

New Safety Analytics Can Build A Fleet's Bottom Line

Fleets using real-time data and safety analytics are finding new ways to team with drivers for bottom-line efficiencies.

A myriad of independent studies have repeatedly demonstrated the obvious tie between fleet safety performance indicators and accidents involving commercial vehicles. These studies also quantify the staggering cost burdens and productivity losses commercial vehicle accidents place upon fleets. Safety monitoring, analysis, and assertive response together comprise a cost-effective fleet management strategy. Operations managers and business owners increasingly agree with this view, seeing safety not just as a cost center and compliance issue but as a strategic business priority to help trim costs and boost efficiency.

Fleet managers have long sought continuous improvement in driving behavior and highway safety performance to instill a "safety culture" in their businesses. GPS vehicle tracking and related telematics technologies have now reached a critical mass, which enable fleets to take safety management to an entirely new level. New analytical tools are giving managers powerful control over fleet

safety and new ways to control costs, mitigate risk, and ensure DOT/FMCSA compliance.

How To Meaningfully Measure Fleet Safety

Until now, managers could make use of safety-related data by reviewing a range of reports generated from GPS tracking and vehicle monitoring solutions. With the availability of new tools, managers can now get fine-grained views and

alerts from a variety of real-time vehicle monitoring and driving behavior data streams, continuously available and reflecting up-to-the-minute information. Utilizing these dynamic data streams — plus new safety analytics that reveal patterns hidden in the data — drivers and their managers can have specific driving behavior goals and, for the first time, be accountable for meeting their goals. Behind-the-wheel behavior is monitored in real time, enabling accurate and meaningful measurements of safe driving. Information about vehicles, driving behavior, traffic density, posted speed limits, and other variables combine to produce actionable insights.

Exceptions are documented, archived, and aggregated into composite safety scores. A specific safety score can be created for each driver, measuring key variables such

as harsh acceleration, hard braking events, and speed.

Safety scores and related information are delivered via Web browser to managers' desktops in customizable dashboard displays. These displays plus historical data reveal which drivers are contributing to the bottom line from a safe-driving standpoint, which need to improve, and in what specific ways. Analytical safety scoring is provided for individual drivers, subfleets, or groups of vehicles that users define, and the fleet as a whole. Thus, drivers and their managers can, for example, compare this week's performance against last week's to gauge progress and identify behaviors needing improvement.

Furthermore, managers can create "watch lists" to focus on drivers who have sub-par safety scores or who aren't meeting goals. By revealing specific patterns, analytics can help managers correct each individual's pattern of unsafe driving behavior — an approach that builds ongoing collaboration between drivers and management, instilling safety into the organization's culture.

Bottom-Line Benefits Of Fleet Management

Numerous bottom-line benefits result, making fleet operations more efficient at a lower net cost. For example, a technology-enabled safety culture:

- Lowers fuel consumption, frequently within the first 30-60 days after implementing telematics with safety analytics.
- Reduces maintenance and repair costs.
- Extends vehicles' useful life, enabling fleets to defer capital costs and increase asset utilization.
- Reduces the incidence of crashes and their operational disruptions and costs.
- Often causes insurance premiums to decline significantly as insurers can gain access to third-party data supporting safe driving initiatives and positive results.
- Improves legal and regulatory compliance by reducing driving violations.
- is a systematic emphasis on safe driving, which attracts the best drivers — an important human resources issue.

Safety analytics add a new dimension to the proven benefits that GPS tracking and vehicle monitoring solutions offer. Fleets are deploying telematics solutions with safety analytics features to attract and retain the best drivers, improve operations, and gain financial results mentioned above — making safety a strategic focus and competitive advantage in a challenging economic landscape. ●

drew hamilton



Drew Hamilton
executive vice president,
Teletrac
www.teletrac.net