

Ultimate Buyers Guide to Video Telematics and Dash Cams

Answer these 20 questions as you research video driver behavior monitoring systems to increase safety and productivity in your business



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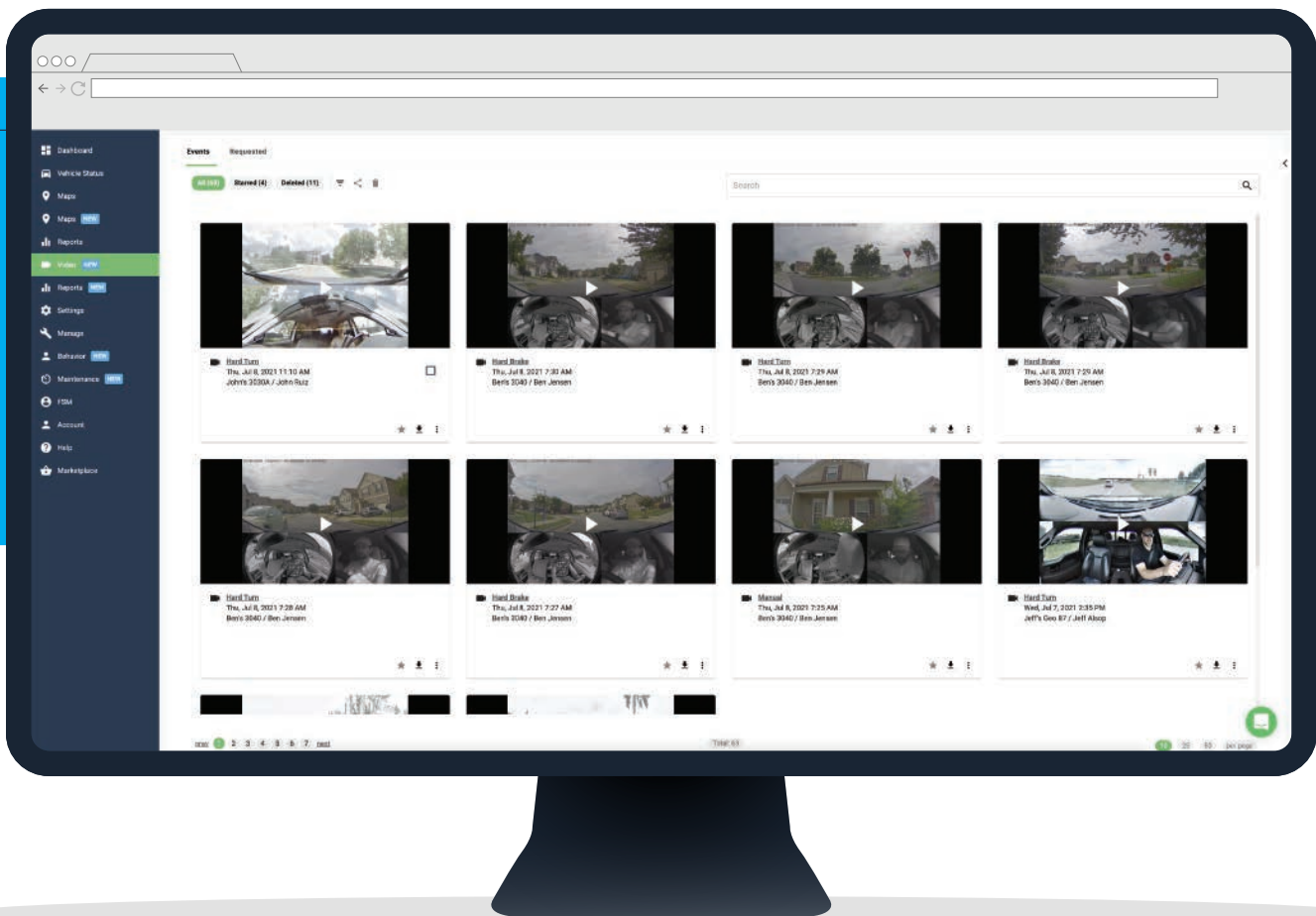
Why You Need Video Telematics

Video telematics systems provide a high-visibility tool for lowering risk and increasing productivity among a driver pool. They generate “event” clips of speeding, distraction, and other risky behaviors that allow fleet administrators to coach drivers to improve. These snippets help exonerate commercial drivers when a passenger vehicle cuts off their truck. Video can also validate stops to ensure productivity metrics are met.

Once implemented, video telematics (especially systems powered by artificial intelligence) can result in a high return on the initial investment to deploy the technology. Some of the benefits of video telematics include:

- **Exonerating drivers:** Accident video validates that commercial drivers are often not at fault. The majority of truck accidents (80%) are caused by passenger cars, according to the American Trucking Association. Video from dash cameras is often rendered in high definition, showing how the accident unfolded. This gives a more accurate picture of the incident.
- **Improved risk management with more detailed scoring:** Video telematics systems are tied in to cloud-based platforms that provide scorecards for each driver. They enhance existing driver scoring provided by traditional GPS tracking devices.
- **More effective driver coaching workflow:** For drivers who engage in risky behavior, video provides event clips that clearly show what happened. The snippets bring greater awareness to drivers who may not be aware of their risky driving, especially veteran drivers with ingrained habits.

- **Greater visibility into operations:** Video shows how drivers are using company vehicles and other assets. It can also give proof that a service was given, such as pickup of refuse receptacles.
- **Identifying low-speed mystery damage:** Many fleet accidents occur at low speeds in parking lots. Fleet vehicles being damaged while parked was the leading cause of fleet accidents in 2019 (29%), according to Automotive Fleet.
- **Asset protection:** In-cab video cameras can be used for theft detection, because they activate during a break-in and often include infrared technology that provides a clearer nighttime image.
- **Claims management:** Video snippets often serve as the first notice of loss (FNOL) after a collision for the insurer.



Finding the Right Solution: 20 Questions to Ask

Most telematics service providers now offer a video telematics system, so a fleet owner who's considering such a system will need to carefully research the options. Let's go over 20 questions to ask during a process that leads from initial research to a final decision.

Step 1

Understand What Problem You're Trying to Solve

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Question 1: How Will I Primarily Use Video Telematics?

Video telematics systems provide many benefits (see the above list), but it's important to focus on a few key initiatives so you don't become overwhelmed with data. Perhaps you're receiving complaints about driver speeding? Start with that. Develop some key performance indicators, such as reducing speeding by 10% across the fleet. Once you solve one issue, then move on to deal with others.

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Question 2: Which Stakeholders Need to Be Consulted?

Implementing video driver behavior management systems can be tricky, and if you spring it on your drivers, you'll likely get plenty of pushback. This can be an even worse idea, if you manage a unionized driver pool. Select a few leaders among your drivers, and loop them into the process. Explain that you're not implementing "big brother" technology, but rather trying to reduce accidents and risky driving. Also be sure to consult with your insurer about how you can lower your costs by implementing video. Check with other vendors of vehicle and asset tracking products, as well as back-office software, to ensure that data can flow between solutions.

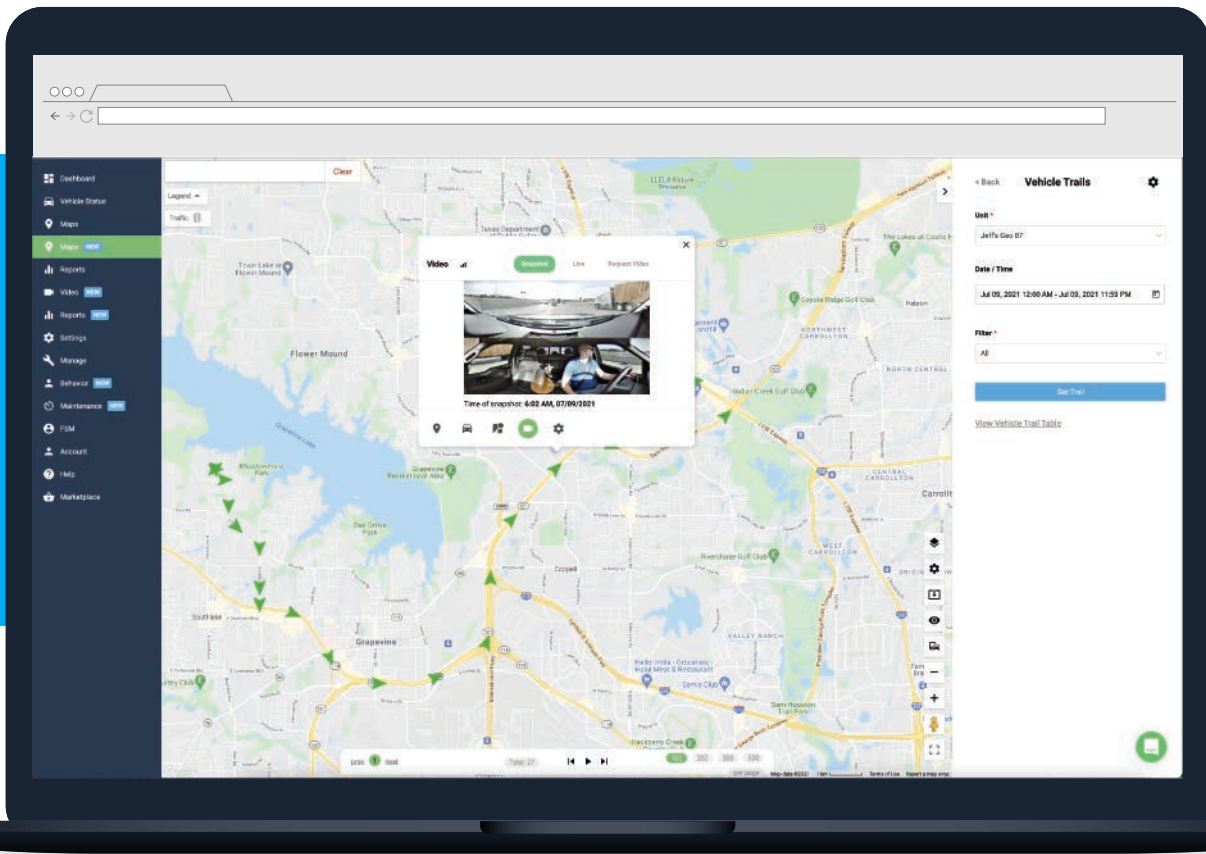
Step 2

Learn About Your Potential Video Telematics Partner

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Question 3: How Long Has the Company Been in Business?

You'll want a video partner who you know will be around for the long haul, so make sure you research the track record of the company you're considering. Do they offer reliable products? How much of their product lineup is sourced from overseas manufacturers?



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Question 4: What Video Solutions Does the Company Offer?

It's important to gather a list of the features offered by the video provider. Most video systems should at bare minimum help you better detect the ABCs (acceleration, braking, and cornering), and should be able to offer much more. Make sure you understand how to set up the event triggers and how to retrieve video for review. How are the snippets delivered to drivers for coaching?

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Question 5: Can the Company Articulate How Its Technology Solves My Issues?

Rather than offering technology for its own sake, make sure you clearly understand how the video system will address real-world challenges, such as aggression on the road, distracted driving, theft, and more.

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Question 6: What Kinds of Reviews and Customer Success Stories Do They Have?

Be sure to review websites such as Capterra, G2, and others that publish reviews of video telematics systems. The Google Play store and Apple App Store provide user reviews of driver and fleet manager apps. Does the company have case studies of customers like me?

Step 3

Discover How the System Works

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Question 7: Do I Need Camera Views of the Road, Driver, Sides, or Rear?

Video systems come in three varieties – road-facing, driver-facing, and a multi-camera system. You'll need to know which one you want, then you can determine how many pieces of hardware you'll need to install in your truck. Multi-camera systems use auxiliary cameras that are usually mounted to the sides of vehicles or behind a trailer.

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Question 8: Which Features Are Important to My Business?

It's important to understand how you'll use the system to improve your business. Rather than ticking off a list of snazzy features, your potential partner should be educating you about how to use these tools to reduce risk and increase productivity.

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Question 9: Can the System Integrate with My GPS Tracking System?

When paired with GPS vehicle tracking and management, video offers an even more powerful tool, because it's supplementing data you're already receiving. It's sharpening the spear. While a GPS tracking module uses an accelerometer to deliver G-force triggers, video shows an image of what's actually happening inside the truck. It's crucial to make sure that your new video system integrates with your tracking product.

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Question 10: How Does Video Help Me Better Coach Drivers?

"Video doesn't lie," telematics analyst Clem Driscoll has said. When you can show drivers irrefutable evidence of risky driving during a weekly coaching session, you'll start to see progress. Oftentimes, drivers become ingrained with their habits and aren't even aware of the risks they're creating to your business.

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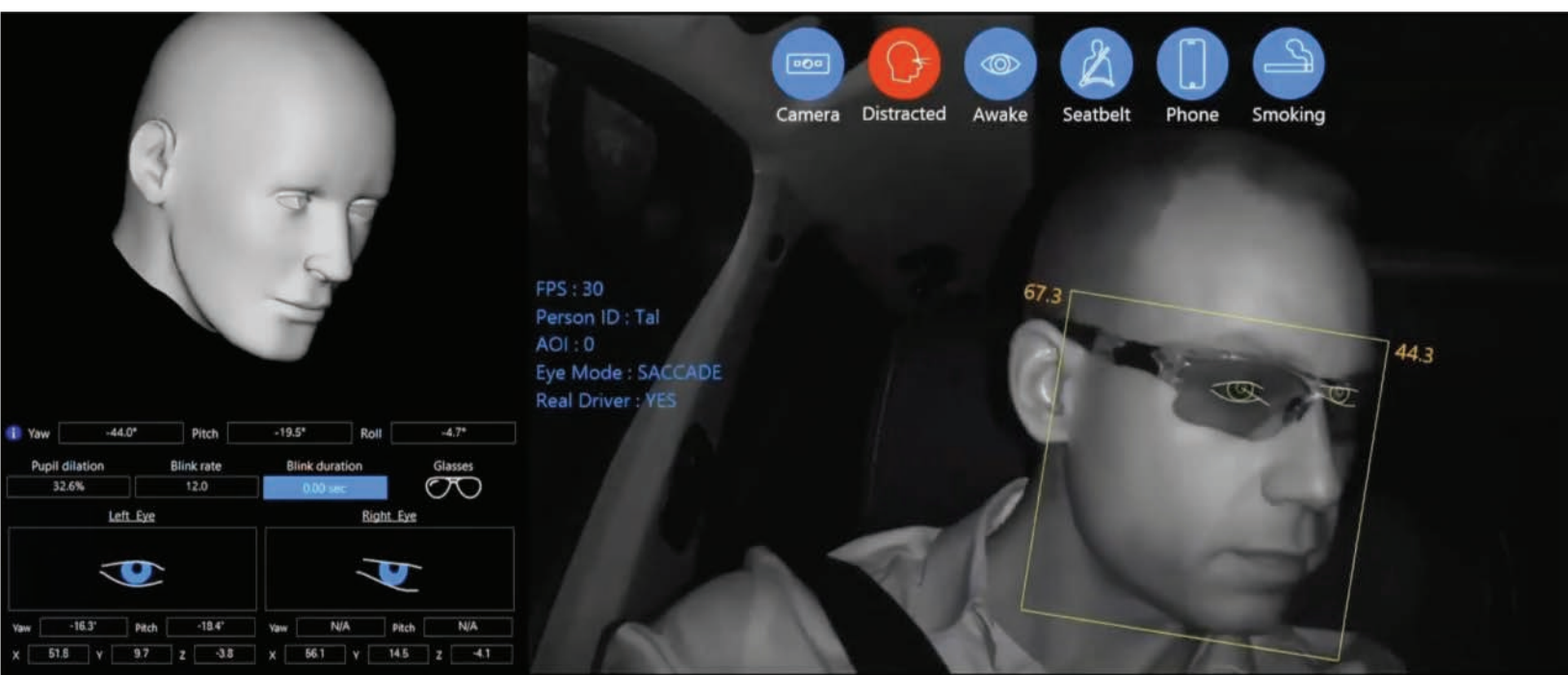
Question 11: Does the Company Offer an AI-Based System?

A wave of video systems has arrived offering AI features such as camera vision, machine learning, and edge computing to more effectively deal with distraction such as cell phone use via the driver-facing lens. In some cases, AI is also implemented on the driver-facing lens and in the cloud to categorize events. Be sure to understand AI features and how they raise the bar of video monitoring. Query the video vendors about how they implement AI and how it helps deal with the real-world issues you face.

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Question 12: What Capabilities Does the AI Camera Have?

AI cameras can do a lot more – do you need the capability? These systems can supercharge your driver safety initiative by delivering more accurate and timely event clips. They can provide automation such as in-cab audible alerts to help drivers self-coach. They offer improved detection of distraction and drowsiness and greater immediacy around alerting.



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Question 13: How Do You Handle Installation?

Some dash cameras arrive as a “one box” solution – meaning the GPS tracking is built into the device – while others pair with a tracking module. You’ll need to know the components of the solution, so you can plan installation to minimize time the vehicles are out of service. Your telematics service vendor may be able to help you get the cameras and other hardware professionally installed or provide an installation guide for a self-install.

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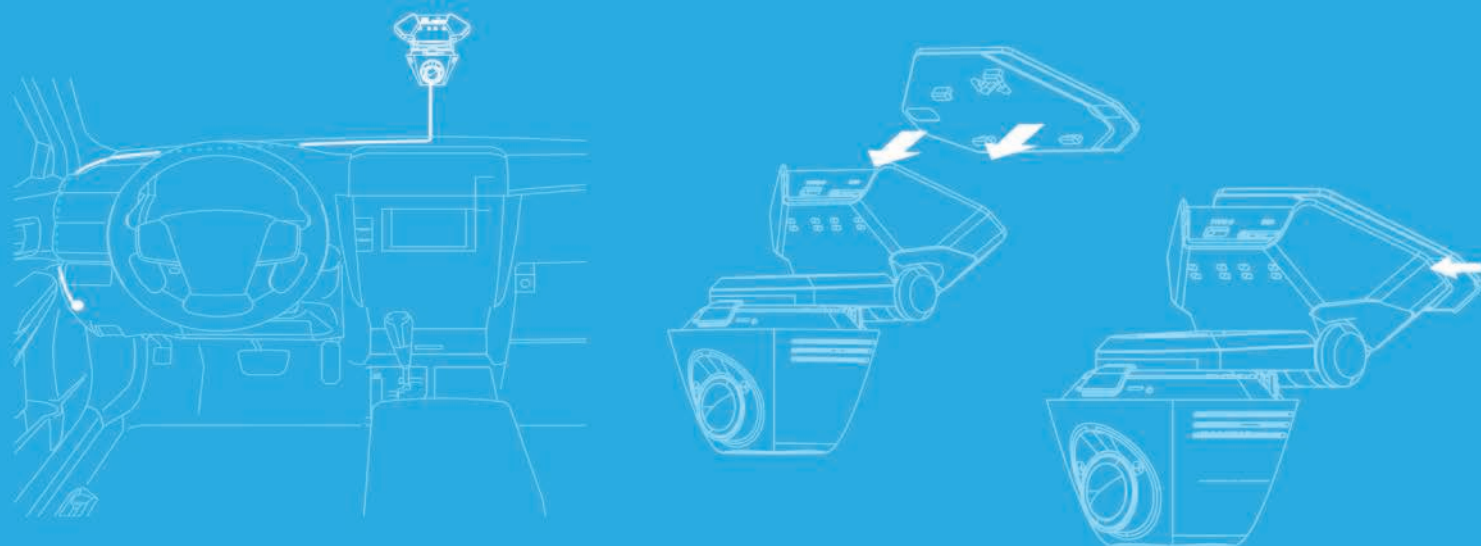
Question 14: How Do I Access Customer Support?

You’ll want to choose a vendor who provides support to you and your drivers. Ask about a 24/7 hotline or call center that can help deal with any technical or user concerns.

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Question 15: What Are Your Contract Terms?

Video systems are usually sold as hardware and monthly service priced separately or as a bundle with monthly all-inclusive pricing. If you’re purchasing hardware separately, you’ll need to consider adding cameras to new vehicles in the future. Oftentimes, bundles can provide more consistency in your budgeting and accounting processes. This may depend on the size of your order, so you may not have a choice, but it’s better to know upfront.



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Question 16: What's Included in the Purchase?

Video telematics systems include three main components – hardware (camera and gateway), software (analytics platform and dashboard), and data (transmission of the video). Higher-functioning systems will usually come with increased hardware and data costs.

Step 5

Configure the System for Maximum Value

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Question 17: Have I Included Video Telematics in My Safety Policy?

To avoid “big brother” pushback from drivers and to retain a transparent process, articulate your goals and how the system will be used as part of a fleet policy that has been put in writing. The policy should be widely available to all drivers.

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Question 18: Have I Set KPIs to Track Progress?

Set up key performance indicators with specific data points, so you know you're making progress. If you want to reduce speeding, set a goal to reduce speeding by 5 mph per driver or 10% across the fleet. Implement a rewards program for those drivers with the most improvement.

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Question 19: Did I Give Drivers Input on Implementation?

Drivers need to be included in every step of the process, so they remain engaged in the company's safety initiative and culture. Don't play favorites, and provide recognition to the best or most improved drivers. You might be able to use gamification strategies so drivers compete with each other to see who can score highest.

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Question 20: Am I Working Closely with My Insurer?

Commercial insurers are prioritizing customers who implement video telematics – often giving rebates on policy renewals following the implementation of these systems. Try to get a commitment from your insurer to provide a benefit if you use video telematics and achieve a positive result.

Source Links:

<https://www.tampabaynewswire.com/2020/09/29/what-percentage-of-truck-accidents-are-caused-by-cars-90662>

<https://www.automotive-fleet.com/10122186/accident-management-survey-crashes-in-parking-situations-remain-a-fleet-safety-p>



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