

# Finning Canada

## Off-Road and on Point!

Technology helps with tricky terrain.

BY KRYSZYNA LAGOWSKI

**W**hen you're operating 850 heavy duty assets in places like the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, you'll likely face unique situations.

But Charles Schwanbeck, Service Asset Manager for Finning Canada, deals with many of the same issues as others in his position. "One of my challenges is having the information on hand to make informed decisions," he says. "Over the past year, we've introduced telematics. All of our leased assets are integrated with our GPS to provide real-time information from our fleet vehicles to our leasing portal."

As a result, Schwanbeck has visibility for total lease, fuel, maintenance, utilization and repair data for each asset. "It also tracks our drivers' hours of service for our National Safety Code compliance, as well as vehicle fault information to reduce downtime," he explains. Finning Canada is a division of Finning International, the largest dealer of Cat equipment in the world.

### Rugged conditions

The Finning Canada fleet is made up of 400 F-150 and F-350 trucks for sales and parts reps, plus 450 field service trucks that service Cat equipment, often in very rugged conditions. "Most of our service trucks are Ford 550s but we also have the Freightliner M2 106 and Kenworth T370," Schwanbeck says.

The trucks travel to Finning's customers all over Western Canada—from the mountains to mine sites and construction projects. "Many of these locations are off-road, so we have to be fully equipped to service that piece of equipment on site," says Schwanbeck.

The service truck air compressors and cranes are tied into the GPS, which enables Finning to track where the equipment is being utilized. "This allows us to better

support our customers by ensuring our technicians have the required equipment, when they need it," Schwanbeck adds.

### Power packs

The service truck toolbox cabinets are heated for when technicians use tools in cold weather. "New trucks have diesel-fired heaters to avoid idling the truck engine," says Schwanbeck. "The power pack heats the engine and air compressor for reliable starts, and to keep the truck's engine warm while parked on site."

**"We're always looking to leverage new technology to be more efficient."**

Charles Schwanbeck, Service Asset Manager, Finning Canada

Maintenance is scheduled according to number of kilometres, engine hours or by date, depending on the asset. "There's more preventive maintenance like oil changes and fuel filters on trucks that have

high hours," says Schwanbeck. "Safety is our number one priority and we pay extra attention to brakes and suspension components on trucks that have driven long distances and through the mountains. As part of our commitment to safety we also have a winter tire program that ensures all our trucks have winter-rated tires or are equipped with tire chains."

Over the past year, 85 trucks were installed with power packs, including an air compressor, welding unit, generator, battery charger and booster. "This cuts down on idle time and saves fuel so we're able to operate more efficiently in remote locations," notes Schwanbeck. "We anticipate about a 32 percent saving in fuel and maintenance costs. As trucks come up for replacement, we'll install more of them."

"We're always looking to leverage new technology for safety and efficiencies to better serve our customers. The power pack added four extra non-standard functions on the trucks. And the telematics support the power pack to make our long term goal of reducing fuel and maintenance costs more realistic." 🌐



One of Finning Canada's Ford F-550 trucks, prepped and ready for a hard day of work.

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