

Fleet Telematic and Dash Cam Systems



What is the need or desire?

- Motor carrier compliance
- GPS tracking for route deliveries and dispatching
- Driver behavior scorecards to assess individual driver behaviors
- Camera systems
 - Forward facing
 - In cab/driver facing
 - Rear facing

Popularity and availability of fleet telematics systems have increased over the past decade with increased functions that include monitoring of speed and fuel, engine failure coding, and seatbelt usage within vehicles. In addition to telematics, dash cameras, or “dash cams,” have also increased in popularity with the ability to capture events surrounding a driver before, during, and after an accident or harsh driving incident. Fleet telematics and dash cams can be used independently or in unison with other appropriate systems.

Fleet managers have an array of choices when it comes to outfitting their fleets with telematics and/or dash cam components. The first step should be to ensure the selected components meet the fleet management requirements and can be customized based on the needs of the organization.

Cost

The more complex the system’s features are, the higher the costs generally are for both hardware and monitoring services. Conversely, the more simplistic the technology, the lower the cost. Identifying the features you need, versus what you want, could lead to significant savings.

Here are categories of “fleet technology” for ease of understanding how to distinguish among different systems and/or what you’ll find when addressing and managing the risk of your fleet.

Category 1:

Basic standard definition dash camera:

- Low-cost hardware/camera only; typically, under \$300 one-time expense
- Plug and play disposable type technology
- Offers basic features which can be tied to smart phones and/or WIFI tablets
- Some units offer multiple ports to add additional cameras (in-cab or rear-facing camera) in addition to primary forward-facing camera.
- Low-budget solutions for personal vehicles or fleet of passenger vehicles, as well as small and mid-size trucks/vans
- Lower-cost alternative to enhance risk management

continued...

- Valuable for:
 - o accident defense or admission
 - o theft protection
 - o heightened awareness for drivers

Category 2:

Technology with a monthly service plan:

- Hardware/cameras remain at a reasonable price point
- Vehicle-monitoring technology requires a monthly service charge
- Monthly fees can range between \$25 and \$50 per month/per unit; prices vary among vendors and system features
- Some vendors may require longer-term service contracts beyond month to month.
- Large array of technology offerings for vehicle and driver monitoring
 - o Dash cameras
 - o GPS
 - o Driver scorecards based on historical performance
 - o Vehicle telemetry
 - o Collision avoidance alerts

Category 3:

Advanced technology systems with an array of features and contract costs:

- Typically the costliest of technology systems; however, it offers the most technology features, including, but not limited to:
 - o Features listed in Category 2
 - o Electronic Logging Devices (ELD's) paired with IPADs and tablets
 - o Dash cameras with more viewing options
 - o Collision avoidance alert systems
 - o GPS tracking
 - o Vehicle telemetry
 - o 24/7 data monitoring by vendor
- Typically for larger vehicle fleets – those who may need an ELD for DOT compliance or those who want to tie into a dispatch system that tracks tractors, trailers, and even cargo
- As with Category 2 systems, these systems come with a monthly service fee per unit and may also come with a multiple-year service contract. Ranges for contracts vary, commonly from three to five-years.

Suggestion

Work with a vendor that has a sustained history and reputation. Companies that don't sustain rapidly-changing technology and/or go out of business can lead to unsupported or non-functioning devices. Longevity and reputation are vital in the decision-making process.

Contact your West Bend Loss Control representative for more information on fleet telematics and dash cam systems.

