

Regent's driver training initiative bolsters telematics

Amid the growing use of telematics data in commercial vehicle management, fleet managers and owners are increasingly finding themselves overwhelmed by the wealth of information that they receive from Telematics Service Providers (TSPs).

From statistics on fuel consumption per kilometre to revving and a variety of other performance measures such as speed, braking, driving hours, daylight versus night time driving, unauthorised stops, the breadth of information now available to fleet operators is extensive.

But with the benefit of telematics has come the challenge of how to make use of the data at their disposal not only to add value to their bottom line, but also to improve the performance of the drivers they are so meticulously monitoring.

"It's a lot of information, and some of it is very useful in managing the business of the fleet, that is your costs and risk," says Hennie Engelbrecht, founder and chief executive of bulk transport company Kopano.

"However, another area where we are now seeing the added benefit of telematics data is in driver performance and wellness, where we are able to check a driver's telematics profile and improve their driving performance based on what the data says," Engelbrecht adds.

Over the past two years Kopano has partnered with Regent Commercial Vehicles (RCV) and now makes use of the insurer's driver training initiative, designed specifically to help fleet companies improve truck driver performance and wellness.

Regent incorporates driver assessments and training with telematics, enabling its clients to improve performances on a driver-by-driver basis.

The training programme, facilitated for Regent by TETA Accredited Assessor, Kobus Hanekom, includes assessments of both driving skills and road attitude and is conducted a minimum of once a year for each driver.

Driver Reception

Hanekom says the response by drivers to the training programme has been excellent so far.

"While you do get some drivers who think they know it all, the overwhelming majority understand that they can only benefit from keeping their skills and performance sharp on the road," he says.

Over the past eight months, more than 500 drivers have been assessed and Regent has held 63 defensive driving courses.

The company says its experience has shown that fleet managers can make dramatic improvements in terms of insured losses, vehicle performance and operational efficiency by addressing a few critical things through driver training.

“You’re looking at things like average speeds, harsh braking, driving hours without taking a break, and unauthorised stops, which can all be addressed by training,” RCV National Manager Wayne Rautenbach says.

According to the Department of Transport, close to 14 000 deaths occur on South Africa’s roads every year. The department says 85% of these fatalities are caused by human error, often involving trucks. Road traffic deaths are 3 times more than in the USA annually and South Africa is the only country getting worse. The cost is R300 billion to our economy per annum.

“From a transport industry perspective, it’s not only about getting good drivers, which is actually quite difficult, but as fleet owners it’s also about making sure that we maintain a very high standard with the drivers that we do have by constantly evaluating and updating skills,” Engelbrecht says.

“It is very refreshing now to have partnerships such as the one we have with Regent because we can now play our part and maintain that standard.”

ENDS

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