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# How Corporate Phones Lower Fleet Safety Risk

Companies that rely on the personal phones of their drivers (BYOD) unintentionally create higher risk in fleet operations around safety, security, and insurance.



# | Table of Contents

Introduction.....	03
Managing Unsafe Driving.....	04
Corporate Phones Lessen Liability.....	05
Protecting Sensitive Work Communications.....	06
How IT Infrastructure Supports Driver Devices.....	06
Implications for Fleet Insurance.....	07
Final Thoughts.....	08

# Introduction

Hiring and retaining qualified drivers has been an ongoing challenge exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Fleet managers have needed to expand their hiring pools, and as a result have brought in a wave of younger, less experienced drivers who need more training and supervision.

These drivers are more prone to distracted driving involving cell phones. In fact, 25% of the distracted drivers involved in fatal crashes in 2018 were young adults aged 20–29, according to the [Center for Disease Control](#).

Inattentiveness caused by cell phone use, which was already a problem before the pandemic, has reached crisis levels as the pandemic pushed companies to move to remote or distributed workforces with staffs of less experienced drivers.

Fleet managers pair technology with expertise when developing a risk management plan. A corporate phone issued to a driver provides more control to deal with distraction, among other benefits, rather than relying on a driver's personal device in a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) scenario.

With many more drivers living in a virtual world, tolerance for distraction has skyrocketed.

Motor vehicle deaths increased 8% in 2020 over 2019 even though miles driven declined, according to the National Safety Council. Road deaths in 2021 are expected to increase again. In the commercial realm, the duration of distraction has declined as the frequency spiked, according to the [Zendrive Collision Report](#).

In an analysis of 185 billion miles of driving data from 2020, Zendrive found that 57% of collisions involved phone use before a crash. In 16.8% of the cases (nearly one in five), the driver used a phone in the 5 seconds before the collision.

The accidents also involved speeding in 17% of the time and hard braking in 75% of the time, which are indicators of aggression and inattentiveness.

In November of 2020, collisions per million miles increased by 63% compared to January of that year. While the duration of distraction fell 22% from March to November, frequency of phone use increased 17% during the year.



# Managing Unsafe Driving

Reducing distracted driving and the accidents that may follow requires a 360-degree approach by corporate fleet managers. However, not all tools are as effective or affordable. There are six main tools for reducing risky driving:



Let's take a closer look at the benefits and costs of each tool. While cell-phone blocking provides the greatest balance of proactive vs. reactive and lower vs. higher cost, managing driving risk usually involves more than one option.

Cell phone blocking can bring the highest impact in a way that's minimally invasive at a low cost. Typically, this involves using an app on a corporate device that limits the driver's ability to interact with the phone.

**"We usually see fleets achieve a 20% to 50% reduction in at-fault collisions after they install LifeSaver on corporate devices. It's low cost, minimally invasive, and achieves a high safety impact."**

**-Ted Chen, co-founder of [LifeSaver Mobile](#)**

Monitoring motor vehicle records is also a proactive, lower-cost tool that can pay dividends. Oftentimes, checking MVRs several times a year can catch speeding and other violations in a driver's personal life that provides red flags for professional driving.

Online driver training and effective fleet safety policies offer lower cost solutions; however, these tools are more reactive. They often come into play as a response to accidents.

GPS vehicle tracking systems generate plenty of data to help fleet admins deal with the ABCs of risky driving – acceleration, braking, and cornering. However, they typically require a higher capital outlay and more staff time to sift through and analyze driving data.

Video-based driver management systems also enable a proactive approach, because these systems, especially the ones powered by AI, can provide highly accurate data and in-cab audible alerts. But these systems carry a high price tag and can take years to return investment.

A relative newcomer to driver safety for commercial fleets are solutions focused specifically on cell phone distraction. To reduce phone distraction while driving, corporate fleet and safety managers have started to use cell blocking apps such as LifeSaver Mobile. These apps impose screen blocking and call blocking restrictions to improve driving safety; some of them even provide the drivers with telematics measurements and audible warnings during the drive. This category is very attractive to safety managers because the solutions are proactive in preventing and correcting the #1 cause of crash frequency, rather than having to coach the drivers after the behavior has occurred, which might be too late.

# | Corporate Phones Lessen Liability

With the pandemic-era shift to remote work, many companies increased their investment in mobile phones for workers and other technology. It allowed many CIOs to “hasten existing investment plans,” according to Deloitte’s 2020 Global Technology Leadership Study.



Prior to the pandemic, companies planned to spend **4.25% annually** on technology. Updated plans range from **10% (banking and finance)** to **2% (manufacturing)**, according to the report.

Corporate phones help lower liability because the company is liable for calling, texting, or emailing on any device while an associate is working. BYOD mobile phones present high risk because they are beyond the control of fleet managers, safety or risk officers, and IT directors.

Employees may use the BYOD phone in an unsafe way, especially while driving. This includes unsafe apps or texting while driving. Younger drivers are using personal phones more frequently than any generation that has come before them.

On the other hand, corporate phones are typically controlled with Mobile Device Management (MDM) software and are part of an enterprise mobility management approach. MDM software helps organizations achieve security standards, and employees are usually hesitant to install the software on their personal device.

Companies have offered stipends as an incentive for employees to run MDM software on their personal phones, but these payments create hidden costs that can add up. These stipends can average \$36 per month and create higher costs in the long run, according to research by Oxford Economics.

# Protecting Sensitive Work Communications

The BYOD model has been around since at least 2009, when the term was first coined by Intel.

Many companies now use a model known as COPE (Corporate Owned, Personally Enabled) that allows companies to supply the phone, allow employees to personalize the device, and maintain control of the phone. The model was invented around 2012 and has been attributed to Philippe Winthrop, the Sr. Director of Product Marketing & Strategy for Mobility & IoT at DXC Technology.

A key tenant of the approach is the protection of sensitive corporate information.

A corporate phone typically provides greater access to corporate information than a personal phone, which necessitates MDM software that can limit unauthorized use. It can help IT personnel more easily locate and wipe information from the device if the employee leaves or goes rogue.



## How IT Infrastructure Supports Driver Devices

BYOD phones give IT personnel less control but often require these associates to provide support to enable emailing or other productivity needs. BYOD phones come in all shapes and sizes, and many are older models.

Because people hang on to their personal phones longer, these older phones have shorter battery lives, which can cause disruptions if you're asking drivers to use GPS navigation to navigate stops on a driving route.

IT personnel may also not be well versed in the various phone models, especially with employees who prefer Android phones that come in many more flavors than Apple's iPhone.

Company phones can be replaced more often, which keeps employees productive.

This aspect can impact local last-mile delivery fleets that may be tempted to try to lower the cost of new devices.

# Implications for Fleet Insurance

Using BYOD phones can result in higher insurance costs. And claims can be disregarded if the cause of an accident can be traced back to a personal phone rather than a corporate device.

Trucking company ECMD, Inc. began using cell-blocking technology to deal with rising premiums, a higher cost of self-insurance, injuries, and loss of productivity.

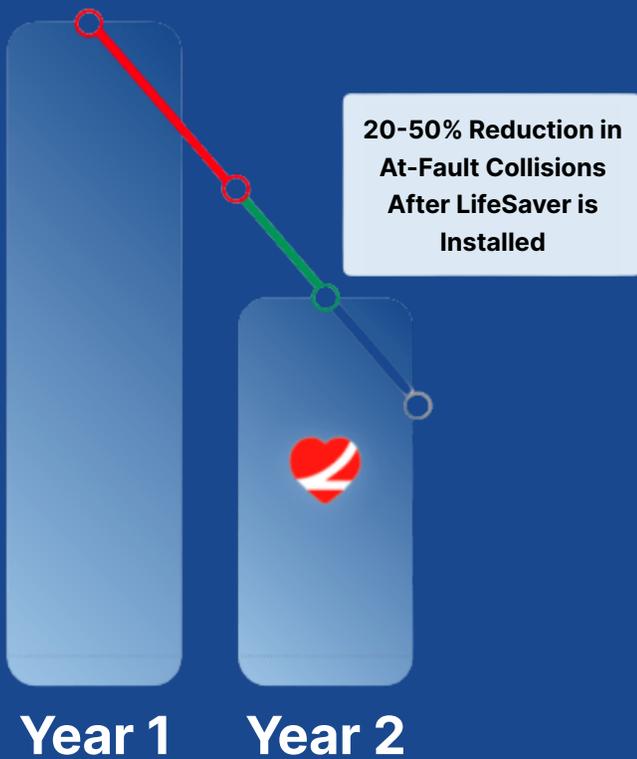
After implementing LifeSaver Mobile's distracted driving technology among their 350 drivers, the company saw a 50% decrease in insurance claims the following year.

The fleet's drivers experience LifeSaver Mobile's user-friendly interface, while company safety managers use the real-time administrative dashboard that provides ease of deployment, customizability of the driver app and the dashboard, and visibility into driver mobile distraction.

The smartphone app has been teaching employees new, safer driving behaviors.

“Our mandate is to use your cell phone safely and let's all get on with business. LifeSaver provides us the tool to enforce our cell phone driving policy.”

-Steve Brown, ECMD's VP-MIS.



# | Final Thoughts

Managing commercial drivers is often a multi-pronged approach that relies on various technology tools. And keeping drivers safe from their own risky, distracted behavior remains a thorny proposition.

Managing drivers becomes even more challenging in the era of the smartphone. In 2022, Apple is celebrating the 15th anniversary of the introduction of its iPhone. The first Android phones were sold in late 2008. Apple sold 1.9 billion iPhones through 2020, according to [Backlinko](#). It plans to sell 300 million more in 2022, according to [Apple Insider](#).

Using a sound approach starts with a game plan that takes the risk out of the playbook by putting the control back in the hands of the managers. The path toward success usually starts with a corporately owned device.

That will be the strongest foundation on which to build an effective device management plan.



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