

Case Study

How Mercedes-Benz U.S. uses timely, accurate forecasts to maintain safe operations



Mercedes-Benz
U.S. International, Inc.

**\$1.2M per hour,
average cost of shut
down due to severe
weather**

**4 per year, average
shutdowns auto
assembly facilities
face due to severe
weather**

**\$5M, average loss
per year from severe
weather impacts**

// The decision of whether or not to shut down operations because of severe weather impacts is not taken lightly at the Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc. plant in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. The manufacturing plant sits on 966 acres and is considered the center of the automotive industry in Alabama. As a “just-in-time” facility, weather disruptions impact more than 20,000 people involved in its supply chain.

The Challenge

Lost production, asset protection and supply chain disruption are just a few reasons why MBUSI’s management team have been turning to StormGeo since 2007 for hour-by-hour weather monitoring and alerting supported by live meteorologists and the latest technology.

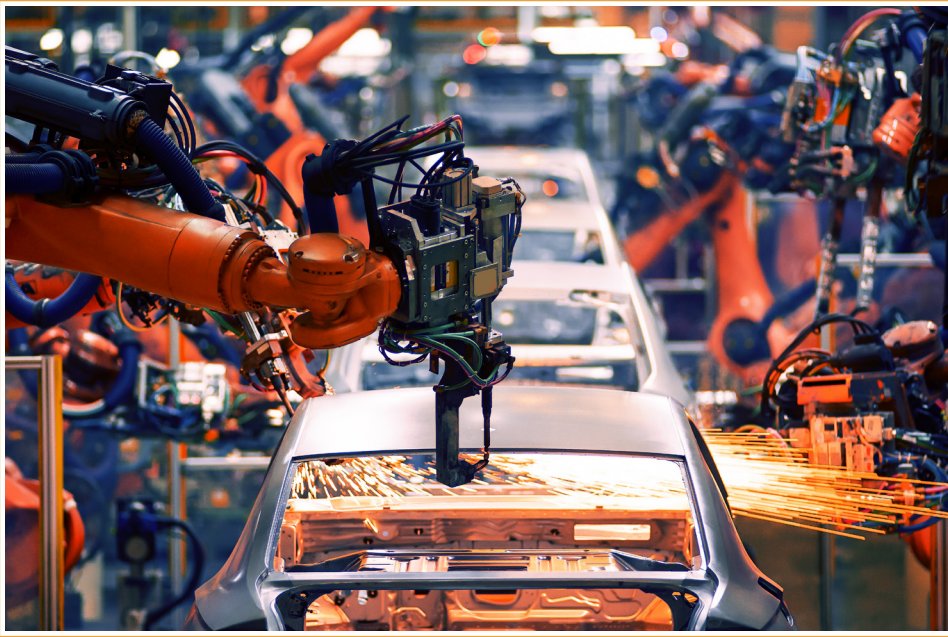
“We base our decisions to evacuate or stop production on team members’ safety,” said Cicero Bevelle, Safety Specialist for MBUSI. “We have a higher frequency for tornadoes than in other parts of the state, so we’re all ears when the forecasts from StormGeo mention severe weather with tornadic activity. In addition, winter weather is incredibly challenging for us because we’re taking into consideration transit time for employees in a 75-mile radius as well as members of our supply chain.”

As a “just-in-time” production facility, MBUSI’s decisions to stop production affect not only its own employees, but a total of 9,000 to 10,000 people including suppliers who are in and out of its gates on a daily basis.

“We hear 72 hours in advance that severe weather is coming, and we are on the StormGeo website watching the forecast develop, or on the phone with a meteorologist requesting updates for our safety department,” Bevelle said.

// For more information or to
schedule a call with
a representative, email us at
info@stormgeo.com

stormgeo.com



Considerations

For winter weather conditions, the challenge is complex, as snow and ice can persist for days, affecting the mobility and safety of employees in a massive area. “We were tracking the ice line of a severe winter storm,” Bevelle said. “We were trying to make a decision on whether to shut down the plant for team members’ safety. Every half hour or so, the direction of the storm would change dramatically, a 50-mile shift for the better or for the worse.”

Solution

Because of StormGeo’s frequent updates starting in the early morning, MBUSI’s management determined that the storm would not impact its specific geographic radius, and the facility was able to safely remain open and avoid lost time and its associated costs.

To Bevelle and MBUSI, it is the specificity and precision of StormGeo’s forecasts that provides the greatest value.

“There are a lot of outlets for weather out there - across smartphones, television, and radio. But they speak in such general terms. If you want to be specific about the impact to your area, you need a more focused look,” said Bevelle. “For another facility of our size, this is the service for you.”

Benefits

StormGeo’s service has had a huge positive impact on the way the Mercedes manufacturing plant makes its safety decisions. “I would definitely recommend StormGeo based on our level of service. It would be a benefit for anyone’s facilities.”

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Cicero Bevelle

MBUSI

Safety Specialist

StormGeo, a part of Alfa Laval, is a global provider of advanced weather intelligence and decision support services—relied upon to maintain business continuity, avoid supply chain disruption, protect assets and maximize productivity for industries including manufacturing, construction, telecom, utilities, healthcare and data centers. Our products and services help clients manage risk, optimize performance, reduce costs and increase profitability. As a participant in the UN Global Compact for Sustainable Ocean Business, our passion for weather and the protection of natural resources motivates us to support our clients in making informed, environmentally responsible business decisions.