

EcoSafe: 3 Simple Ideas for Ensuring a Safer Fleet

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Creating a culture of safety, investing in telematics and adopting a mobility mindset can help reduce the amount of collisions in your fleet.

Europe's roads have never been safer. Eurostat says traffic-related deaths (including drivers, passengers and pedestrians) in the European Union fell from 100 per 1 million people in 2005 to 60 per 1 million people in 2014. The United Nations Transport Safety Council (UNECE) found that, in Europe, Canada and the United States, traffic fatalities fell by an average of 8% per year between 2007 and 2010.

Unfortunately, the rate of decline has abruptly slowed in recent years, according to the European Transport Safety Council. The ETSC registered a flat rate in 2014 and a 1% increase in 2015. It decreased by 2% in 2016, the most recent year for which a complete data set is available, falling to 51 road deaths per million inhabitants.

That is an incredible improvement — nearly a 50% reduction in traffic deaths in little more than a decade — but no indication that fleets should relax their safety standards. Collisions can result in death, injury, downtime, damage and insurance claims. Three simple ways can help fleet managers make their fleet safer today.

1. Create a Culture of Safety

Driver safety training should be frequent, thorough and mandatory. But it can't end there. A pervasive, companywide culture of safety will reinforce a company's message and let leadership, management and customers know they mean it.

Policies for driver screening, safe driving behavior, seatbelt use and post-collision reviews should be spelled out in black and white and strictly enforced. No employee can be exempt — neither the top-performing salesperson nor the most veteran driver.

Buy-in from ownership is paramount. Consider adding a safety slogan to a company's website and email signatures. Communicate accomplishments such as a month without collisions or moving violations. Make a point of selecting safer vehicles with advanced safety technology, including semiautonomous features designed to help drivers avoid forward collisions and unintended lane departures.

2. Invest in Telematics

Telematics is no longer limited to “dots-on-a-map” vehicle tracking and route optimisation. Today's systems can help enforce safety policies by registering incidents of excessive speed, harsh acceleration, braking and cornering. Some can detect whether the driver's seatbelt is in use when their vehicle is in motion.

Managers may review telematics-produced driving records on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. They may also choose to be alerted, in real time, whenever a severe violation occurs.

But telematics is not only useful for identifying and managing unsafe drivers. It can also be used to reward a company's safest drivers. It also creates an impartial digital record of each driver's day, which can be useful should a complaint be filed by a customer (e.g. a late arrival or early departure) or other motorists (for speeding or causing a collision).

3. Adopt a Mobility Mindset

One might assume that pedestrians are the most vulnerable transport network users. According to Eurostat, pedestrians account for 21% of traffic-related fatalities. Drivers represent nearly two-thirds (64%) of all traffic deaths. Remarkably, only 15% of traffic deaths are vehicle passengers.

These numbers can and should compel fleets to improve safety by reducing, whenever and wherever possible, the hours drivers spend on the road. Offering employees a monthly “mobility budget” — rather than an assigned vehicle or a cash allowance — encourages them to travel by train, bus, bicycle, rideshare or ride-hail. Employees who are allowed to “cash out” their unused mobility budget at the end of each term will have a financial incentive as well.

Interested in learning more about safe mobility? Find out more about on board driver safety technologies and driver behavior management in our dedicated White Paper "[Future of Safety](#)"

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