

Vehicle Fleet: Using Dashboard Cameras To Improve Driver Safety

In today's business operations, the dashboard camera, also known as a dash cam, has become increasingly widespread in their placement. Only a few years ago, dash cameras were expensive, complicated to set up and use, had a limited number of available choices and were frequently of poor quality. While they were initially often used only in vehicles driven by professionals that drive all day long, dash cams are now used in many other industries that involve a vehicle. This includes passenger cars, fleet vehicles that are used by delivery and service companies, intrastate and interstate companies hauling goods. The success stories are many. **Dash cams can reveal both good and bad drivers, as well as show the truth when an accident occurs.**

What is a Dash Cam?

A dash cam is a camera that is mounted to the dashboard or windshield. The system records video and audio while the vehicle is operated. Some systems may have multiple cameras. More feature-laden systems also can track the vehicle by GPS and record useful data like speed, panic stops or hard braking that help organizations manage drivers and vehicles.

Dash cam technology is also advancing rapidly toward artificial intelligence. From being able to recognize when a driver is taking their eyes off the road to monitoring the distance of a vehicle in front of a driver, artificial intelligence will continue to improve safety on the roads.

Five Key Points to Help You Develop Your Dashboard Camera Program

1. More effective training with personalized coaching programs

Video footage allows you to identify a high-risk level driver and their unsafe driving practices. Through the help of dash cam footage, you can easily identify which drivers need to learn more about safety and customize their driver coaching programs accordingly. Videos recorded by dash cams can

show you everything before, during and after an unsafe driving event. These factors can either be internal or external. For example, an internal factor is the driver's character when behind the wheel, while an external factor could be an unexpected road hazard. Many of these events will present an opportunity to teach drivers how to avoid them in the future. By personalizing each driver coaching program, you can then make them more effective.

2. When an accident occurs, review and learn from the video

By using video footage, you can identify mistakes, explain the poor decision-making, present an alternative and instruct drivers on what should have been done instead. The second piece is to also reinforce good decision behavior. Separate from the safety tips, using video footage has the potential to capture the other driver when they are at fault for the accident. Without captured video evidence, it can often fall into the situation of their words against your driver's.

3. Promote acceptance and values of safety by getting drivers on board with dashboard cameras

Always be transparent about the use of dash cams with your drivers. You need every driver operating your vehicles to agree to the campaign involving dash cams for it to be successful. Promote and encourage the use of the video footage, demonstrate positive driving habits and discourage poor behavior. Start with your veteran drivers by installing dash cams in their vehicles first and get their opinions since you will need their buy-in on the program. During your next safety driving meeting, get your veteran drivers to share their experiences with fellow drivers who may not be as familiar with dash cams.

4. Work with drivers to set unsafe incident triggers

Critical unsafe incidents, such as excessive acceleration, hard braking and hard cornering, trigger dash cams to record video footage. Set the standards to make sure everyone is on the same page and work with your drivers to set thresholds that

are considered as unsafe incidents. When a driver is included in the discussion and decision-making process, they are more likely to respond positively and be willing to learn.

5. Set reachable goals, monitor them at set intervals and provide regular feedback to your drivers

Setting goals are important and the best way to measure each driver's performance. You should regularly monitor driver performance and create a driver safety score. Provide feedback from time to time for continuous improvement. This can establish a healthy competition between the drivers. There is an opportunity to single out the best driver with a prize or safety certificate. In a place all the drivers can see, post signs such as "Days without an accident."

Five Key Points to be Aware of Before You Finalize Your Dashboard Camera Program

1. Be transparent – make every driver aware of the program

One of the biggest no-noes of camera use is not making it 100% clear that cameras are being used in a vehicle. If there is a camera in the cab, it is particularly important that easy to read signage be included in the cab, so drivers and passengers know they are being recorded. Never try to hide the fact a driver is being recorded. Secret surveillance should only be used in specific circumstances, such as suspected theft.

2. Gain agreement from the drivers

Realize that some drivers may remove, unplug or try to block cameras. Always include your drivers in the discussions and consult with them in the decision to install in-cab cameras.

A driver's lack of agreement can create distrust. On the other hand, when the reasons and benefits for the cameras are explained and drivers agree to their use, the cameras remain in their working configuration.

3. Create a Camera Footage Policy

One of the best ways to gain agreement is to provide an official written policy for how the camera footage will be recorded, used and stored. Make sure you designate who will have the responsibility to initially download and review the footage, who will have access to the footage and for what purposes. The policy should also include consequences for tampering and how infractions will be handled.

4. Create a privacy policy

You must take privacy as a serious matter. This applies to the use of the footage itself, so you must only use the footage for the purpose it was originally intended.

5. Employment Agreements

The easiest way to ensure consent for use of cameras is to incorporate it into your employment documents. Have existing employees sign an agreement to the use of cameras. Similarly, new hires should sign the same agreement at the time of hire.

Remember, when dash cams are paired with a strong fleet management program that evaluates driver behavior, they can be a positive influence in creating a culture of safety.

For More Information:



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