



How to Use Technology to Complete Your Fleet Safety Program

While drivers have more distractions than ever because of technology, a new class of anti-collision, telematics, and smartphone technology and solutions are helping fleets monitor and prevent poor driving behaviors and keep employees safe behind the wheel.

Distracted driving is the primary cause of accidents today. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each day in the United States approximately 9 people are killed and more than 1,000 are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver¹.

This isn't just a problem for individual drivers — it's a concern for employers, too. In addition to the loss of valued employees, in 2013, work-related crashes cost employers an average of \$65,000 per non-fatal injury and more than 10 times that — \$671,000 — per death².

To combat this issue, companies must have a strong fleet safety program in place with clear guidelines for preventing distracted driving. But that's just the beginning. Having a policy alone isn't enough, as people don't always do what's in their best interest. Fleets must find a way to make the safety policy effective and hold drivers accountable. Technology is the answer.

Having a fleet safety policy isn't enough. Fleets need technology to hold drivers accountable and realize the intent of the policy.

DISTRACTED DRIVING IS A DANGER TO EVERYONE

Distracted driving comes in many forms, all of which threaten the safety of drivers and those around them.

There are three main types of distraction:

- » **Visual:** taking your eyes off the road
- » **Manual:** taking your hands off the wheel
- » **Cognitive:** taking your mind off of driving

Activities that fall within these categories include talking or texting on cellphones, eating, talking with passengers, and adjusting vehicle controls, among others.

Distracted driving is a very real problem, as thousands die each year due to these behaviors: In 2017, distracted-driving-related crashes accounted for 2,935 distraction-affected fatal crashes and 3,166 fatalities³.

Technology is exacerbating this problem, with cell-phone use topping the list of causes of distracted driving fatalities. In 2016, 14%⁴ of all fatal distraction-affected crashes reported to have involved a cell phone. This problem is even more prevalent for fleets, as mobile-device use is the cause of 25% of all commercial crashes.

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Texting while driving is especially dangerous because it combines all three types of distraction: eyes off the road, one hand on the wheel, mind on the text. When you send or read a text message, you take your eyes off the road for about 5 seconds, long enough to cover the length of a football field⁵ while driving at 55 mph. That's like driving with your eyes closed.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Cell-phone use has become a major cause of distracted driving fatalities and is the primary cause of commercial crashes. Texting while driving is especially dangerous, as it involves visual, manual and cognitive distraction and is akin to driving with your eyes closed.



HOW TO KEEP DRIVERS SAFE AND ACCOUNTABLE

Cell-phone use poses a clear safety risk to employees. But asking them to put down their phones while driving only goes so far, even if you have a formal policy in place.

Even when drivers are aware of the risks to their jobs — and their personal safety — many don't consider their own use a problem; it's the "other guy" who has to worry. For instance, a National Safety Council survey found that while 67% of respondents felt they were at risk because another driver was distracted by technology, only 25% said their own technology distractions were putting others at risk⁶. People often believe they are better drivers than those around them. This "it's not me" attitude prompts drivers to feel they are above the rules. So even if you have a fleet safety policy in place, it can be difficult to enforce.

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How do you keep employees accountable? Technology.

While some technology can be a major distraction for drivers, other forms of it are actually making them better drivers, helping fleets to prevent crashes rather than simply reacting to them.

Technology that can help prevent drivers from getting in crashes when they are distracted includes:

- » Blind spot monitoring and assist
- » Lane departure warning and assist
- » Forward-collision warning (FCW)
- » Automatic emergency braking (AEB)

These systems are helpful for mitigating the results of distractions. For instance, a 2017 study conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI) found that FCW alone reduced rear-end striking crash involvement rates by 27%. A low-speed AEB reduced rear-end striking crash involvement rates by 43%. And FCW paired with AEB reduced rear-end striking crash involvement rates by 50%⁷.

But while this technology can help drivers course correct from distracted driving, these systems don't actually remove the source of the distraction — and they don't reduce the need for drivers to stay alert.

Systems like lane departure warnings and automatic emergency braking can help mitigate the results of distractions, but they don't prevent the distraction from happening in the first place.

The technology that can do that combines telematics and smart phone apps.

Telematics can record driver behaviors, like sudden braking, that indicate drivers are distracted. Some telematics systems even use in-vehicle cameras to record the behavior. Data and footage are then fed to the fleet manager, who can provide the proper coaching to correct the behaviors. Telematics devices can go a long way toward identifying the behavior and coaching to it, but they still aren't able to physically prevent dangerous behaviors, and some drivers may continue to choose to perform risky activities, like using their cell phones while driving.

This is where telematics integrated software comes in. With cell phone use topping the list of distractions that cause crashes, stopping this behavior is one of the most effective places to start — especially as the "addiction" to phones grows more prevalent. Fortunately, fleets can use cell-phone blocking apps and devices to stop drivers from using their phones while in motion. These blocking apps prevent drivers from making or accepting calls, texting or accessing the internet while the vehicle is in motion, and help drivers stay focused on driving instead. The ORIGOSafeDriver solution does this and more.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Preventing cell phone use while driving is one of the most effective ways to enforce a fleet safety policy and reduce crashes caused by distracted driving.



THE ORIGOSAFEDRIVER SOLUTION

ORIGOSafeDriver is a telematics integrated software solution that keeps drivers accountable by removing the temptation to use their phones while driving. By pairing easy-to-plug-in hardware that syncs with a mobile app, once your driver's vehicle goes into motion, it removes the manual and visual distractions. If desired, handsfree calls via Bluetooth can be allowed by the administrator.

All drivers have to do is log into the app once during initial set up. From there, they can remain logged in. No further action is required to make the technology functional. If a user tries to drive a company vehicle without having logged into the app, he or she will be alerted to log in — and will continue to hear a beep until the log in happens. If, after two minutes, the driver still hasn't logged in, the fleet manager will receive a notification and can take the appropriate action.

With ORIGOSafeDriver, drivers can't ignore the rules — and fleets can stop a dangerous distracted driving behavior before it even happens. ORIGOSafeDriver is not invasive like in-vehicle cameras. You can prevent cell-phone use without having a camera in the cab or making drivers feel like Big Brother is watching.

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After the ramp-up period, Origo has been shown to change drivers' perception of risk and even change their behavior when driving their personal vehicles. ORIGOSafeDriver is a simple, effective tool to reduce or eliminate distracted driving among commercial fleets and reinforce your fleet safety policy.

While technology is crucial to hold drivers accountable and keep them safe, first and foremost fleet managers and company leaders need to embed safety into the culture with a strong safety policy. Technology is then the means by which drivers are held accountable to that policy. Fundamentally, having the technology that reflects your policy and working in tandem with it will help you keep drivers safe and costs related to crashes low.

KEY TAKEAWAY:

Using technology like ORIGOSafeDriver reinforces a fleet safety policy and holds drivers accountable, keeping drivers safe and crash-related costs low.

To learn more about how Origo can help you use its technology to hold your drivers accountable and keep them safe, go to www.origosafedriver.com

ABOUT ORIGO

ORIGOSafeDriver is a cell phone safety technology company and is designed with fleet safety in mind. The solution integrates with telematics and keeps drivers safe by removing the temptation to use their phones while in motion. We want to join you in your mission of helping your fleet run more efficiently and most of all, crash-free.

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