work being done and turns over as needed.

"We use probably 30 or 40 sets of Ford brake shoes a year. We keep two in stock at all times. That way we don't have disruptions in work. The guy takes the job apart, gets the parts, puts it together, the parts guy orders a new set, and away we go," Priscu said.

Benefits Beyond Inventory

NYCT equipment usage is measured in engine hours not mileage because the equipment stays on site, so that's where exhaust gases are generated — a concern for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey which regulates harbor operations.

"We use handheld computers with AMCS Fleet Maintenance and record the fuel pumped to each piece of equipment, so we have very accurate records of gallons per hour burned. Those records validate our compliance with the Port Authority's clean air program. If I'm saving fuel, I'm putting less hydrocarbons in the air," Priscu said.

AMCS Fleet Maintenance provides Priscu a valuable window on the work mechanics do and the resources they use.

"What comes to mind are batteries and alternators. You'd be surprised how many machines had a battery and an alternator fail at the same time. But looking at AMCS Fleet Maintenance records you'd say, you know what? There's just no way that's possible. You start challenging your mechanics on, well, which one is wrong? Why am I spending \$100 on a battery and \$200 on an alternator? They're not both dead. Let's start making better calls."

AMCS Fleet Maintenance on Warranties

"We don't use the warranty tab as much as we should. It's one of those things on the to-do list. But we use the notes tab and just put down, say, this is a transmission that was changed, or this was a turbocharger changed. It gives you the ability to go back and look when it was changed. Even if you don't do that, you can look in the work order records and see the last time that machine had one changed. You say, hey, we changed that turbocharger only three months ago. Now you can go back to whoever rebuilt it and put in a warranty claim," Priscu said.

"AMCS Fleet Maintenance has helped us with that and with pricing. You've got the historical record of the last price paid for parts. First thing my parts guy does is look at what he paid for a part last time, and when he's reordering he gets a quote for it. When it doesn't match up you start checking whether it's a legitimate increase or something that should be investigated further. Maybe it's cheaper somewhere else," he said.

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AMCS Fleet Maintenance on Equipment Utilization

"It gives me ammunition in staff meetings when people say we don't have enough equipment," Priscu explained. "I might be able to say that, say, 10% of the fleet was only used 20 hours in the last month. And you start seeing trends like real low-use machines. Are they simply underutilized or do they have issues?"

A particular machine might have a problem, Priscu explained, or an operator may simply prefer a newer machine.

"In any case, AMCS Fleet Maintenance has pointed out that portions of the fleet are underutilized, and you say, you're asking for more equipment and you're not utilizing what we have," he said.

Looking Ahead

Priscu said that NYCT is looking into a wireless system that will automatically update service hours into AMCS Fleet Maintenance.

"An Achilles heel of my shop is hour meters," he said. "Apparently writing a five-digit hour meter number down for a mechanic is harder than rebuilding a transmission. So we spend probably three hours a week correcting hour meters. I want accurate hours."

The company is also considering GPS devices.

"They'll have accelerometers for impacts so if there's a collision, we'll be alerted. Some alerts will go directly to an email address or my phone so I'll be notified. Others may create work pending notices in AMCS Fleet Maintenance. Right now we're keeping it very simple. Once we get the service hour meter readings up and running, we may put other things into the AMCS Fleet Maintenance system," he said.

AMCS Fleet Maintenance Support

"By far AMCS Fleet Maintenance has had the easiest, quickest response time for customer support of any software company I've ever worked with — bar none," Priscu said, explaining that in one instance he had worked with a maintenance software provider based in Europe.

"Just getting someone on the other end was an issue. If you didn't call early in the morning you'd never get anyone," he said. And when he did get someone it wasn't always as helpful as it could be.

"It was a kind of a one-sided conversation. Very tough to get a dialogue going where I tell you the problem, you tell me the fix and we go back and forth," Priscu explained.

"With AMCS Fleet Maintenance I've probably called a hundred times and I think I've gone to voice mail maybe twice, three times. One time I went over to voice mail with a question on how to run a report. I left that voice mail and was called out of the office. AMCS Fleet Maintenance called back and left a very nice message saying, we got your message; here's the report you need. And by the way, I emailed step-by-step instructions to you.

"I get back to my desk, open up my email. Step A — push this button. Step B, etc. It walked me right through running the report. I couldn't ask for something easier to do. I couldn't come to the phone when they called, but they left this step-by-step on my desk ready to go.

"They're very polite, very quick. Every once in a while someone will say, gee, I'm not the expert on that, let me get so-and-so. Usually within five minutes, ten minutes I've got an answer to my question. So AMCS Fleet Maintenance support is an absolute A plus," Priscu said.

"The only hard thing about AMCS Fleet Maintenance support is getting my people to pick up the phone and call them. They'll ask me a question on AMCS Fleet Maintenance, and I say, well, have you called support? Well, no, they say. Then it's my turn to ask, why not?"

Learn how AMCS Fleet Maintenance can save your business money.

The AMCS Fleet Maintenance software solution gives you comprehensive management to optimize your fleet assets and all related areas. It empowers you to manage your equipment, employees, shops, and resources in real time — enabling you to unlock hidden productivity within your fleet and reach its cost-savings potential.

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