



BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL DRIVER COACHING PROGRAM

Reduce Risk and
Enhance Performance

SUMMARY

Want to reduce your injury crashes by 35 percent or more? A study of over 10,000 crashes¹ found that driver coaching – when combined with video event systems – did just that.

Video event systems, also known as dash cams, provide the opportunity to proactively reduce the recurrence of unsafe behavior, minimize risk, and improve your profitability. Dash cam systems help you focus on the riskiest and most inefficient drivers and can transform your company culture when used with **continual coaching** – rather than reacting to crashes and violations. Plus, improving your under-performing drivers' skills comes at a lower cost than continually hiring drivers.

**Event-Based
Video Systems**

+

**Driver
Behavior Coaching**

=

**20% REDUCTION
IN FATAL CRASHES**

**35% REDUCTION
IN INJURY CRASHES¹**



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But first, let's consider why dash cams are a necessary investment for carriers today.

¹ Soccolich, S., & Hickman, J. S. (2014). Virginia Tech Transportation Institute

THE STATS

Without dash cam evidence or support, the potential for a major loss is significant if your safety management controls cannot stand up to the scrutiny of litigation.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's *Critical Reasons for Crashes Investigated in the National Motor Vehicle Crash Causation Survey* found that 94 percent of all crashes were caused by human choices. Add to that, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) found in the 2019 Large Truck and Bus Facts, that 33 percent of fatal large truck crashes had at least one truck driver behavior as a root cause.²

In 2020, American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) found that from 2006-2010 there were 26 cases over \$1 million; and 2015-2019 there were nearly 300 cases over \$1 million.³ In the same study, defense and plaintiff attorneys agreed that **"crash avoidance is everything"** and "FMCSA minimum standards can and should be exceeded." The potential for a large settlement against a carrier is far lower if effective coaching and behavior management processes are in use.



Are you at risk?

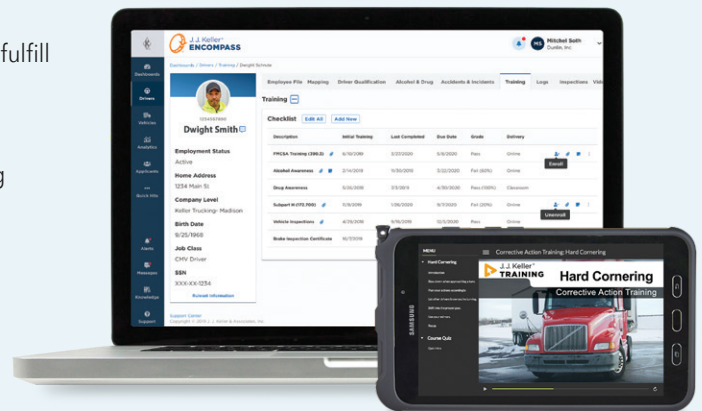
- How many near misses did your driver have last year?
- How many near misses do you NOT know about?
- Can you prove your drivers aren't speeding, following too close, or driving unsafely?

J. J. KELLER® ENCOMPASS® TRAINING

Many carriers struggle to proactively manage safety and training. **Encompass® Training** and recordkeeping provides a better way to fulfill DOT compliance requirements and maintain efficient operations.

J. J. Keller® Encompass is the only fleet management system that delivers best-in-class DOT compliance with award-winning training to help you mitigate risk and comply with FMCSA requirements.

You can assign video and on-demand training to your drivers via email or text. Drivers complete training at their convenience using the J. J. Keller® Training mobile app, on the road or at home. They can even download courses to complete them at a later time without an internet connection!



² USDOT National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Critical Reasons for Crashes Investigated in the National Motor Vehicle Crash Causation Survey (February 2015) <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812115>

³ Murray, Daniel, Nathan Williams, and Erin Speltz. "Understanding the Impact of Nuclear Verdicts on the Trucking Industry." American Transportation Research Institute. Arlington, VA. July 2020.

MINIMIZE POTENTIAL LIABILITY



Legal terms associated with the failure to properly manage driver safety performance:

- **Negligent supervision**
When the organization does not properly supervise or coach an individual, leading to deficient performance or other issues.
- **Negligent retention**
When an individual is kept in a position even though the individual should have been removed/discharged due to deficient performance.
- **Negligent entrustment**
If the organization entrusts an individual to operate a commercial motor vehicle who should not be entrusted due to lack of qualifications, lack of skills, or deficient performance.

Organizations reinforce safety by consistently executing policies and procedures that define acceptable, safe behaviors and unacceptable, unsafe behaviors along with the consequences. Drivers and office employees must understand and support the performance standards.

A carrier has a “duty to act” to remedy any unsafe situation that could affect the motoring public. If the behavior could have been detected from the data generated by the truck’s systems (telematic or camera), moving violations, driver accidents, or motorist complaints, the carrier should have known that unsafe driver behaviors were present. Carriers are judged in court by what they should have known, not what they take the time to find and correct.

Timely detection and correction of unsafe behaviors reduce safety-related and operational costs, minimize potential liability, and can reduce the impact of litigation in the event a major crash occurs.

Any forms of negligence can occur when a carrier fails to properly identify, coach, and/or remediate or terminate high-risk drivers.

In summary, you can reduce potential liability and claims of negligence if you demonstrate that:

- You effectively detect unsafe behavior and utilize correction processes, especially with your drivers who have a negative safety history;
- Your team consistently follows policies and procedures, including progressive discipline; and
- Your roadside inspection data does not show a serious trend of unsafe driving.

FOCUS ON THE RISKIEST BEHAVIORS

Choosing the unsafe behaviors you will focus on with your dash cam should depend on the likelihood of the behavior to cause a crash. Some behaviors to consider monitoring are:

Speeding and hard acceleration, which are a factor in around 17 percent of fatal crashes. Both must be a priority to reduce risk and both are huge fuel wasters.

Hard braking, possibly caused by inattention or lack of following distance for the speed traveled. Hard braking and subsequent acceleration increases wear on the drivetrain and brakes.

Following too closely is a collision waiting to happen. The driver may have been distracted or “tailgating” at the time.

Rolling stops put pedestrians at risk and could lead to a collision.

Cornering too fast at any time, especially in inclement weather or with high center-of-gravity vehicles can be dangerous.

Lane drift is possibly indicative of drowsy or inattentive driving. Up to 16 percent of fatalities involved inattention or cell phone use in 2016.

Distracted driving, including any use of a handheld device or other behavior that takes a driver's focus away from the task of driving.

Alerts such as a those listed above, call attention to potentially unsafe behavior before a motorist complaint call, a driver receives a citation, or a serious crash occurs.



Maintain a top-five list of unsafe behaviors based on trends in your company. They will give you high-impact behaviors to prioritize for coaching.

BUILD AN INTERACTIVE COACHING CULTURE



Best Practices for Training Coaches

- Have coaches assess the same video events to verify the consistency of assessments.
- Use role-play exercises to ensure the coaches can counsel without putting drivers on the defensive.

The coaching and correction of unsafe behavior maximizes your dash cam return on investment.

The selection and training of skilled coaches is the foundation of any successful dash cam program. Measuring coaches assures ongoing quality.

CHOOSING COACHES

Consider limiting coaches to a select group of individuals who can be objective and possess the right skills. If the number of “coaches” gets too large, the quality and consistency of feedback may suffer.

Coaching that sustains behavioral change is ongoing and requires rapport-building skills, as well as the ability to make tough disciplinary decisions. A “gotcha” mentality won’t be well-received by drivers, and hardly encourages improvement.

Coaches should focus on motivating a driver to become more safe and productive, rather than simply identifying deficiencies.

TRAINING COACHES

Don’t underestimate the importance of training coaches. You may find that a few of your star leaders aren’t great coaches, and you may be surprised as to who may be a natural at building rapport and getting drivers to take accountability – without putting them on the defensive.

Expect that the tone of coaching sessions will be shared among drivers quickly. One poorly executed session can create a negative ripple effect.

BUILD AN INTERACTIVE COACHING CULTURE

MEASURING COACHES

Don't leave the coaches out of the measurement process. A little healthy competition between coaches can add motivation to do well.

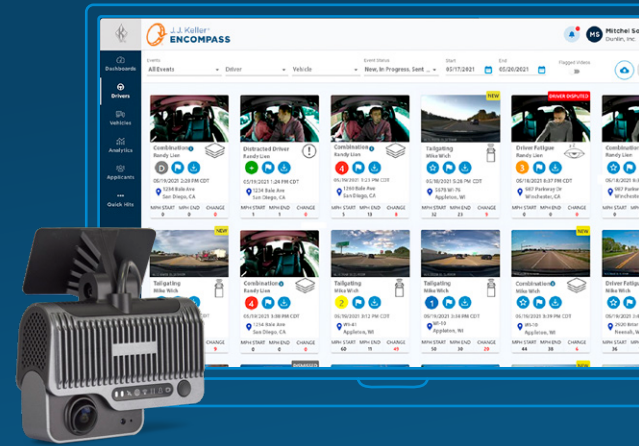
Possible metrics include:

- 🕒 "Coaching Timeliness," which could represent the percentage of events coached within a specific timeframe, such as within two to three days of the event.
- 🎯 "Coaching Efficacy" can measure the percentage of similar risk events by driver/by coach within a specified timeframe.
- 🗣️ Consider having drivers evaluate the coaches anonymously.

Provide ongoing feedback to keep your coaches sharp. They should be committed to improving their ability to affect change in others.



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Encompass® Video Event Management reduces your risk with road- and driving-facing video footage.

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FIVE STAGES OF A SUCCESSFUL COACHING SESSION

Coaching sessions must be timely, conducted in private, and provide a safe environment for the driver to share their feedback. How coaches prepare for the sessions, approach the drivers, and gain commitment to behavior change is equally important.

Below are the five stages of a successful coaching session:

1. SCHEDULING

- 🕒 Coach in a timely manner per the company standard, with the most serious events addressed within 24 to 48 hours of the event.
- 🕒 Verify that the driver will be available, rested, and receptive.

2. PREPARING

- 🕒 Focus on the facts, avoid emotions, and don't make assumptions.
- 🕒 Review the driver's safety history for trends.
- 🕒 Review the video at least twice and get another coach's opinion, if needed.
- 🕒 Think through the conversation – write down key points and questions such as:
 - What questions do you have for the driver?
 - How will you start the conversation?
 - If you expect a strong reaction, how will you respond?

3. BUILDING RAPPORT

- 🕒 Greet the driver in a positive manner and treat them with respect during the session.
- 🕒 Tell them that you appreciate their time.
- 🕒 Recognize positive safety history when appropriate.

Here's the top five stages of a successful coaching session:

1. Scheduling
2. Preparing
3. Building rapport
4. Coaching and recognition
5. Gaining commitment



FIVE STAGES OF A SUCCESSFUL COACHING SESSION



"The Encompass back-office tool has been a great help to me in terms of monitoring the results from our **dash cams**. It's a piece of technology we're going to use to **coach drivers in the right direction**."

—MH, Operations Manager

4. COACHING AND RECOGNITION

- 🕒 Have the driver view the video clip before conveying what you think happened. This allows the driver to provide information that may help shape your assessment. Also, recognize the driver for their positive actions, despite negative circumstances, when applicable.
- 🕒 Ask the driver whether there are other factors that aren't evident from the video, including what happened during his or her day leading up to the event. For examples, where there excessive delays or poor sleep the prior evening.
- 🕒 Ask the driver how they would correct the root cause or how you/the company can help them. If this is a repeat or more serious incident, formal training, including a trainer ride-along, may be needed to correct the deficiency.
- 🕒 Cover any points the driver missed and note positive behavior along with areas that need improvement. Explain the risk of continuing unsafe behavior. Recap the issue in a simple statement to check for agreement.
- 🕒 Be consistent with remedial or disciplinary actions as outlined in the company's policies.
- 🕒 If the driver deflects the conversation or reacts defensively, respectfully guide them back to the reason for the session. Make a note of unrelated issues and commit to getting the driver additional support after your session.
- 🕒 Document the root cause and next steps. If the session involved recognition for a skillful maneuver, ensure that this is also documented.

5. GAINING COMMITMENT

- 🕒 Get a commitment from the driver to correct unsafe behaviors and engage in safe behavior in the future, not just agree to complete the follow-up actions. If the driver doesn't take accountability, that must be addressed.
- 🕒 End the session on a positive note by thanking the driver and letting them know that you are available any time and that they are a valuable member of the team.

IN CONCLUSION

Dash cam systems, combined with effective coaching, are an investment that will provide significant financial and cultural returns for years to come.

Focus on your high-priority, coachable behaviors to generate the greatest reduction in crashes, potential liability, and operational costs. At the same time, reward and recognize drivers for their improvement in those behaviors to enhance buy-in.

Cameras provide the fuel for the performance management process, but coaches are the engine that maximize the return on your dash cam investment.

J. J. Keller® Dash Cam PRO and Encompass® Video Event Management

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Mark G. Schedler, Senior Editor

Mark joined J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. in June 2016, with 25 years of transportation experience in operations, customer service, planning, logistics, and finance. His primary areas of expertise include transportation operations and safety, driver retention, hours of service, ELD requirements, and reasonable suspicion training. In addition to developing and updating content for proprietary products and whitepapers, Mark also helps customers with their regulatory issues and presents to live audiences on transportation-related subjects.



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