

THE LITTLE FRIEND

The presence of in-cab cameras remains a contentious issue. Peter Shakespeare examines turning Big Brother from an Orwellian nightmare into your best mate

Driver (inward)-facing cameras are a development of the popular forward (road) facing camera. These cameras, combined with telematics, offer additional operational, economic and safety benefits for fleet managers, contends Damian Penney, vice president of video telematics provider, Lytx Europe. He says: "Video telematics can deliver invaluable benefits to both drivers and their employers. For drivers, it acts as a friend, there to demonstrate that they have done everything they can to prevent a road incident from occurring. This not only protects the driver's reputation, but proves they are good drivers who can then be rewarded.

"For operators, having an internal lens means you can see what happened inside the vehicle in the lead-up to an incident; in some scenarios it could be a distraction, or in others, a case of drowsy driving. In both cases, seeing the actual cause of an incident helps lead to a more informed conversation with the driver."

Fitting cameras is about safety – for the driver, other road users, pedestrians and the operator for driver safety and transportation intelligence company



SmartDrive Systems, says Penny Brooks, EMEA managing director. "This technology should not be used as method to penalise drivers," she says. In addition to protecting and exonerating drivers when not a fault, it should be used to proactively capture and review risky driver behaviour that can be prioritised for objective and fair coaching sessions, to eliminate risky behaviour before it results in an incident. Typically, inward-facing cameras would only be installed with a road-facing camera, and in many cases other cameras, to give fuller context.

She recognizes that installing one can be a hard sell to drivers. "One of the hardest tasks an operator faces when initiating any safety culture, or policy, is ensuring buy-in across the fleet. From the boardroom down to drivers, it is important that everyone understands why the programme is being initiated, how it fits with the company's safety policies and standard operating procedures, and the expected results. And managing this is primarily about communication, communication and more communication!"

Lytx Europe's Damian Penney agrees. "It's not uncommon for drivers to be wary about camera technology. This isn't necessarily to do with the camera itself, but understanding how the video or data will be used. This is why communication (both early on and throughout) is key in helping drivers learn about the experience and benefits. Crucially, that the cameras are on the side of the driver. Once this communication and understanding takes place, we've found that many drivers insist on having a camera installed.

"An additional benefit for drivers who have a camera installed in the vehicle is the ability to develop safer driving skills. This is about working with them to provide personalised coaching and giving them the opportunity to improve."

One operator that has decided to extend its use of vehicle safety cameras (from SmartDrive; pictured, right) is Reynolds Catering Supplies. Having used vehicle safety cameras for several years, Reynolds made the decision to extend its programme based on safety improvements and financial results achieved. They include a 30% reduction in collisions year-on-year, ongoing fuel



HOW TO CONDUCT A LEGITIMATE INTEREST ASSESSMENT (LIA)

In the new GDPR rules about handling employees' data, vehicle operators are considered the data controller. In an LIA, they need to declare that the capture and processing of video-based data is necessary for a road transport business to monitor vehicle performance, driver behaviour and to ensure road safety. Best practice guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office, outlines how to conduct an LIA (see www.is.gd/ehatu1) and provides a template (www.is.gd/ixotux). There is more information on legitimate interest from the Data Protection Network (www.is.gd/adezuf). That document also contains a completed example that is relevant to the use of technology in fleet operations.

consumption improvements across the fleet and a reduction in associated costs, such as insurance premiums. Head of fleet Steve White says: "All of our drivers engage with our strong safety culture. It is part of our core operational DNA and the SmartDrive programme is a vital component of this. We haven't experienced any problems with driver acceptance of cameras, predominantly as it is firmly-embedded in our induction programmes. Furthermore, in many cases, it has been instrumental in exonerating 'not at fault' drivers and helped protect against fraudulent claims."

GROUND WORK

The issue of data protection and how data captured by in-cab video cameras will be used is covered under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). It states that operators, as the data controller, are responsible for ensuring that drivers are informed about

the technology installed in the vehicles.

SmartDrive's Penny Brooks strongly advises this is done in a proactive manner, through driver training sessions or briefings. "It should be clearly explained that the video recording technology is installed to protect drivers when they're on the road, to act as an accurate and objective witness in the event of a not-at-fault incident or fraudulent claim.

Fleets should ensure they've completed the necessary DPIA [data protection impact assessment; see also



www.is.gd/uavad1], to help them identify and minimise the data protection risks of any in-vehicle cameras, and that the implementation of the cameras are included in the fleet's operating processes and procedures" (see box).

If a fleet is unionised, early engagement is vital in the process to decide whether to install cameras. Penny Brooks says the best strategy is to encourage the union and employee members to participate in the solution definition, to improve safety and security for the fleet and public. This gives everyone an opportunity to convey their concerns and have them addressed early in the process, building trust along the way.

She offers additional advice: "Be up front about how the programme will be used, and clearly communicate how the programme applies and doesn't apply to existing policies, coaching and training. Ensure that the message is consistent - everybody needs to be on the same page. Start with the managers and work down through the organisation to ensure that when drivers ask questions, they hear consistent answers from their managers. This minimises confusion and misinformation."

In addition, as real as sensitivities may be about 'Big Brother', inward-facing cameras generally do not stream live footage. Most only send a video when they are triggered by an event or the driver, so are not a live 'spy in the cab'.

On the other hand, such an ideal scenario does not necessarily translate to a real-world fleet. That means that someone within the operator will need to review flagged video content from the fleet. Some suppliers, such as Lytx, offer a video monitoring service to reduce admin load. **TE**