

FleetNews

Safety report

February 2025



CUT YOUR RISK

Expert advice on pre-empting, minimising and managing road incidents

TAKING FLEET SERIOUSLY

Running a safe fleet has many benefits, from driver health to improving efficiency

UPSKILLING DRIVERS

Changing demands and technologies mean regular training is a necessity

MONITORING RISK

Maximise the potential of telematics to bring improvements to driver safety

WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS

Any initiative can only achieve true success if you have employee buy-in



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Initiatives from Government and other national authorities are having an impact

POST-COLLISION STRATEGIES

Drivers must react quickly to minimise potential impacts of a road incident

CASE STUDY

Serious road collision led engineering company to introduce new technologies

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Rental can provide perfect solution as emissions pressure increases



Gary Smith, Managing Director
Europcar Mobility Group UK

Grey fleet usage has been a challenge for fleet and business travel managers for many years. Of course, it's handy to not have to worry about vehicle ownership and maintenance; but as the pressure mounts to reduce business emissions – and the age of the vehicle parc increases – grey fleet vehicles could present a growing risk for many organisations.

Our recent research among people who drive for business found that grey fleet usage is still a big factor. Nearly 85% said they rely on their own vehicle for business journeys. For the very short journeys, of course, that makes sense. But for any employees regularly driving for work, the use of grey fleet could be a false economy.

Safety has to be the number one concern. However, the bigger issue on the horizon is emissions. With the average age of the UK car parc being nine years old, how many grey fleet vehicles actually comply with CAZ and ULEZ

requirements? And if they're not – what are the real costs to a business? Tolls and fines could be an unplanned expense.

Plus, reputationally, does employees using older grey fleet vehicles tell the right story for a business and its brand?

Rental makes a lot of sense as part of a holistic fleet strategy to tackle the risks of grey fleet usage. Access to rental vehicles – by the day, week, month or even year – not only provides more certainty over vehicle safety and condition. It also means emissions can be reduced by using modern rental vehicles.



Safety from service



Tom Edwards, Kwik Fit fleet sales director

An important part of fleet tyre safety is establishing a corporate tyre policy and sticking to it. At Kwik Fit we support our clients and their drivers in their safety mission by providing the right tyre in the right place at the right time.

We have continually led the way in innovation, most recently with customers now able to integrate their systems with our own web booking platform. This allows fleet drivers to benefit from access to Kwik Fit's live diary for tyres, MOT and SMR services.

In control

The driver simply logs into our platform with the system able to recognise their fleet, tyre size and fleet policy and pass the driver through to a centre or mobile fitting option convenient to them. Bookings for MOTs, servicing and any other products covered by the client agreement work in a similar fashion.

The platform utilises all of Kwik Fit's e-commerce experience in tyre retailing and fleet tyre management in one system, making life easy for both the driver who wants convenience, and for the fleet manager concerned with correct fitment policy in an era of tyre complexity.

Opening access to our live system has been a game changer for clients. We've been able to combine many years' fleet experience with the unparalleled scale of our network and breadth of stock to create a seamless booking process and we have seen a hugely positive reaction from fleet drivers.



WELCOME

In a recent *Fleet News* safety webinar, I was gently admonished by the hugely respected Alison Moriarty about using the phrase 'near miss'.

She corrected me: "It's a near hit."

Changing the terminology influences the way everyone – drivers, line managers, board executives – thinks about how they should address a situation where a driver narrowly avoided a crash.

Many companies treat a near hit in the same way as an actual collision in terms of post-incident investigation leading to training.

In a similar vein, *Fleet News* supports and is doing its best to adhere to the national campaign to stop using the word 'accident' to describe a crash.

Again, it's about changing the mentality of all stakeholders – rarely, if ever, is a collision an accident, which suggests an unavoidable non-fault incident. It is almost always somebody's fault.

The push to stop using the word accident has gained momentum over the past 12 months (note the views of National Highways in this report), but I first came across it more than a decade ago during a roundtable jointly hosted with the late road safety expert Dr Will Murray.

His proposal was initially dismissed by fleets, but his argument about changing the way people viewed crashes was compelling. He won round the audience.

In much the same way, our safety report is an invaluable guide that will help fleet decision-makers to win the hearts and minds of drivers and those who manage them.

Employing case studies and expert advice, we examine ways in which you can take pre-emptive action to reduce the chances of an incident occurring, deploy technology to minimise the severity of an incident if it does happen, and have a clear process to manage the aftermath of an incident.

I hope it helps to strengthen your risk management strategy.



Stephen Briers,
group editor,
Fleet News

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Why you NEED to take fleet safety seriously

Running a safe fleet has many benefits, from driver health to improving efficiency.

Andrew Ryan looks at six of the key reasons why it should be a priority



1 IMPROVED DRIVER HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Driver health and well-being has risen up the fleet priority list in recent years and for good reason: happier and healthier employees are more productive and loyal.

"When Driving for Better Business (DfBB) started in 2007, it was all about the cost benefits because health and safety wasn't really anywhere on anybody's to-do list," says Simon Turner, campaign manager at the National Highways programme, which helps employers reduce work-related road risk.

"That's different now. Employees, certainly the younger ones, are looking for companies that will look after them and do the right things.

"There's a much better appreciation of the moral angle in treating staff well and looking after their safety."

This is reflected in the evolving attitudes of organisations towards staff well-being, with many organisations reflecting this by introducing 'zero harm' safety cultures.

Balfour Beatty, for example, conceived its Zero Harm terminology in 2008 as a succinct way to define its risk management strategy, with many companies since mirroring this.

It's a similar situation at Autoglass parent Belron. "We have a zero harm policy where the emphasis is that every incident is a person, a colleague, a friend," says Andrew Ertl, its fleet contracts specialist.

"We record every incident whether or not it results in time off work so we can identify how to prevent them happening again. Having buy-in from the business is the only way we are able to do this."

While many organisations feel they have a moral – as well as legal – responsibility to keep employees safe, it also has a positive effect on fleet operations.

Happy and healthy drivers will be more fulfilled by their work, improving loyalty and staff retention, while they will also be more engaged in their job.

This can lead to better productivity and can also mean they are more likely to listen and act on feedback around driver behaviour, be more receptive to adopting new technology such as dash-cams and pay attention to cost-saving measures they can influence.

It also means that, when dealing with customers, they are more likely to act as a professional ambassador and representative of the organisation, thereby improving brand reputation.

It could also help attract a higher quality of staff through word of mouth and websites such as Glassdoor, where employees share their experiences of working for different organisations.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Looking after driver health now goes far beyond simply reducing physical injuries through cutting the incidence of collisions.

An increasing number of organisations have introduced initiatives to look after the mental health and well-being of drivers on a day-to-day basis.

This can be influenced by long hours, irregular schedules and the often sedentary nature of the job.

These can combine to create significant mental and physical health risks, including musculoskeletal disorders, cardiovascular diseases and increased levels of stress and anxiety.

The solitary nature of driving can also exacerbate feelings of isolation and loneliness, impacting mental health: research by the Office for National Statistics has found the suicide rate for van drivers is 25% higher than the national average and 20% higher for truck drivers.

To help tackle this, mental health charity CALM

(Campaign Against Living Miserably) has partnered with DfBB to produce a toolkit and various resources to educate and support organisations.

There are also other actions organisations can take to improve driver well-being.

Regular check-ins can be scheduled with drivers to have open conversations with them. This will give them the opportunity to talk about any concerns or stresses they have.

A support system could be put in place to ensure drivers have access to impartial, additional help, while telematics data can be monitored to identify changes to driver behaviours that may be an indicator of issues, such as increased instances of harsh braking or rapid acceleration.

"Work scheduling can affect fatigue or speeding," says Alison Moriarty, managing director and head of compliance at Beverley Bell Consulting and Training. "Your driver is working an eight-hour day, so you may think it is fine to give them seven visits in a day with roughly an hour in between.

"But is that fine? Is that driver never going to come across any traffic? Is he never going to take time to get into the vehicle or speak to a customer for longer?"





2

TRANSITION TO ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) brings its own challenges from a safety perspective.

"They function differently from conventional fuel-powered vehicles; they offer instant acceleration, regenerative braking and other advanced features," says Nick Butler, director of DriveTech.

"Their unique characteristics present risks if drivers haven't received the proper training; they must be confident behind the wheel."

In other cases, the transition to zero-emission vehicles is meaning that a number of fleets are operating older vehicles – either through keeping hold of existing vehicles for longer, or by buying used diesel vans.

Older vehicles may lack the safety technology of the newest vehicles, as well as being more susceptible to wear and tear or reliability issues, making robust management vital.

The latest Leasing Outlook report from the BVRLA (British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association) notes the complications of running electric vans is prompting some operators to schedule another cycle of diesel vans or extend replacement cycles rather than make the switch to zero tailpipe emissions.

This is backed up by last year's FN50 research of the UK's largest contract hire and leasing companies, which found the average van lease length had increased year-on-year from 43 months to 46.3 months.

The Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Mandate is also influencing fleet behaviour when it comes to procuring vans, says Shoreham Vehicle Auctions.

It adds some fleets are buying used LCVs at auction to avoid increasing pressure from OEMs to order one or more EVs for every 10 new diesel vehicles they order.

"Fleets are buying good quality used vehicles to avoid being forced to buy eLCVs from OEMs keen to meet their ZEV Mandate targets," says Alex Wright, managing director of Shoreham Vehicle Auctions.

"Many fleets are still not prepared for an electric journey as their usage and mileage sits outside the capability of current eLCVs."



"Are you actually part of the problem? Are you enabling that driver to speed because you gave them too many jobs in the time available?"

Route planning can be used to help: within software packages, priorities can be set to avoid areas where people live and work, while accident blackspots can also be avoided.

Regular health screenings and support programmes can be offered and could include eye tests, ergonomic assessments, cardiovascular health screenings and mental health resources.

The quality of a driver's diet may also be an issue as they could be grabbing food on the go, and this could lead to diabetes which is becoming a hidden epidemic in UK workplaces, says Kate Walker, managing director of the Diabetes Safety Organisation.

"We know that there are five million people with the condition and a further 12.6 million in the UK have pre-diabetes," she adds.

"These numbers are significant. If people are

unmanaged, time off work increases, there is an increased risk of accidents from those who are undiagnosed or those who are not necessarily managing it well."

Walker says when the Diabetes Safety Organisation works with companies it sees "very little understanding of diabetes".

"So almost the first failing is that it is not recognised to have any impact in the workplace. It is seen as just purely a medical condition," she adds.

"People living with diabetes have to also comply with DVLA regulations, and they fit under the Equality act because, more often than not, diabetes would be a disability.

"We really need to start a conversation around diabetes across the industry to make our roads safer and to help anyone who is living with it to feel safe to come forward."

3

A SAFE FLEET WILL COST LESS MONEY

While there are many moral and legal reasons for an organisation to take fleet safety seriously, there are also strong business ones.

A safer fleet is also a more efficient and cost-effective one, and this is an important argument for a fleet decision-maker if they need to win buy-in to risk management policies from a reluctant board.

"Driving for work is one of the highest-risk activities that most employees undertake," says Simon Turner, campaign manager for DfBB.

"There is a strong business case for managing work-related road safety. Fewer road incidents mean fewer days lost to injury; fewer repairs to vehicles with vehicles out of action; fewer missed

orders and overall reduced running costs."

On the surface, it may appear that the cost of a collision is restricted mainly to vehicle damage, but this is just one small part of the picture.

There are many other factors that need to be taken into account, including additional vehicle costs such as recovery and storage, downtime, reduced resale value; driver costs, such as loss of expertise, lost productivity, personal injury; third-party costs, including vehicle and/or property damage, loss of earnings and legal costs; and other costs, including missed sales, damaged or lost stock, business reputation and management and administration time.

To highlight the true impact, road safety charity Brake uses the example of when a vehicle hits another from behind, it could incur £1,000 of damage, cause £1,000 of damage to the other one, and there may be an injury claim of £1,000 to the other driver.

While the reported cost of the collision is £3,000, Brake says the actual cost could easily be double this when the other factors are taken into account: if the organisation makes a 10% return on sales, to cover this collision it would require an additional £60,000 of revenue.

Many examples and case studies of fleets which have achieved significant savings after introducing risk management programmes can be found throughout, for example, the fleet profile section on the *Fleet News* website, as well as the case study section of Driving for Better Business's site.

For example, Tarmac saw a decrease in speeding of 10% across all geographical areas, and its insurance claims drop by 48%, while Clancy Docwra reported a saving of £65,000 on fuel and traffic offences down 9%.

The Canal and River Trust, which looks after 2,000 miles of historic canals and rivers, has a fleet of 517 LCVs and saved £200,000 in the first



12 months after overhauling its approach to road risk management.

Key priorities included ensuring that all drivers had valid driving qualifications and licences – bringing driver licence compliance from 20% to 99% – and ensuring the vehicles were correctly maintained.

Steve Mulvaney, fleet manager at Canal and River Trust, also renewed the organisation's driver handbook, introduced driver risk assessments, a training programme and telematics to monitor driver behaviour and identify areas for improvement.

"What's clear is that we have gone from zero to a much safer, compliant and cost-effective fleet," says Mulvaney.

The measures reduced annual fleet spend by 14% year-on-year, reduced non-fault collisions by 21%, at-fault collisions by 19% and fuel use by 12% among specifically trained drivers.



SAFE FLEETS WIN WORK

Demonstrable fleet safety is increasingly becoming a requirement for organisations when contracting work from suppliers, says Simon Turner, campaign manager at Driving for Better Business.

Larger organisations may already ask for emissions from suppliers to fulfil their Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scope 3 reporting requirements, and Turner says this is spreading to safety.

"There is an increasing trend now for large companies to demand proof of good risk management from their supply chain," he adds.

"For example, if big companies want to work

for National Highways as a contractor on a major project, they have to supply a copy of their driving for work policy and proof that they not only manage it well, but they demand that their supply chains manage it well.

"A major last-mile delivery company is just about to instigate the same thing where they have told their supply chain they have got to be a part of DfBB, and make sure they have a policy.

"Increasingly, you're going to find it more difficult to win work or keep work unless you can prove this."

Also, all suppliers listed in the Crown Commercial Services Framework Purchase of Standard and Specialist Vehicles, under which central government and the wider public sector can buy standard, converted and specialist vehicles, are committed to signing up to DfBB.



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5

LEGISLATION

Ensuring your fleet is compliant with the law is a win-win as far as safety is concerned.

Not only will this protect you from prosecution if something goes wrong, but it will significantly reduce the likelihood of incidents, including vehicle damage, employee injury and vehicle off-road time.

"One of the things that people often say, particularly if they haven't got HGVs on their fleet, is that there isn't really any specific legislation about what they have to do for a driver on the road," says Alison Moriarty, managing director and head of compliance at Beverley Bell Consulting and Training.

"But once you've accepted that driving is a work activity, then you will see that there is loads and loads of legislation that already exists that ties in with running a fleet."

This includes legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.

These are enforced by various governmental bodies including the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

"Risk assessment is a fundamental principle of the Health and Safety at Work Act," says Moriarty.

"There's lots of things contained in it, but the most important thing is about risk assessment.

"It's about making sure you risk assess the person when they are doing the job that you've asked them to do in the vehicle.

"I would think that every organisation risk assesses their offices for trips, slips and falls, and if they are a construction company they will assess anyone working at height.

"But how many properly risk assess their drivers

when they are carrying out their day-to-day role? It's a work activity, so it absolutely has to be assessed."

As a general guide, fleets should ensure they cover the following to ensure compliance:

- **Vehicle maintenance:** regular servicing, adhering to MOT schedules and keeping proper records.

- **Driver licencing:** drivers must hold valid licences for the vehicles they will use.

- **Working hours and driver fatigue:** complying with regulations on driving hours helps prevent fatigue-related collisions.

There is also a long list of laws drivers have to comply with as well, such as speeding, drink- and drug-driving, and mobile phone use.

A fleet's – and driver's – legal requirements should be included in an organisation's driver handbook, but Mark Cartwright, head of commercial vehicle incident prevention at National Highways, says safety policies should go far beyond this.

"One of the things that grinds my gears is seeing policies which are just saying 'yeah, don't break the law,'" he adds.

"Go beyond it. Just saying 'don't drive at more than 70mph' or 'don't use a handheld phone' isn't a policy, that's just a requirement to abide by the law.

"There's loads of evidence that tells us the use of hands-free phones while driving is just as dangerous as using a handheld phone, so ban that in your policy.

"A safe driving policy gives you the opportunity to be very clear about your expectations."

"RISK ASSESSMENT IS A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT. THERE'S LOTS OF THINGS CONTAINED IN IT, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS ABOUT RISK ASSESSMENT"

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6

INSURANCE COSTS

Soaring insurance costs can be mitigated by a robust risk management strategy.

Figures from the Government suggest insurance premiums have risen 21% over the past two years, with contributing factors including inflation, increasing car thefts and potholes.

Analysis indicates the rise is hitting both internal combustion engine (ICE) and electric vehicles (EVs), although zero-emission models are suffering more.

The Government has created a taskforce to tackle the increasing prices, but there are actions that fleets can take to mitigate the rises – primarily by improving fleet safety and reducing the number of collisions they have.

"We've found that our insurance costs have gone up by 50% since 2020, which is a huge rise, but that is probably in line with the rise we've seen in SMR (service, maintenance and repair) costs and other kinds of fleet costs," says Dale Eynon, director of group fleet services at Defra.

"We might see a slower increase in cost, but that 50% is not going to be reversed, so we're looking at what we can do as an organisation to try to reduce our premiums."

He is taking a two-pronged approach: assessing whether fleet optimisation can be increased, allowing fewer vehicles to be operated, and reducing Defra's collision rate.

"We're working with our broker at the moment to use a risk profile tool to understand a bit more about the types of claims we're getting and the types of incidents that we're involved with, to try to see whether we can do some interventions to reduce that collision rate," says Eynon.

"My message to everybody is look at how you currently assess and manage your risk within your fleet. Is there more you can do with all the data you've got from your supply chain, your

insurers, your brokers, or whoever you're using?"

If a fleet can demonstrate to its insurance partner that it has systems in place to improve driver and vehicle safety, and this is reflected in an improved claims record, then it could result in mitigated premiums.

For example, between 2020 and 2022, railway infrastructure and construction company TES 2000 saw its insurance premiums cut by 20% after reducing its at-fault damage costs by 60%.

Speedy also recommends getting insurance companies on board with any initiatives.

"If you've got some initiatives, such as you want to fit cameras, then get your insurance company on board," says Aaron Powell, fleet director at Speedy Hire. "They may contribute financially because it helps them in the long run."

Fleets can help reduce insurance spending by employing a range of other measures, including offering to carry a higher excess on a policy, which could help lower premiums as the organisation accepts more of the risk on their own balance sheet.

An organisation could also consider self-insuring by increasing the excess on its policy to a level where it effectively insures only for losses that it causes to third parties. Taking this action should involve careful consideration of the current level of claims it has, as well as the number of vehicles on fleet.

It can use this to work out what the cost is per vehicle across the entire fleet, and whether this is lower than the insurance premium.

"IF YOU'VE GOT SOME INITIATIVES, LIKE YOU WANT TO FIT CAMERAS, THEN GET YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY ON BOARD. THEY MAY CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY BECAUSE IT HELPS THEM IN THE LONG RUN"

**AARON POWELL,
SPEEDY HIRE**

Keep drivers' skills up to date with robust training policies

Changing demands and technologies mean regular training – starting at induction – is a must. *Catherine Chetwynd* reports

Having safe, compliant, informed drivers is not just about caring for the welfare of employees, it also reflects company culture and reputation management.

Even if they are not in branded vehicles, drivers are still representing their employer. Therefore ensuring they drive responsibly is essential.

As a result, making road safety and driver training the priority induction process for new employees – before they are even given the vehicle's keys – shows that the company cares about the individuals who are working for them.

It also conveys the early message that corporate best practice embraces company policy, compliance requirements and high standards of driving.

"We have a strong focus on new starters because this is the most effective time to influence behaviour behind the wheel," says Greg Ford, head of corporate at Red Training.

"It is vital for a business to lay out unequivocally

what it expects from employees when they are behind the wheel, both in terms of driving skill and, just as importantly, attitude."

At Univar Solutions, for example, all drivers undergo an in-depth induction process which outlines all its policies and procedures, while drivers are buddied up with colleagues which allows the fleet team to assess and review their performance to ensure all instructions are understood.

If there were any doubt in the importance of regular skills updates, bear in mind that many people pass their test aged 17 and drive until they are 70 without having to renew their licence.

During that time the Highway Code will have been updated and republished many times, technology in cars and under the bonnet will have moved on apace, and drivers become older, but not necessarily wiser.

Driver assistance technology is increasingly common in vehicles, including automatic emergency braking, intelligent speed assistance and

lane assist, but individuals may not understand how these systems work, and these can be highlighted and explained online.

"If employers are supporting drivers with effective communication, and transparent policies and procedures, typically they see reduced collisions. But you have to bring drivers with you on that," says Andy Wheeler, training product manager for TTC.

This should be part of a comprehensive driver training strategy to ensure safety and compliance, to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

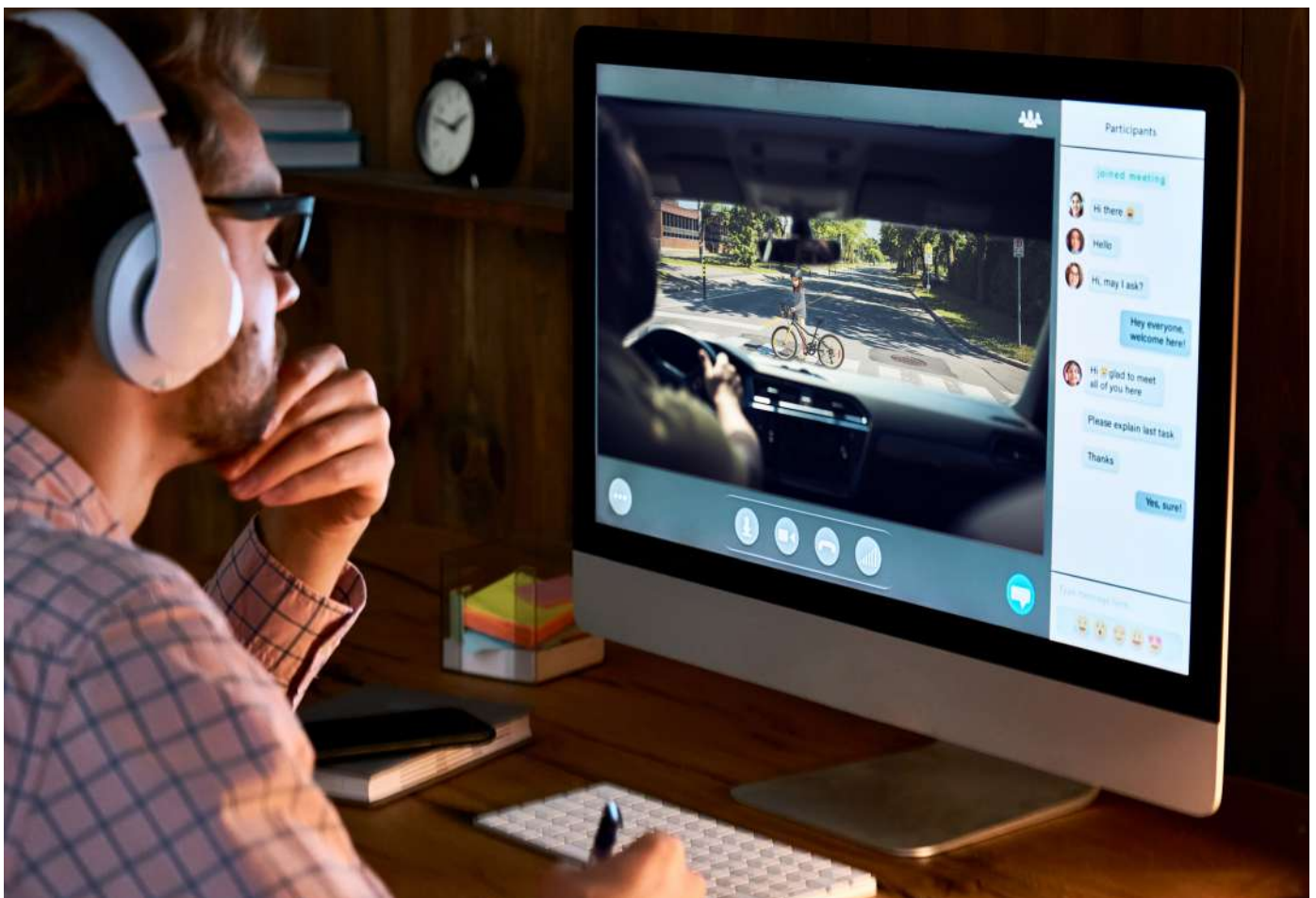
RISK ASSESSMENTS

Each new starter can be assessed for risk – what, where and when they will be driving – allowing an organisation to write a plan for each driver.

Proactivity is key because being reactive suggests there has already been a problem – speeding fine, a phone call from a member of the public or an alert caused by telematics information.

"This is especially critical for roles involving specialist vehicles or operating under stringent regulations like FORS or DVSA standards," says Nick Butler, director of DriveTech.

Part of the plan should be a regular skills refreshment programme, whether that is every two or





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☞ three years, or even every year.

After the initial training, it is important to maintain a drip feed of reminders and skills refreshers so drivers remain engaged and up to date, and to keep bad habits at bay.

To that end, "it takes several weeks to break a habit so we keep nudging – small, sharp, timely reminders. Our videos are short; they last just less than two minutes and could be about driver fatigue, getting your eyes tested regularly, or alcohol and how long it takes the body to eliminate it", says Wheeler.

Driver training companies have platforms that are repositories of company and driver information, ranging from the results of driving licence checks, penalty points and vehicle category permissions, to length and types of training.

Instructional videos are part of this, and drivers and employers have 24/7 access.

Data and management information captured from telematics are also stored here, ensuring a comprehensive picture and allowing employers to manage road risk effectively.

However, having access to huge amounts of information about drivers is worse than useless if organisations do not act on it, and not addressing a definable problem leaves drivers and their employers vulnerable – emotionally, physically and legally.

Where driver training used to take place over a day, now companies cannot afford to lose people for that long, so it tends to be a half-day.

CHOICE OF TRAINING METHODS

This has also led to a greater choice of training

methods. E-learning is quick, efficient and flexible; it allows drivers to learn when it suits them and gives them tests to ensure information has sunk in.

Training tailored to each employee can also be kept online, with access available only to that individual, and their employer can see when or whether they have used it.

This includes modules created to address a specific problem, deployable as required.

"Prevention is miles better than cure. And it makes a critical difference if such a programme is supported from the top of the organisation," says Ford.

Online is not the only option, however, and classroom and in-cab also play a vital role. Interactive sessions inspire greater engagement and therefore enquiry, eliciting further information and allowing trainers to deal with tricky issues.

Classroom is particularly useful if there is a number of drivers with the same problem and is effective in implementing changes in behaviour; a trainer can firmly challenge drivers' beliefs to get them to reflect on the consequences of making bad decisions.

DriveTech is pushing the boundaries in this area. "We are developing a range of virtual reality courses which provide an immersive and engaging approach to training," says Butler.

On-road training takes longer, but for bad habits it is a must and means trainers can give real-time feedback to drivers; it also allows drivers to put instruction into practice immediately.

In addition, professionals can be briefed about a problem, so they can build it into the training.

SHARE SAFETY POLICIES

From day one, it is essential to "share policies enthusiastically and widely in the business and offer a blended range of training content in different formats to appeal to even the most cynical, time-poor and self-proclaimed 'best drivers' who don't think there is anything they can learn about driving", says Ford.

There may be resistance to training, but if employers promote to drivers that they value their safety and will therefore give them a driving course, the narrative becomes a positive one.

This can all be backed by emails that can help keep drivers up to date about technology coming into the vehicle and changes in legislation, for example, but classroom is better for dispelling myths such as how often electric vehicles need to be charged, and attaching that to the idea that for a driver to stop for a break to charge the vehicle halfway through the day might be a good thing.

"Ideally, you would have a combination of online, classroom and in-cab, and use the online to create a funnel," says Jason Kaye, national account manager for IAM RoadSmart.

"All drivers start with a licence check and risk assessment, and that information tells you the percentage that is high risk. From there you can choose: with lower risk, some classroom training – education and information to help them be safer – and put forward the higher risk individuals for on-road training."

A holistic approach is best and choose your trainer with care, to ensure not just proven expertise but a cultural fit to ensure drivers buy into the programme.



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Maximise potential of telematics to improve driver safety

Targeted data insights and developments such as AI-powered cameras can have huge benefits for fleet operators. *Ben Rooth* reports

Telematics has become the go-to technology for a huge number of fleet decision-makers when it comes to improving driver behaviour.

It generates a large amount of data about how a vehicle is being driven which can be used to identify issues and areas of improvement as well as make operational gains such as increased efficiency.

But, this is now just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the technology – it is evolving rapidly to provide much more than just post-driving analysis.

“Telematics isn’t just about identifying problems,” says Philip van der Wilt, vice-president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) at Samsara.

“With in-cab alerts and AI-enabled dashcams, it now intervenes in real-time to address issues such as distracted driving or driver fatigue.

“By detecting risks as they happen and delivering immediate feedback – such as alerts or warnings – telematics actively prevents dangerous behaviours from escalating into incidents and that makes the roads safer for everyone.”

EFFECTIVE TELEMATICS

Traditionally, telematics has been used to measure metrics such as harsh braking, rapid acceleration, speeding and seatbelt use, and later using the information to gain the clearest possible understanding of where potential safety gaps exist.

“The key is turning the data into actionable insights,” says Geotab EMEA sales manager Oliver Holt.

“For example, identifying trends like frequent hard braking can indicate a need for driver training.

“By employing data to provide proactive coaching, fleets can create safer driving habits and reduce incidents. The data must serve as a guidepost for ongoing improvement.”

Real-time feedback – delivered to drivers through in-vehicle devices – can also empower them to self-correct immediately which reinforces safer driving habits, says Beverley Wise, Webfleet regional director for Bridgestone Mobility Solutions.

“Performance benchmarks can be set and progress tracked over time – and this approach fosters long-term behavioural change and creates a culture of safety,” she adds.

“Enhanced safety standards contribute to fewer accidents, lower repair costs and reduced insurance premiums, illustrating the symbiotic relationship between safety and cost management.

“Ultimately, telematics platforms allow fleets to transition from reactive to proactive risk manage-

ment, ensuring that driver safety is an integral part of wider health and safety strategies.”

The experts agree that communication is key when it comes to implementing any remedial action identified by telematics data.

Telematics reports can be used to illustrate specific areas for improvement and frame subsequent conversations around mutual benefits, while consistently highlighting how safer driving protects both the driver and the business.

“It’s about giving drivers visibility of the information and making them aware of where improvements can be made,” says Vernon Bonser, UK sales director at Queclink Wireless Solutions.

“Let them see how they are performing, backed by the data, and then benchmark this against their peers.”

Many fleets choose to follow up these conversations with tailored training – such as one-on-one coaching sessions or e-learning modules – in addition to positive reinforcement measures such as gamification or rewards for improved performance.

INTEGRATED CAMERAS AND AI

Integrated camera systems can provide fleet managers with invaluable insights into driver behaviour and road risks.

By pairing video footage with telematics data, cameras can identify risky behaviours such as distracted driving, harsh braking or fatigue, while real-time alerts can encourage drivers to self-correct before an incident occurs. The potential to help improve safety is clear.

“Cameras, particularly those integrated with



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telematics systems, provide essential context that raw data alone cannot, capturing the 'why' behind incidents," says Holt.

"For example, an event flagged as harsh braking might have been caused by a pedestrian stepping into the road, something a camera can confirm.

"Cameras also enable real-time feedback, such as alerts for distracted driving or following too closely, allowing drivers to correct behaviours immediately."

Sam Footer, partnership director at SureCam, stressed the mounting importance of these intelligent dashcams – which are frequently powered by artificial intelligence – as a tool for managing risk.

"There are a growing number of intelligent dashcams that can not only capture footage, but also engage directly with drivers regarding distraction and fatigue, detect nearby vulnerable road users and understand fleet risk like never before," adds Footer.

"Organisations can now identify risk-generating events behind the wheel and automatically prompt the driver to change their behaviour with real-time voice instructions.

"If the driver doesn't correct their behaviour, event alerts with video are then sent back to base to ensure coaching and training is focused and relevant to the drivers.

"This approach means the fleet manager isn't inundated with too many alerts."

JJX Logistics uses telematics and dual-facing dashcams to monitor the vehicle and driver while on the road.

When the AI-powered camera detects a pre-determined safety violation, the footage is sent to JJX Logistic's operations team, which reviews the incident and sends digital coaching alerts to the driver prior to them starting their next shift.

When a driver shows a particular underlying problem with their driving standards, they are brought in for an awareness briefing and coaching session with the operations team, with video footage used in certain scenarios where required.

When initiating remedial action based on camera footage, it's crucial to approach the conversation constructively, says Wise.

"Begin by sharing the footage with

the driver to establish transparency and mutual understanding," she adds.

"Discuss the specific behaviours observed and explain the potential risks or consequences.

"Collaborate on a plan for improvement, which could include targeted coaching or adjustments to work schedules to address fatigue."

Chris Horbowj, commercial director of Targa UK, stresses the need for a focused approach to any training that is subsequently provided.

"In some cases, sharing videos or images of specific incidents can be enough to raise awareness about the impact of unsafe behaviours, while coaching sessions help address these behavioural gaps and discuss preventive strategies," he adds.

"Progress should be tracked and milestones celebrated to reinforce adherence to safety practices and foster long-term improvement." ➔





Steve Thomas, managing director of Ctrack UK, says an increasing number of vehicle operators are now looking to explore the full potential of video telematics.

"For example, by extending the recording time after the ignition is turned off, the cameras can monitor whether a vehicle is being loaded or unloaded safely, or whether the correct safety procedures are being followed," he explains.

"We are seeing video telematics integrated with other apps, systems and tools, which is enabling fleets to gain greater levels of visibility, control and insight through added connectivity and seamless sharing of data.

"This now covers a growing range of solutions including lone worker protection, accident and risk management as well as driver training."

And the camera technology companies are constantly innovating in a bid to give fleet managers even greater control and oversight.

For example, Blackout Technologies, which specialises in overcoming the dangers of smartphone distraction, has recently teamed up with SureCam to develop a dashcam equipped with mobile device blocking.

Mark Hadley, chief executive officer of Blackout Technologies, explains: "Our integrated solution eliminates the illegal use of messaging apps, social media platforms, streaming and internet browsing

behind the wheel, which is believed to contribute to as many as 40% of vehicle collisions."

HARNESSING AI'S POTENTIAL

According to Samsara's recent State of Connected Operations Report, nearly half (45%) of UK leaders are already leveraging AI, and 89% plan to increase their investments in it over the next year.

"In fleet management, AI-driven solutions are at the forefront of the transformation that's happening," says van der Wilt.

"This newly-launched suite of AI offerings provides fleets with actionable insights, empowering managers to make smarter, safer decisions with confidence.

"It's now possible to seamlessly integrate AI-powered insights, recommendations and actions across platforms.

"By delivering tailored visualisations, coaching and training tools, organisations are being enabled to foster safer driving practices and elevate operational efficiency."

The consensus is that the potential of AI-enabled dashcams is currently in its infancy.

AI-powered analysis – coupled with the increasing roll-out of the 5G mobile network – will enable the telematics system to utilise an ever-greater range of data and video sources.

Thomas explains: "Details such as

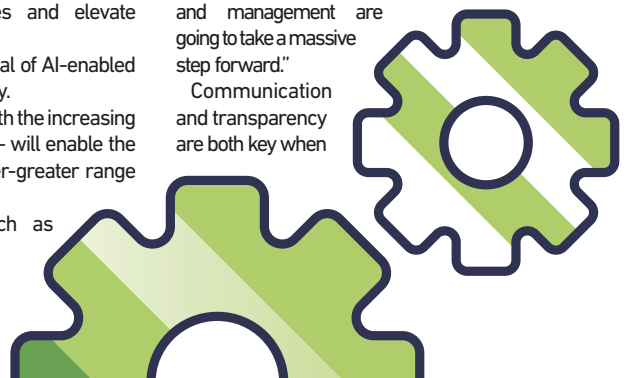
points on a licence, speeding fines, completed training and driving experience could be considered alongside behaviour, incidents, near misses, fuel usage, speed limits, road type, driving time and weather conditions.

"By making sense of these numerous risk elements, fleets can create a more complete picture of driver performance, which leads to highly accurate risk scoring and supports enhanced gamification, incentivisation and engagement strategies."

Bonsler continues: "Continued advancements in edge-based computing – where the data processing takes place on the in-vehicle device – and AI algorithms will lead to enhanced decision-making capabilities and the provision of highly accurate real-time driver insight.

"With improved object detection, better understanding of driving scenarios and sophisticated behaviour analysis, driver communication and management are going to take a massive step forward."

Communication and transparency are both key when



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it comes to addressing any driver – and union – concerns surrounding the introduction of new risk management technology.

Footer adds: "Driver concerns can be a challenge, especially if handled badly.

"Not everyone is supportive of change or greater use of technology, but the biggest pushback from drivers is normally around privacy issues and a belief that they are being watched all the time."

Consequently, colleagues should be kept informed from the start about exactly what data is being collected and how it will be used.

It's equally important to emphasise the role of telematics and camera systems in improving safety and operational efficiency.

"Usually, pushback is just down to a lack of understanding," says Edward Martin, head of marketing and business growth at JJX Logistics.

"We make it clear that we're not watching them – we haven't got time to. That's not what they are there for; they are there for the drivers' safety."

STICKING POINT

Union buy-in is traditionally a sticking point for many fleets looking to implement telematics and cameras, but Wheatley Group won them over with its determination to improve driver safety and desire to ensure staff are given high-quality, well-equipped vans with the latest safety technology.

"We re-wrote our safe driving handbook and sat down with the unions and our health and safety people to explain why we needed telematics and what we were going to use it for," says Jenny Dolan, group fleet manager at Wheatley Group.

"The drivers had that peace of mind that the processes were in place."

Anonymising data – whenever possible – and maintaining strict data security measures also go a long way when it comes to building trust.

"To address privacy concerns, prioritising data protection is fundamental. This includes measures such as blurring driver images and ensuring data is only accessible to authorised personnel," says Horbowyj.

"Engaging drivers and unions early in the process is another important step, allowing their input to be considered and their concerns addressed."

Horbowyj adds that the use of clear and legally-compliant policies on data collection, storage and usage also help build trust with the driver.

Van der Wilt says: "Highlighting dashcam tangible benefits is another way to foster driver support."

"Sharing real-world examples of how dashcams have exonerated drivers or contributed to safer outcomes can demonstrate their value.

"And when drivers understand how these tools directly benefit them, they're more likely to embrace the technology."

Telematics and camera solutions offer a substantial return on investment by delivering tangible benefits across multiple areas.

In short, fewer incidents will result in reduced insurance premiums, legal costs and vehicle downtime.

Operationally, better route optimisation, fuel savings and predictive maintenance can lead to significant cost reductions.

"Fleets also see gains in driver retention by creating a safer, more supportive work environment," explains Holt.

"Many fleets report seeing returns on investment within the first year, but the long-term benefits – such as lower risk, higher efficiency and improved reputation – are invaluable."

'SAFETY-FIRST' CULTURE

Horbowyj concludes that compliance with regulatory standards and fostering a "safety-first" culture also strengthens a company's reputation.

"The impact of these systems is clear: 80% of incidents stem from distracted driving, highlighting the need for proactive measures, while insurance claims increase by 50% in the absence of video safety solutions," he says.

"Moreover, 84% of poor driving incidents negatively affect businesses, further reinforcing the financial, operational and reputational value of telematics and video integration."

Keeping fleets on safe ground



When considering the safety of fleets, it's vital to remember that, whatever other technological advances vehicle manufacturers make, only one component connects a vehicle to the road – the tyre.

To the fleet driver, tyre choice may go largely unnoticed when compared with other developments in their vehicle such as new powertrains or advanced driver-assistance systems. But the reality is that all those systems rely on tyres performing as expected.

In delivering performance which fully meet the needs of both today's vehicle parc and the regulatory environment, the tyre market has become more complex than ever – both within an individual product and across the sector as a whole.

As the leading tyre supplier to UK fleets, Kwik Fit has long been at the forefront of guiding fleets through this complexity.

Tyre insight

Recently, the company added to the raft of support it provides to fleet clients by

holding its inaugural Tyre Insights Day for the industry, with the event attended by key decision-makers from leading leasing and rental companies.

Kwik Fit designed the event to provide information which could help fleets improve safety by reducing accident rates, managing tyre wear across their vehicles and, ultimately, reducing costs.

The programme was specifically tailored to help inform fleets in their planning, both for the medium and long term. Sessions included the challenges faced by both vehicle and tyre manufacturers, forthcoming legislation and future vehicle technology.

The Kwik Fit tyre experts also covered developments in tyre complexity, both in the context of meeting the widening needs of the ever-changing car parc and in responding to the pursuit of more sustainable products.

The day also included data from Kwik Fit's proprietary analysis of current rates of tyre wear across different vehicles. The company has, arguably, the largest data set on tyre wear in the

UK, with more than 1.2 million observations added each year.

Kwik Fit's analysts can tailor the data by vehicle type to enable customers to plan for any changes in the profile of their own fleet.

First-hand experience

The event was held at the testing ground at MIRA Technology Park. This enabled Kwik Fit to not only share the company's tyre market expertise, but also offer attendees first-hand driving experiences in various conditions – under the safe tutelage of experienced test drivers.

Tests included comparisons between budget and premium tyres when straight line braking on wet and icy surfaces, as well as handling on wet and dry roads.

Guests were able to feel the levels of confidence different tyres provided when encountering unexpected situations.

Tom Edwards, fleet sales director at Kwik Fit, said: "We've had great feedback about the value of the event in providing fleets with practical information which cuts through the complexity and can be fed into their planning.

"As Kwik Fit works with a wide range of tyre manufacturers, we are able to provide a sector-wide view. Our clients tell us this independent insight is invaluable in informing their decision-making."



Kwik Fit

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Winning driver hearts and minds is key to improving safety

Any initiative can only be truly successful if employees buy into it.
Andrew Ryan looks at how this can be achieved.

It is said that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and if drivers do not buy into a safety programme then it will not have the desired success – however good it is.

One of the potential issues is that some employees, such as engineers who drive between sites, do not consider themselves to be business drivers given it is not the main purpose of their job. Therefore, they may be reluctant to engage in what they see as driver-specific initiatives.

"If you went out and asked our drivers what they do for a living, they'll tell you they're a cleaner, they're a security person, they're an M&E (mechanical and electrical) engineer," says Chris Connors, head of fleet and travel (UK and Ireland) at ISS UK.

"None of them will say they drive for a living. Yet we know that they do drive for a living because they spend a lot of their day driving around."

This needs to be addressed by ensuring every employee, no matter how much or little they

drive for work, knows they are considered to be a business driver.

A key step is to have a clear safe driving strategy, which forms part of the organisation's driver policy.

This should be included in the driver handbook, which employees should be required to confirm they have read and understood, and also detailed at a new employee induction.

"Induction is such a fundamental opportunity to let your drivers know what is expected of them," says Alison Moriarty, managing director and head of compliance at Beverley Bell Consulting.

"Because if I start work for you as a driver, and you give me an induction which is all around working hours, what to do if you're off sick, all this sort of thing, but not specifically about how you expect me to drive, then I am going to think you don't care how I drive, so, why should I care?"

The safety message should be reinforced by ensuring support, care and tools to manage driving risks are available to them.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

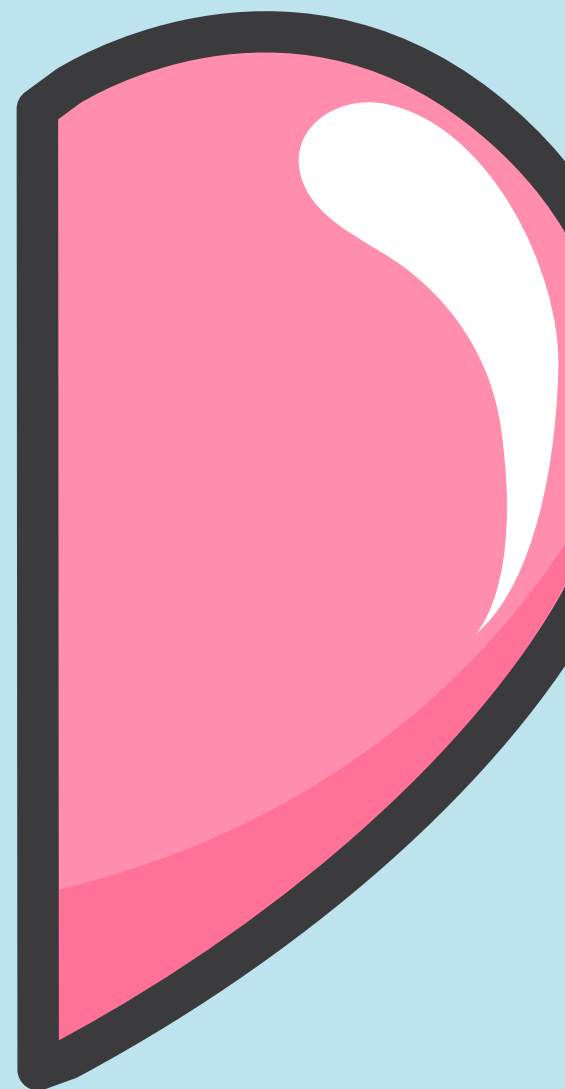
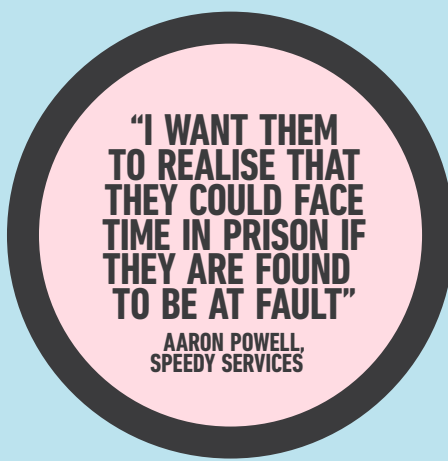
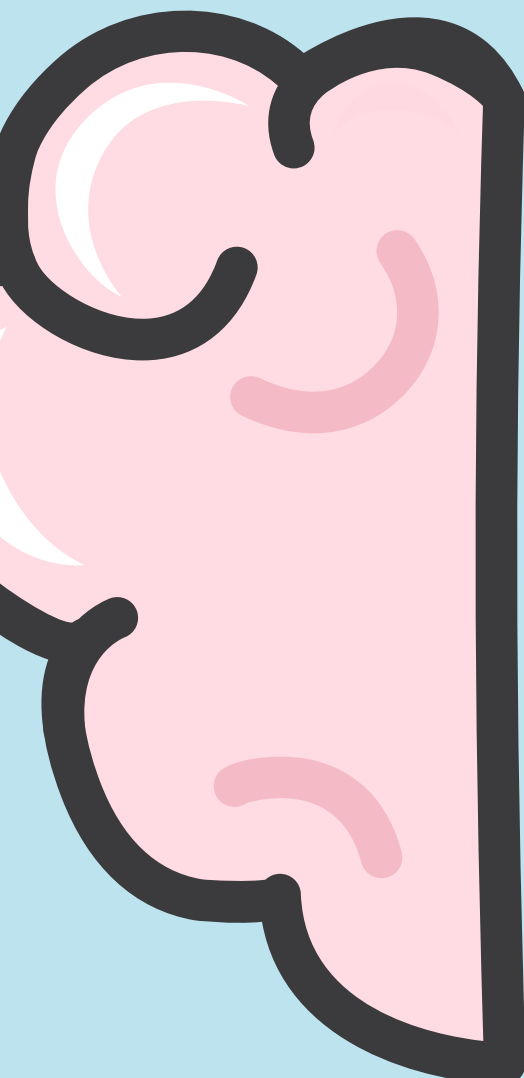
The way safety is communicated is also key. Messages tend to focus on either the legal, moral or financial considerations and can be tailored dependent on what works best for individuals.

"Companies have to do the legal messaging for compliance, but really that's a box-ticking exercise," says Simon Turner, campaign manager at Driving for Better Business (DfBB).

"The moral angle is that we are genuinely looking out for your safety. Ask drivers 'why would you not work with us to make the roads safer for everyone? We want to keep you and your family safe, so please get engaged'.

"A lot of companies, certainly the bigger ones, are focusing on that now instead of the financial angle where we have seen many companies say how much the collisions are costing them.

"A lot of companies actually don't want to do that now, because some feel that gives the message that they are doing it for their own financial



interests, not that they are interested in your safety."

Tool hire provider Speedy Hire has created three driver safety videos – one for cars, one for vans and another for heavy goods vehicles – to get the message across.

"The videos cover the basics, such as checking the vehicle before setting off. We emphasise looking at the tyres, ensuring there's enough washer fluid and checking the lights – considerations such as that," says Aaron Powell, fleet director at Speedy Hire.

The second part of the videos addresses what drivers should do in the event of a collision, emphasising the importance of taking photos of the scene and ensuring they capture everyone's details.

The third section is much more hard-hitting, and intentionally so. "It features a police officer sharing his experiences of attending road accidents. He warns 'if you were on your mobile phone before the collision, we will find out – even if you've deleted the messages,'" adds Powell.

"We also include a paramedic who discusses some of the horrific accidents he has encountered, along with a transport lawyer who explains the potential consequences for a driver found at fault, including the possibility of imprisonment."

"I WANT THEM TO REALISE THAT THEY COULD FACE TIME IN PRISON IF THEY ARE FOUND TO BE AT FAULT"

**AARON POWELL,
SPEEDY SERVICES**

'I WANT TO SHOCK DRIVERS'

Powell's ideal outcome is that drivers are genuinely shocked by what they see. "I want them to realise that they could face time in prison if they are found to be at fault," he says.

Regular communication is a must to keep safety at the forefront of drivers' minds.

While any safety messages should be consistent to gain universal buy-in, organisations should be flexible in how they deliver information and in what format, says Nigel Lawrence, strategic partnerships director at Applied Driving.

"Bulletins sent by digital means are highly effective, but some drivers, especially in operational roles, may not have access to email," he adds. "Therefore, face-to-face toolbox talks may be appropriate.

"Ideally, communication should be shared monthly, but be prepared to be flexible so as not to disengage by, for example, sending too much information."

Messages can also be sent directly to employees' personal digital assistants (PDAs) if they use them.

The DfBB programme is a valuable source of free resources. It includes case studies as well as best practice advice and toolbox talk videos, which can all be distributed to employees.

Last year, it launched its Van Driver Toolkit, which is a series of driver information cards and online modules to assist light commercial vehicle drivers and fleet managers to reduce costs, improve operating conditions and ensure safe and legal vehicles and wellbeing.

"There are more than 36 topics in there now, so there is enough material to send one out a month for three years if you want to," says Turner.

"We've also just restarted a series of monthly fleet focus issues. It was about speed last month, drug and alcohol impairment in December, and winter driving in November."

DfBB also has articles written by legal specialists aimed at both fleet managers and drivers which are designed to be distributed to employers and employees.

USING GAMIFICATION

Harnessing drivers' competitiveness to engage them in improving safety standards is also becoming increasingly widespread.

This is usually done by using telematics data to produce league tables with prizes – such as gift tokens – given to the best-performing or most-improved drivers.

"The ethos of gamification is to provide visibility and transparency that encourages competitiveness and creates a positive environment, rather than one based on blame and punitive actions," says Lawrence.

"Where it can really come into its own is when it is paired with a reward or recognition programme. In combination, this typically generates a greater desire to achieve, improve and strive to become the safest driver in the fleet."

A successful strategy will rely on gaining buy-in at senior level, with goals agreed at the outset, which is communicated to all stakeholders, he adds.

"Make it clear what you are implementing," says Lawrence. "Why are you doing it? What are the benefits to the drivers as well as to the business. And how can they help shape long-term outputs?"

"Then you need to decide how to distribute positive messaging around the success of the strategy, celebrate best practice and foster continued buy-in."

The grey area in business mobility



New Europcar research of employees who drive for work has found that 84.5% use their own vehicle – not a company, pool or rental car – for business travel.

Certainly, this high level of grey fleet usage reduces the financial burden of owning a fleet. However, it can make it harder to meet “duty of care” requirements, vehicle checks and compliance. It also makes it more difficult to meet emissions targets as grey fleet vehicles are typically older and, therefore, less fuel efficient.

With vehicles on UK roads now more than nine years old on average, this reliance on grey fleet gives fleet and travel managers several areas of concern.

Safety first

First and foremost, of course, is the issue of safety. Research among employers found that only 40% claimed to do mandatory vehicle checks on employees’ own vehicles and just 39% required proof of MOT or servicing. Yet the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 clearly states that it is “the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees” and this includes when they are travelling.

The challenge, however, arises because, according to the Europcar research, a large proportion of business journeys are for short distances. A little less than half (45%) of drivers said they use their vehicle for business travel for between two and eight hours per week.

Providing company vehicles for this type of usage is, arguably, uneconomical and unsustainable. Providing access to rental vehicles makes more sense.

Going green

The other issue is the age of grey fleet vehicles. As businesses face growing pressure to reduce their emissions, the unknown emissions of a grey fleet presents an increasing challenge. In particular, employers could find the savings they believe they are making through grey fleet usage is a false economy. As the number of clean air zones (CAZs) and ultra-low emissions zones (ULEZs) around UK cities proliferates, managing toll payments and fines should they not be paid for non-compliant

vehicles, is both an administrative and financial burden fleets could do without.

Raising standards

To reduce risk and protect employees, robust travel policies that focus on enforcing minimum standards for vehicles and drivers are critical. Policies could also support sustainability goals, such as upper emissions limits and a maximum engine capacity to help bring down overall business emissions and encourage employees to switch to greener vehicle options.

The rental solution

Providing employees with access to rental vehicles – by the day, week, month or even year – not only provides more certainty over vehicle safety and condition; it also means emissions can be reduced by using modern rental vehicles, as well as accessing the latest electric models.

And it can all be achieved without having to make any long-term financial commitments to vehicles that may not be required in the future.

To download the Europcar Grey Fleet report visit [Greening the Grey Fleet](#)

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FLEET OF THE YEAR:

MORE THAN 1,000 VEHICLES

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SUPPLIER AWARDS

LEASING COMPANY OF THE YEAR:

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BEST MEDIUM VAN

- Ford Transit Custom
- Maxus eDeliver 7
- Mercedes-Benz Vito

- Peugeot Expert
- Renault Trafic
- Toyota Proace

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- Iveco Daily
- Maxus Deliver 9
- Mercedes-Benz Sprinter
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- Hyundai Ioniq 5
- Kia EV6
- Kia Niro
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- Ford Puma
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- Vauxhall Frontera
- Volvo EX30

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- Audi Q4 e-tron
- BMW iX1
- Cupra Tavascan
- Kia EV3
- Renault Scenic
- Škoda Enyaq

BEST LARGE SUV

- Audi Q6 e-tron
- BMW iX
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MANUFACTURER

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ZERO EMISSION

MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

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- Hyundai Motor UK
- Kia UK
- MG Motor UK
- Polestar
- Renault Group
- Volkswagen

MOST IMPROVED FLEET

MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

- Audi UK
- BMW Group UK
- BYD
- Cupra UK
- Nissan Motor (GB)
- Renault Group

HEADLINE AWARDS

FLEET SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

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FLEET MANUFACTURER

OF THE YEAR: CAR

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FLEET MANUFACTURER

OF THE YEAR: VAN

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FLEET MANUFACTURER

OF THE YEAR: TRUCK

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FLEET MANAGER OF THE YEAR

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- Chris Mullings, Openreach
- Matt Neale, Platform Housing Group
- S-J Mitchell, OVO
- Stuart Murphy, Royal Mail
- Wayne Warburton, Siemens
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FLEET NEWS HALL OF FAME

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- Editor's decision

Why employers hold the key to collision prevention

Every year, thousands of lives are lost or changed forever due to road collisions – many involving drivers on work-related journeys. With nearly half of UK motorway traffic linked to business travel, employers have the power to make roads safer. Ensuring vehicles are roadworthy and driven safely isn't just best practice – it's a corporate responsibility.

The cost of speeding in the UK

Speeding is widespread, with nearly half of all vehicles exceeding limits on motorways and 30mph roads. RAC research found that 47% of drivers admitted to exceeding 60mph limits, further increasing collision risks.

To highlight the issue, Quartix analysed more than 660 million anonymised data points, identifying the UK's worst speeding hotspots. The M6 Toll road (Tamworth to Burntwood) topped the list, with 46% of vehicles exceeding 70mph.

Excessive speed isn't just common – it's deadly, contributing to 21% of fatal collisions. Businesses must proactively manage this risk, just as they would any other workplace hazard.

How telematics helps fleets identify and reduce risk

With telematics, businesses can identify high-risk drivers early and take action to improve safety. Driver scores, league tables and gamification tools help teams engage with the data and adopt safer driving habits.

Quartix's SafeSpeed feature doesn't just track compliance with speed limits. It compares a driver's speed to the average speed driven on each section of road, valuable on rural roads where tight bends make the posted limits unsafe.

For greater visibility, businesses can integrate Quartix's commercial dashcams with their fleet tracking system, providing context to critical events such as harsh braking, speeding or collisions.

Mark Cartwright, Head of Commercial Vehicle Incident Prevention, National



Excessive speed isn't just common – it's deadly, contributing to 21% of fatal collisions. Businesses must proactively manage this risk, just as they would any other workplace hazard

Highways says: *"I think the kind of rich data that businesses can pull from systems such as Quartix is invaluable. I've always liked Quartix's SafeSpeed feature. We know that speed is a significant cause of collisions and certainly makes them more serious."*

The employer's duty: managing road safety

Fleet safety is an employer's duty of care. Businesses can prevent collisions by:

- Monitoring and reducing risky driving behaviours.

- Encouraging safer driving through coaching.
- Ensuring vehicles operate within speed limits.
- Assessing staff fitness to drive.
- Conducting regular vehicle inspections.

Safe vehicles, safer drivers: the importance of vehicle checks

Speeding is only part of the problem – vehicle condition also plays a role. Regular inspections prevent breakdowns, reduce accident risk and ensure safety compliance.

To support fleet safety, Quartix is offering a year's free access to the Quartix Check mobile app with any new fleet tracking subscription – simplifying daily vehicle checks and keeping vehicles roadworthy.

Act now to improve fleet safety

With so many work-related journeys happening every day, businesses can't afford to ignore road safety. Investing in the right telematics system reduces liability and protects company drivers.

Take control of your fleet's safety today. Contact us on 01686 806 663 for a fleet tracking demo and claim one year of Quartix Check free with a new subscription. [quartix.com/en-gb/](https://www.quartix.com/en-gb/)

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Three key safety initiatives

While fleets have a direct influence on the safety of their operations, initiatives by Government or other national authorities also have an impact. *Andrew Ryan* looks at three of them.



GOVERNMENT PROMISES ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

Last year, the Government pledged to publish the first road safety strategy in more than a decade after saying that the number of deaths on UK roads has

become “normalised”.

The latest Department for Transport (DfT) road casualty figures show that in 2023 there were 1,624 people killed on UK roads, a decline of 5% compared with the previous year.

The number of those killed or seriously injured (KSI) was reported as 29,711, little change compared with 2022, while there were 132,977 casualties of all severities, a 2% decline year-on-year.

In October, the then Transport secretary Louise Haigh said: “We have started the process to set in place the first road safety strategy in this country for more than a decade.

“We’re looking really carefully and taking evidence from other countries where they have Vision Zero to see what has worked and adopt a whole system approach, because this can’t just be a DfT-owned policy.

“It needs to be across Government, whether it be in education or the criminal justice system, to look at the most effective measures.”

While Haigh has since been replaced by Heidi Alexander, *Fleet News* understands work is continuing apace on the road safety strategy, with an anticipated publication date of late spring.

A Vision Zero approach is based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on the roads and follows the principles of the Safe System, where the five pillars of the road environment – safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, safe road use and post-crash care – work in combination to minimise risk.

Haigh said the Government would prioritise those measures that are most effective.

“I really think one death on our roads is too many. I think we treat road safety in a way, as if it is somehow a natural accident,” she added.

“I think if the numbers of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads were happening in any other way, we’d be treating it as a pandemic – we have normalised it for too long.”

The decision was widely welcomed by road safety organisations, many of which have campaigned for the strategy for many years.

“We would like to see a holistic, evidence-led approach that includes not just the immediate improvements, but also regular reviews of incident-prone areas, the use of new safety technologies, and ongoing efforts to educate drivers about safe practices,” says Caitlin Taylor, road safety manager for England at RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents).

Nicholas Lyes, director of policy and standards at IAM Roadsmart, adds: “It’s vital the Government looks at all solutions that could reduce deaths on our roads, including the improvement of driving skills, managing in-vehicle distractions and effective enforcement of the so-called ‘fatal four’ – speeding, drink- or drug-driving, not wearing a seatbelt and using a mobile phone.”



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ORGANISATIONS STOPPING THEIR USE OF THE WORD 'ACCIDENT'

Road safety campaigners have long called for organisations to stop using the word 'accident', saying it suggests something unintentional and beyond control: it is a description with an excuse embedded within it.

Instead, they say using alternative words such as 'crash' or 'collision' would be better. These also do not presume guilt or culpability.

One of the major examples of this is National

Highways, which confirmed in October last year it would be replacing 'accident' with 'collision' in its communications, although updating signage on the road itself such as on its electronic variable message signs will, it says, take longer.

"We are committed to changing our terminology in line with the government, policy and road safety and transport organisations – while also taking in road users' views and prioritising safety," says a National Highways spokesperson.

"We will continue to explore the most cost-effective options for changing this language on our electronic roadside signs, which we hope to do once all regions use the same national system for setting signs and signals.

"We are already changing the language we use in all the documentation and literature produced across our company, while also encouraging our supply chain and other partners to align with us."

RoadPeace, the national charity for road crash victims, has led a 'Crash Not Accident' campaign for many years, urging authorities, the media and members of the public to stop using the word accident to shift perception around road harm.

"For far too long, the term 'accident' has masked accountability and allowed society to dismiss the daily tragedy of road deaths and serious injuries as inevitable," says Kate Davidson, CEO of RoadPeace.

~~ACCIDENT~~
COLLISION



TACKLING GLARE FROM HEADLIGHTS

One of unintended consequences of the increased popularity of SUVs and vehicles fitted with full LED headlights is the increased incidence of other drivers being dazzled.

The RAC has been surveying drivers on dazzling headlights for the past seven years and has found the issue is worsening. Recent research found 85% of the 2,000 drivers interviewed believe it is more commonplace.

Among those who complained, 91% said they get dazzled while driving, with 64% saying this happens regularly.

The research also found 62% of conventional car drivers blame the dazzling on higher vehicles.

Headlight glare can also be caused by the alignment of headlights, but the RAC says the major factor behind the rise is the increase in vehicles being fitted with LED headlight systems as the human eye reacts to them in a different way to yellower halogen beams that can cast a more diffuse light.

In response to this issue, TRL (Transport Research Laboratory) is working with the DfT

to carry out practical trials with the aim of understanding and addressing the issue.

"Our long-term research shows that a significant proportion of the driving population struggles with dazzle, with some people reducing how much they drive, or even giving up driving at night altogether," says Rod Dennis, RAC road safety spokesman.

"Understanding what's causing these problems and, most importantly, what can be done about them in the future, will be a huge step forward for drivers."

The TRL project started in October and will run until the spring. It involves the research company deploying instruments on a car to measure light levels experienced by drivers in real-world conditions.

Factors such as other vehicles, the weather and ambient lighting will be measured to build a complete understanding of the conditions that are most likely to give rise to high brightness levels and glare.

A review of scientific evidence and engagement with a range of stakeholders will also be undertaken, while the project will result in actionable recommendations for the DfT to take forward.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Glasgow, featuring a prominent arch bridge over a river. The foreground shows a multi-lane bridge with several vehicles, including white vans with a rainbow logo. The background includes a mix of modern high-rise buildings and older, traditional architecture. The sky is clear and blue.

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Act quickly to minimise impact of a road incident

How a fleet responds to a collision has far-reaching consequences for both the driver's well-being and an organisation's operations.

Andrew Ryan reports



H

owever good an organisation's risk management strategy is, collisions will still happen.

How a fleet reacts to them will have long-lasting consequences, both from operational and driver well-being perspectives.

From an operational angle, best practice is well-established. "A fleet manager or their accident management provider should take decisive action following a collision to reduce disruption and costs," says Mark Young, corporate account director at AX.

"The first step is to ensure the safety of the driver and other parties involved.

"The driver should be instructed to follow company protocol, which may include reporting the accident, gathering necessary information and avoiding any admissions of liability."

If there is a collision involving a third party, the business driver should get their name, address, phone number, vehicle registration number and insurance details. Taking photographs of the scene can also provide a useful record.

The driver should then contact their employer or the organisation's accident management company which will then take up the claim.

Many suppliers offer smartphone apps which make immediate reporting convenient and ensure drivers gather all the information needed.

Speed is of the essence when it comes to reporting incidents. "Drivers need to get any collision logged straight away," says Lorna McAteer, head of fleet at National Grid.

"It doesn't matter what happens, call it in; end of. Because all of the costs etc. tend to rise the longer it is before the incident is reported."

The main cost which can be avoided is credit hire – when a temporary replacement vehicle is provided by a credit hire organisation (CHO) in the event of a non-fault collision.

The CHO funds the car hire while the vehicle is being repaired and will then claim the hire charges back from the at-fault party's insurer. This is vastly more expensive than the at-fault party sourcing a replacement rental itself, with this cost, obviously, racking up the longer the repair takes.

INTERVIEW DRIVERS

Fleet managers should also interview their driver as soon as possible to learn from any incident and use their findings to implement training or operational changes to reduce the likelihood of a similar crash happening again.

"Investigate all incidents, whether they are minor or more serious," says Mark Cartwright, head of commercial vehicle incident prevention at National Highways.

He recommends using the 'five whys' methodology, which involves asking 'why' questions multiple times to identify the root cause of a problem.

This also helps to differentiate between the contributing factors of a problem and its root cause, and can be learned quickly and does not require statistical analysis to be used.

Cartwright says: "Ask what happened? 'Well, I crashed into them'. Why? 'I didn't see them'. Why didn't you see them? And so on. Dig into it and find

out what the root cause of an incident was so you can address it.

"A lot of businesses talk about having a blame-free culture. It's not a blame-free culture. You will go through the investigation process and blame may well actually end up somewhere, but it's having a just culture, a consistent culture, where you're taking everybody's views on board and you are carrying out that investigation in a proper manner."

LOOK AFTER DRIVER WELL-BEING

As well as potentially sustaining physical injuries, drivers who are involved in a collision can often experience mental health issues.

"Some drivers have understandable anxiety about getting in a vehicle again, particularly when they are in a situation similar to when they were involved in a crash," says Dr Nicola Lester, clinical consultant for Brake and also of the Psychological Trauma Consultancy.

"They may no longer feel safe when they're in a car, for example. They might be having nightmares.

"They may be thinking all the time about what has happened and that would be a normal response to a traumatic incident as it shows the mind is working really hard to process the event.

"We don't need to look far to know that we don't want anxious drivers on the road."

Organisations can tackle this by offering access to mental health support, such as trauma-informed therapy, counselling services and employee assistance programmes (EAPs).

Employers should ensure these resources are easily accessible, confidential and free from stigma, so employees feel empowered to seek the support they need without fear of judgement, says Caitlin Taylor, road safety manager England at RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents).

"It is not enough to offer empty condolences or superficial policies; true support requires a deeper, authentic engagement with the well-being of employees," she adds.

"When employers show genuine care, it fosters trust and creates an environment where employees feel safe, valued and supported, enabling them to navigate their trauma with the understanding they truly need."

Support can also take the form of offering affected employees flexible leave options, phased returns and adjustments that can help them transition back when they are ready.

SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE

This support sends a clear message to employees that their well-being is the priority, says Taylor.

"It acknowledges that, while work is important, it is only sustainable when the individual is supported holistically and is allowed to regain their health and strength in their own time."

Colleagues can play a pivotal role in helping employees feel supported, and this may be through simple acts of kindness, such as offering a listening ear or helping with practical tasks.

"By prioritising care and understanding over performance, teams can provide a safety net for those dealing with trauma and loss," says Taylor.



As well as offering support internally, organisations can also provide affected employees with details of independent organisations which offer help, such as the National Road Victim Service run by Brake.

This is a free, professional service which provides a telephone hotline, as well as numerous guides containing useful information.

Brake will this year also establish and run a new National Centre of Excellence for Post-Crash Support.

This will offer a commissioned consultancy service providing expert guidance to organisations and practitioners to help them integrate and deliver a trauma-informed response to victims and their families.

The charity adds the centre is committed to research and developing knowledge supporting the development of trauma-informed approaches in the field of post-crash support, and promoting opportunities to ensure that lived experiences and the voices of victims and their families are heard, understood, and inform practice.

Prioritising workplace driver safety

As driving evolves through technology, infrastructure and regulation, one fundamental challenge remains an ever-present: human behaviour.

Here, Nick Butler, director of Drivetech, part of The AA, examines how businesses can mitigate risks and why prioritising driver wellbeing is key to safer roads.

The human factor in driving

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) states that human factors contribute to 95% of collisions, while someone is killed or seriously injured on UK roads every 16 minutes. Younger drivers are particularly vulnerable, with men aged 17 to 24 four times more likely to be killed or seriously injured than older drivers.

Those who drive for work face even greater risks. A third of all road fatalities involve someone driving in a professional capacity, underscoring employers' responsibility to protect their workforce.

Technology's role in reducing risks

Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) have improved road safety with features such as lane-keep assist (LKA), autonomous emergency braking (AEB) and intelligent speed assistance (ISA) helping to reduce collisions.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) estimates that widespread ADAS adoption could save 1,700 lives and prevent 15,000 serious injuries over a 16-year period.

However, ADAS systems are only as effective as the drivers using them and research shows 41% of motorists disable ADAS features due to irritation.

Equally, while technology helps reduce human error, drivers must remain vigilant, as no system fully compensates for lapses in judgement.

Safety systems need to be integrated with driver education and behavioural improvements to truly reap the benefits.



The importance of education, training and wellbeing

Education and training are essential for improving road safety. Young drivers are more prone to inexperience-related incidents, while older drivers may encounter slower reaction times or have lapsed into bad habits.

Training should be ongoing to keep drivers confident in handling evolving technology and regulations. Employer-run, tailored programmes addressing risks such as speed awareness, mobile phone use, fatigue management and even skills for driving electric vehicles (EVs) can play a pivotal role in protecting a driving workforce.

Driver wellbeing should also not be overlooked. Fatigue is involved in up to 20% of crashes, according to the Department for Transport. Poor sleep, long working hours and stress impair concentration and reaction times. Stress, anxiety and depression can also cause errors and impaired judgement. Long-distance drivers may experience loneliness and isolation, impacting wellbeing. Prolonged sitting can also lead to musculoskeletal issues, affecting vehicle control.

Employers should support driver wellbeing

through mental health initiatives, health assessments and regular check-ins. Flexible work schedules, regular breaks and access to counselling services improve safety. The AA prioritises wellbeing with physiotherapy access, mental health support and a wellbeing app for remote workers.

Businesses integrating similar initiatives benefit from greater staff retention and improved safety.

Collaboration for safer roads

Improving road safety requires collaboration between employers, policymakers and safety organisations. For businesses, collaboration includes working with driver training specialists such as Drivetech to implement risk management programmes as well as road safety organisations to stay updated on regulations and best practices.

As driving evolves, human factors remain the most critical element in road safety. While technology offers exciting possibilities, human behaviour remains the greatest variable in preventing collisions.

British businesses must prioritise human factors, support driver wellbeing and embrace technology to reduce collisions, save lives and create safer roads.

For more information on improving road safety, Drivetech and The AA have produced a Yellow Paper containing detailed guidance and actionable steps for businesses. It is available for free download at: www.drivetech.co.uk/downloads/



Cappagh Browne cuts dangerous driving behaviour by 95%

A serious road collision led this engineering company to introduce new technologies and procedures to help improve the well-being of its employees. *Ben Rooth* reports...

A renewed focus on fleet safety following a near-fatal crash involving one of its drivers has led to Cappagh Browne cutting adverse driver behaviour by 95% and speeding events by 17%.

The engineering company, which is headquartered in Enfield, North London, serves 1.5 million wastewater customers across Hampshire, Sussex and Kent on behalf of Southern Water. It specialises in building new water networks, repairing pipes and cleaning blockages.

A robust safety culture is core to the business's operations, but at the time of the incident it was struggling to track its fleet of 250 vehicles and reviewing driver behaviour was proving time-consuming to carry out at scale.

The organisation was using telematics and dashcams, but the technology was proving outdated and unreliable.

"We'd have to manually obtain the memory card before we could access any forward-facing footage," says Matt Reid, head of fleet at Cappagh Browne.

The system was also losing files and offering up inaccurate data, so mapping out safety improvements was proving nigh impossible.

It was at this point that Cappagh Browne appointed Samsara. Following a one-month pilot, Samsara installed its Vehicle Gateway and AI dashcams across the engineering company's entire fleet.

This gave Cappagh Browne's operations staff

complete visibility into vehicle locations, trip time-lines, harsh driving events, idling and recorded video footage. All the data is now automatically uploaded to the cloud.

"As soon as the system registers a risky event, I'm notified for review – it's seamless," says Reid.

With insights into how drivers are acting while they're on the road, Cappagh Browne can review and provide targeted coaching on risky behaviours such as harsh braking, seat belt infringements and the biggest offender: speeding.

"Now, we know where the vehicle is, who is driving it thanks to the AI, and how they're driving it," says Reid.



"If there's an instance where a driver needs coaching, I can pull up the footage, speak to the driver and hold them accountable."

With Cappagh Browne having access to detailed analytics, tracking and insights into driver behaviour, it began creating an effective safety strategy built on accurate, relevant data.

The team has also started to use the video footage to inform training sessions.

"One week after our first safety session, we had reduced adverse driving behaviours like harsh braking and inattentive driving by 95%," says Reid.


"It's all about awareness. Once drivers understood the risks, they were motivated to self-correct unsafe habits themselves.

"Educating drivers on best practice around vehicle idling as well is paying dividends – we've already seen a 10% reduction in overall fuel spend."

As an added incentive, the operations team also launched competitions rewarding the top-performing drivers in each county with prizes.

"Safe driving is the law, but if you can sweeten the deal with a little competition, then everyone will compete to be the best," says Reid.

INVESTMENT IN SAFE VEHICLES

Safety technology was also high on the must-have list when it last year invested £2.2 million to expand its vehicle and plant equipment fleet, adding 32 specialised vehicles. 



These included a state-of-the-art eight-wheeled combi recycling HGV, a specialist CCTV van, a four-wheeler city flex, 14 new jetting vehicles, eight new vans, crane lorries, transit tippers and supervisor vehicles.

The new vehicles also offer environmental benefits for the organisation. For example, the recycling HGV – which uses a high-pressure stream of water to clean and dislodge blockages in drain and sewer pipes – uses a process in which the jetting water is continuously recycled, offering significant savings on water and fuel by minimising the need to transport process water.

Cappagh Browne's CCTV van allows engineers to inspect a sewer line from all angles, and they can use the vehicle's on-site mobile office to review the footage there and then.

This allows engineers to make quick and decisive decisions regarding the network of pipes underground, and the best course of action to get the job done quickly.

The company has also installed progressive fuelling stations (F-Pods) in all its yards across the south of England, providing convenient access for its operations.

Refuelling times for service vehicles have been substantially reduced, allowing for more streamlined operations and improved productivity. The new fuel systems are also designed to minimise environmental impacts by reducing fuel waste and emissions.

STAFF WELFARE

Reid says emphasising and prioritising safety not only reinforces Cappagh Browne's commitment to a robust safety culture, but also underscores its core value of prioritising the well-being of its employees.

"Our teams attend call-outs in all weathers and sometimes through the night – which is why many



of our new vehicles are also fitted out with specialised lights and microwaves, kettles, washing facilities, sanitising stations, as well as the technology to solve the problem," he adds.

Many of these jobs are in remote and disconnected sites, where exposure to hazardous gases is a concern, making real-time safety monitoring important.

To do this, it has recently introduced the Altair IO 4 connected gas detector, which uses cellular connectivity to transmit information to Cappagh Browne's IT systems, allowing supervisors to monitor events.

"Now, we're able to use real-time data to establish who to use on a particular job because we can see what exposure they've had over the past week," says Reid.

"We can then track them safely within the seven-

day period to make sure they don't exceed their exposure limit."

Since introducing the detector, Cappagh Browne has not experienced any safety alarms, but an engineer was able to use the inbuilt alarm to call for help.

"We had an instance where a guy became locked out of his vehicle and didn't have his phone on him," says Reid.

"He pushed the alarm button to call for help and we were able to get a second set of keys over to him to unlock the vehicle and get him on the road again."

Reid says Cappagh Browne's emphasis on a culture where every employee feels secure, valued and motivated is central to maintaining a positive workplace atmosphere, ensuring both operational efficiency and employee satisfaction.





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