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Video Telematics: What It Is & How It Can Help

From Ring doorbells to nanny cams to body cams on police officers, video evidence has never been more important — especially in the fleet management business.

In technical terms, we're talking about video telematics. But in casual terms, we're talking about eye-witness evidence — evidence that can give proper context to on-the-road accidents.

Why is that important?

Because nearly 85% of truck-driving accidents aren't the fault of the truck driver.

Let that number wash over you for a moment.

Nearly 9 out of 10 accidents are due to causes outside the control (or influence) of the driver. Even worse, these cases can lead to business-crushing settlements and ruin the livelihood of hard-working drivers everywhere.

The good news, however, is that video telematics can give context to the situation, revealing a variety of critical details about the accident, such as:

- How it happened
- Why it happened
- And who is at fault

But the benefits of video telematics extend well beyond the video component. So, let's take a closer look at why you should consider adding this tool to your fleet.

Instantly know the facts of an accident

Video telematics combines in-depth data and analytics with video data and computer vision technology to create a holistic picture of what actually transpired during an accident. This means as a fleet manager, you would know:

- The speed of the vehicle at the time of the event
- How the driver reacted to the situation — brake, swerve, etc.
- The exact GPS location of the event
- The view of the road ahead (and possibly even around the vehicle)
- Driver behaviors at the time of the event, such as texting, eating, or fatigue
- The sounds at the scene

This information is transmitted in real time over cellular networks, giving you the opportunity to watch live feeds and video playbacks, while knowing precisely where your drivers are at any given time.

Video cameras can be installed anywhere, including rear-view, side-view, front-view, road-facing, and driver-facing. Additional hardware like monitors and sensors can be equipped to provide the driver with enhanced visibility and safety measures. All this technology means you are riding shotgun in every vehicle on every route.

So, should an accident ever happen, you're notified immediately, giving you a jump-start on the legal process with instant access to video footage. No more reliance on driver testimony or he-said/she-said witnesses. You'll have irrefutable video evidence squarely on your side.

Develop better drivers and driving behaviors

Whether or not an accident was your driver's fault doesn't preclude it from offering valuable, teachable moments. Using video can help drivers become aware of their blind spots and enhance their skills and awareness on the road.

Plus, if drivers know beforehand that they're being monitored, they're more likely to drive safer, be more conscientious, and avoid poor behaviors like speeding, taking fast corners, and braking too hard.

Conversely, video can offer trainers and coaches an easy way to praise good behaviors and exemplary driving habits. All of this works together synergistically to build trust and rapport among drivers.

Lower operational costs

In addition to developing better drivers, video telematics may offer significant cost savings for your fleets — most notably, the savings you'll experience when accidents do occur and your driver is exonerated of fault. You could also expect fewer traffic violations (because, as noted above, when a driver knows they're being watched, they're far more likely to exhibit better driving patterns and behaviors), lower truck maintenance costs, and reduced insurance premiums.

And best of all, you could expect lower costs associated with improved fuel consumption. With video telematics, managers can track routes and review a feed of historical speeds, thereby allowing them to plan a better, more efficient route that could save fuel.

The future of video telematics

With all the benefits of adding a video component to your fleet, it's no wonder we're seeing a seismic shift in the industry from standard dash cams to video telematics.

In the coming years, the global market for telematics is expected to grow at a torrid pace of more than 50%. Savvy fleet owners are jumping on this trend and looking at this technology beyond a mere aftermarket add-on, and more concisely as a standard safety feature.

Today, video telematics are helping companies all over the globe protect their drivers, cut costs, and insulate their bottom line from insurance claims and settlements. At SmartWitness, we've been providing in-vehicle cameras to fleet operators and private individuals since 2007. We pioneered the first commercial-grade dash camera and today are recognized by industry authorities as a leader in the field of video telematics.

With so many benefits associated with this technology, you owe it to your team (and yourself) to take a deeper look at how SmartWitness and video telematics can improve your fleet management system.