

TECHNOLOGY

A LOGISTICS MAGAZINE SUPPLEMENT

THE BIG INTERVIEW

*Where technology is taking the sector
with Logistics UK's Phil Lloyd*

QUESTION TIME

*The Member Advice Centre's Top 5
tech conundrums revealed*

TRANSPORT'S TOP 10 TECH BREAKTHROUGHS EVER

From the wheel to Waze

LOGISTICS UK

Autumn 2024

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TECHNOLOGY



David Wells OBE
Chief Executive, Logistics UK

Welcome

Welcome to Logistics UK's 2024 technology supplement in association with Webfleet and Unipart Logistics.

If there is one industry that relies on technological advancement to facilitate economic growth and prosperity it is logistics and, as our Top 10 Technological Advancements in Logistics article on page 10 demonstrates, the leaps and bounds of logistical innovation and invention to date have been truly remarkable. From the invention of the wheel to AI, the internal combustion engine to Waze, every time humans put their minds to creating and refining the transport world, the results are game changing.

Logistics businesses across all modes face their own unique challenges when embracing new technology, whether it is electrifying a fleet or integrating new transportation management systems. On page 5, Phil Lloyd, Logistics UK's Head of Engineering Policy addresses these challenges and provides in-depth insight into all things technological for logistics in a fascinating and illuminating interview.

Elsewhere in the supplement, the Member Advice Centre responds to the top five technological-based queries it receives, from fitting fatigue cameras to the legitimacy of drivers putting a CB radio into their cab.

Our title sponsor Webfleet's Beverley Wise, Regional Director for Bridgestone Mobility Solutions, takes a look at strategic planning whilst Katherine Skidmore, Supply Chain Engineering and Innovation Director, Unipart Logistics, shines a light on using technology for enhancing warehouse visibility and efficiency.

I hope you find this supplement an interesting and useful source of information as you take your businesses forward.

CONTENTS

INTERVIEW

Phil Lloyd..... 5

SPONSORED CONTENT

DexoryView 8

FEATURE

The Top 10 technological breakthroughs in transport..... 10

SPONSORED CONTENT

Strategic planning..... 12

ASK THE MAC

The Top 5 tech questions..... 15

SPONSORED CONTENT

Eliminating unreported damage in fleets..... 18

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The Big Interview: Phil Lloyd

Head of Engineering Policy, Logistics UK

With over 45 years in the industry – many as a senior manager in DVSA and six years with Logistics UK, Phil has witnessed firsthand the effects, positive and not so positive, of technology on the sector. Here he shines a light on current and potential future issues facing fleet operators.



Tim Southwell

Editor & Chief Copywriter,
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What are the specific challenges for the logistics industry when embracing or taking on new technologies in your experience?

Each segment of logistics has its own particular challenges. With future fuel technology the challenge is adaptation to gas or to electric or to hydrogen fuel cell. We talk a lot about fuel technology in our Fleet Engineer conferences and about the importance of workshops and staff being appropriately trained.

Are your facilities adequate for these different types of fuels? If you bring electric vehicles or hydrogen fuel cell or gas vehicles into your workshop there are particular risks associated so your facilities, equipment and tools need to be appropriate for that. You may need intrinsically safe equipment. There may be gas detectors and certain lights that you need in the workshop.

If you're a third-party maintenance provider, you need sufficient provisions for that too.

With electric vehicles you could have a vehicle in your workshop for three or four weeks because it's having body repairs. Batteries will degenerate during that time, so if the vehicle comes in with not much charge and you need to move it around your workshop, how are you going to charge that up? So, your infrastructure and your workshop need to be appropriately set up.

The staff need to be trained suitably for the new type of work they'll be doing. If they are doing inspections for electric vehicles or gas, then they need to be appropriately competent, because failing to do that from an organisation's perspective means that you're open to prosecution from health and safety regulations. So, God forbid anything should happen and you haven't done the due diligence around that, when someone could get hurt, or killed, the company could be prosecuted and a director, or some other senior person even end up in jail.

Is logistics an industry that generally embraces technological change?

As an industry, I would say no, we don't. We are quite reactionary, and we need to be more on the front foot. We need to get into these technologies early on and throw more time and money into preparing for these changes. I've been talking about these changes for six years at our Fleet Engineer conferences. We need to get ready, but when you look at it, how many engineers have even been trained to level 2 in electric vehicles?

This year Logistics UK produced two guidance documents, one on electric vehicles and the one on gas vehicles. The fact is you cannot even get a recognised gas course for trucks! If you want someone to go and service your boiler at home, they have the appropriate qualifications to do so, but if you want someone to look at your gas truck there is no specific qualification requirement to assure someone's competence. I'm currently working with the IMI to try to set up an accreditation course for gas powered vehicle inspections.

I think at the top level, the big companies, they are addressing future technologies, it's lower down the chain where the perception is of a lack of charging points and so forth, which maybe doesn't encourage early adoption of new technologies such as electric vehicles.

Logistics UK has been very active in trying to get this message across, hasn't it?

Absolutely. Logistics UK, alongside partners of the Zero Emission Van Plan campaign, has been calling on government to ensure van fleet operators have the confidence to invest in zero emission vehicles.

We need an agreed and co-created logistics roadmap to net zero to help support the industry to decarbonise. As a partner of the Zero Emission Van Plan, we have been seeking

“The improvements on emissions have been immense. [...] A few years ago it was suggested that a Euro VI engine in a London bus going down Oxford Street was actually cleaning air quality.”

urgent steps from government, including removing regulatory barriers, to help more fleets transition to EVs.

What do you think the most important technological advancements in logistics have been in the last decade?

The improvements on emissions have been immense. If you look at the differentiation between a Euro I engine and a Euro VI engine regarding pollutants, it's been a huge advancement. I remember a few years ago it was suggested that a Euro VI engine in a London bus going down Oxford Street – that what was coming out of the tailpipe was actually cleaner than the air that was going into the engine – it was actually cleaning air quality. So, air quality technology improvements have been very significant.

The other main one for me is road safety and the Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), specifically the emergency braking system. The technology now with radar and LiDAR is remarkable. It will detect if there's a vehicle in front of you that you are likely to crash into. It will warn you and if you don't respond and if you still fail to respond, it will put the brakes on for you.

If we are allowing technology to do more and more things for us in transport, is there a danger that we become too complacent, too reliant on the technology?

Yes, that is a risk, for sure. If you're driving that type of vehicle all the time, if you're allowing technology to take over from your cognitive ability, you can kind of tune out and the concern from the insurance industry is that eventually you will get in a car or a van or an HGV after using one of these highly ADAS vehicles and get into one that's got none of those features and now all of a sudden your risk profile has gone up – as you're expecting the technology to do some of these functions for you. So, there's a potential downside to embracing technology.

In an autonomous vehicle, if you're listening to the radio or reading the newspaper (which is what you may be able to do in the future) or something and then the vehicle has to pass the driving over to you and says, “please take over driving” (there will be a handover period), it could almost be like you're waking up and not 100% certain of what's going on around you – this is a real concern that is being looked at as part of autonomous driving.

What are the key considerations when operators are choosing their transportation management system? Is that something which you'd have knowledge of?

One of the key grumbles from our members is that they need to get various proprietary systems which don't 'talk' to each other. They are buying a technological solution for one thing such as Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS), so they have to have a platform for that and someone to look after that system, and then they have to get a different solution for something else and a different platform for that.

They just want one system that has everything, or systems that are designed to talk to each other, but each Original Equipment



AUTOMATION AND AI

How do you see the role of automation and AI evolving the sector?

Well, in terms of achieving an economic benefit from automation - trucks only really stop between loads because drivers need to rest or to refuel - automated vehicles wouldn't necessarily have that issue, so they could be operational 24/7. There could be a huge financial upside there. But if the cost of automating the vehicle and maintaining that automated vehicle exceeds the cost of a driver, then you have another issue. It's all about economies of scale, but there is no doubt automation could prove to be a very cost effective and transformative development for logistics.

There is also a safety element, because if you look at the statistics for accidents, serious injury and people killed on roads, the main contributor is driver related, it's because they didn't observe something or they didn't do something they should have done. If an automated vehicle always takes this into account, then it is surely worth developing. In the first instance it could probably be tested on motorways, where everyone is going in the same direction, there are no pedestrians, no cats, no cyclists, rather than in cities where, if automated vehicles are constantly detecting danger, they could add to journey times and congestion.

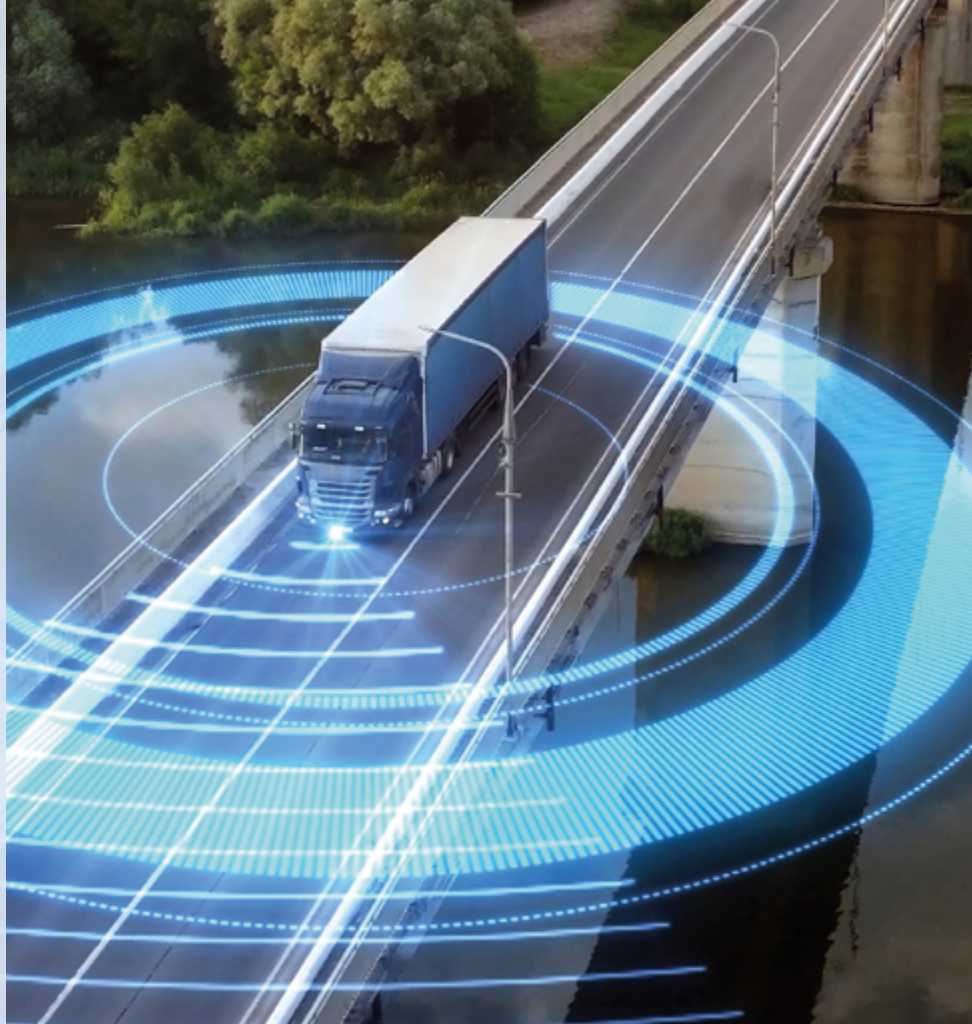
Regarding AI, there is not a lot of impact at the moment, but the more technology that we start adopting and implementing, the more it will come into effect. AI basically just draws down data and looks for parameters so it will be useful, I think it'll be great. Volvo is developing predictive maintenance, it's a bit rudimentary at the minute, but you can predict the failure of engine oil or whether a turbo is starting to degenerate etc. If you have more sensors providing more data then AI can use this in its data analysis. This will enable it to predict more accurately what is likely to happen and when. The more data sets you have, the more AI can do.

Manufacturer (OEM), understandably, wants to keep its own operation protected and separate. This issue is particularly tricky if you're operating a mixed fleet - Volvo technology won't/may not integrate with, say, Scania because they have their own software. That side of things needs addressing.

How is new technology assisting the sector with sustainability targets?

Well, system sustainability is very important. Vehicle designers now have to use certain components in order for them to be recyclable. We've also been having a discussion with DfT regarding the Longer Heavier Vehicles initiative.

Basically, what we are saying to DfT is that with autonomy coming on, we probably need to rewrite the Construction and Use regulations, because if we're going to have safer vehicles, we want to reduce the number of vehicles on the



road. A potential way of doing this is to make vehicles bigger and longer. They're becoming safer anyway, and if you can move more products around in fewer but larger vehicles it will have less impact on the environment.

If you picture the truck from its side, there's a big chunk - the cab - where the driver sits and then there's this big box on the end. What we're saying is that in an autonomous future you won't need that front part because there's no driver anymore. So, you can extend the capacity of the truck without having to do very much at all.

Another area is tyre technology. Tyre rubber ends up in small particles which get washed down drains and end up in the sea. So, research is ongoing as to how to reduce the impact of rubber on the environment. The same goes for road surfaces and materials used for brakes.

One of the arguments in favour of electric being more sustainable is regeneration, which means that you're just harvesting the energy from the vehicle's momentum (which will slow the vehicle down) rather than using your brakes which causes brake dust. That's, again, more sustainable. It's about questioning whether certain components and materials are necessary and if they are, then how do we make them less impactful?

How confident are you that the logistics sector will adapt to these technological challenges?

We will have to, but for me the concern is preparation - things will change, and we need to be prepared for them - doing nothing is not an option! ■

For more information, click or tap [here](#)



Unipart enhances warehouse visibility and efficiency with DexoryView

Unipart Logistics enhances its service to long-time customer Vodafone by implementing Dexory's warehouse intelligence platform. This innovative solution streamlines stock management at Unipart's Nuneaton facility, reducing costs and improving efficiency. The successful integration of robotics in supply chain operations demonstrates Unipart's commitment to delivering cutting-edge logistics solutions for Vodafone.

time on truly value-adding activities rather than checks and validations which can be completed using the automation. The importance of this cannot be overstated given the value of the products we distribute for Vodafone and the importance of ensuring that the correct product gets to the right customer at the right time."

Unipart Logistics has taken a significant step forward in optimising its service for long-standing customer Vodafone by introducing Dexory's state-of-the-art warehouse intelligence platform. This innovative collaboration showcases Unipart's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technology to enhance its logistics offerings.

Franco Ziccardi, Solution Design Transformation Director at Unipart Logistics, highlighted the company's dedication to innovation: *"At Unipart Logistics, we are constantly looking for new technologies that can bring value to our customers. Our recent engagement with Dexory is a huge leap forward in adopting autonomous mobile robots within our warehouses. Using DexoryView provides us with real-time data on stock accuracy that empowers our teams to take intelligent and informed decisions which helps to drive the business forward."*

After conducting extensive market research, Unipart selected the Dexory platform, DexoryView, for its robust features and user-friendly interface. The implementation of this autonomous mobile robot at Unipart's Nuneaton warehouse, where Vodafone's operations are primarily based, has yielded impressive results in supporting the mobile giant's supply chain needs.

Simon Leggott, Unipart Customer Engagement Director for Vodafone, emphasised the impact of this technology: *"The Dexory platform has allowed our stock team to focus more*

UNIPART
LOGISTICS



Katherine Skidmore

Supply Chain Engineering and Innovation Director,
Unipart Logistics

The Unipart-Dexory solution has significantly improved efficiency in managing Vodafone's inventory. It has enabled a 32% decrease in stock transfer requests and a 45% reduction in issue investigation time. Moreover, the system now completes 100% of daily checks against the Warehouse Management System within hours, allowing proactive management of discrepancies before they impact operations or customer satisfaction.

Gareth Williams, Vodafone Head of Logistics, praised the innovation: *"Our partnership with Unipart Logistics continues to thrive on innovation and efficiency. The implementation of the Dexory warehouse intelligence platform has revolutionised our stock management, leading to enhanced processes and maximised efficiency."*

This successful collaboration between Unipart and Dexory in service of Vodafone sets a new standard in logistics operations. It demonstrates Unipart's ability to integrate advanced robotics into supply chain management, ensuring that customers like Vodafone benefit from increased efficiency, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness in their logistics operations. ■

For more information, click or tap [here](#)

The Top 10 technological in transport

The ability to identify and create ways of making things easier for us to move stuff around has been key to the advancement of the logistics industry. From the first time a human was curious enough to roll a round-shaped object down a hill, to the invention of the internal combustion engine, we take a look at the pivotal breakthroughs...

1

THE BOAT

The very first known mode of transport developed by humans - aside from shanks's pony - was the boat. Those who colonised

Australia roughly 60,000-40,000 years ago have been credited as the first people to traverse water using a buoyant vessel of some kind, though there is some evidence that seafaring trips were carried out as far back as 900,000 years ago.

Ships now transport an estimated 80% of the world's goods, with nearly 11 billion tons of cargo transported by ships between 1990 and 2021.



2

THE WHEEL

It must have been quite a moment when the first person witnessed a round bit of wood roll down a hill in front of them. And even more of a moment when the first person to see such a thing had a lightbulb moment.

Archaeological records show that the first wheeled vehicles were in use around 3,500 BC, with evidence of the existence of such contraptions found in Mesopotamia, the Northern Caucasus, and Central Europe.

Since then, humans have been rather dependent on the various modes of transport that rely on the wheel.

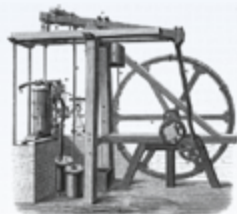


3

THE WATT STEAM ENGINE

In 1769, the Watt steam engine was invented and no longer did we have to rely solely on horses to carry our

goods from place to place. Boats were among the first to take advantage of steam-generated power; in 1783, a French inventor by the name of Claude de Jouffroy built the "Pyroscaphe," the world's first steamship.

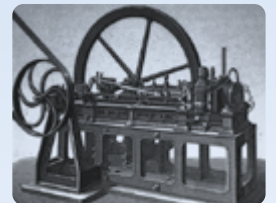


4

THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE

Various scientists and engineers contributed to the development of internal combustion engines. In 1791, John Barber developed the gas turbine and in 1794 Thomas Mead patented a gas engine. Robert Street also patented an internal combustion engine in 1794, which was the first to use liquid fuel.

Reciprocating piston engines are by far the most common power source for land and water vehicles, including automobiles, motorcycles, ships and to a lesser extent, locomotives.



5

THE LOCOMOTIVE

In 1801, British inventor Richard Trevithick unveiled the world's first road locomotive—called the "Puffing Devil"—and used it to give six passengers a - no doubt bumpy - ride to a nearby village.

It was three years later that Trevithick first demonstrated a locomotive that ran on rails, and another one that hauled 10 tons of iron from the community of Pen-y-darren, Wales, to a small village called Abercynon. It took a fellow Brit—a civil and mechanical engineer named George Stephenson—to turn locomotives into a form of mass transport.



6

AIRCRAFT

The start of the twentieth century was truly the dawn of a new era in the history of transportation as two American brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, pulled off the first official powered flight in 1903. In essence, they invented the world's first airplane.



breakthroughs

7

THE CATALYTIC CONVERTER

A catalytic converter is an exhaust emission control device which converts toxic gases and pollutants in exhaust gas from an internal combustion engine into less-toxic pollutants by catalysing a redox reaction.

It was patented by Eugene Houdry, a French mechanical engineer who was an expert in catalytic oil refining, having invented the catalytic cracking process that all modern refining is based on today.



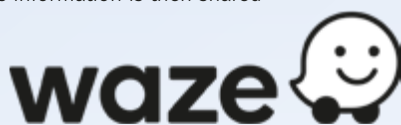
8

WAZE

Waze is the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app. It is a free app that provides turn-by-turn driving directions and fuel prices based on crowdsourcing: users can input information about accidents or other issues, but also automatically upload their actual driving times.

Drivers get alerted before they approach police, accidents, road hazards or traffic jams and this information is then shared by other drivers in real time.

For the road freight and van delivery industries it is an absolute godsend.



9

THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Long before Tesla and Elon Musk, Hungarian priest Ányos Jedlik built the first crude but viable electric motor, using it to power a small model car in 1828.

The first mass-produced electric vehicles appeared in America in the early 1900s when the Studebaker Automobile Company entered the market with electric cars. However, with the advent of cheap assembly line cars by Ford, the popularity of electric cars declined significantly and was not re-ignited until the environmental impact of petrol-based transport was fully realised towards the turn of the twenty first century.

A key advantage of electric vehicles is regenerative braking, which recovers kinetic energy, typically lost during friction braking as heat, as electricity restored to the on-board battery.



10

THE HOVERCRAFT

For no other reason than we just really like hovercrafts, they're cool. Seeing one of Sir Christopher Cockerell's inventions in action was like seeing Concorde flying overhead, you always stopped what you were doing and went "wow".

It was a brave new world, and we were promised our own personal hovercrafts, hover scooters, hovercars, hovertrains and hover ships.

Well, they were cool until people realised how noisy and expensive they were to operate. They were also susceptible to capsizing in severe weather, limiting their use.

The hovercraft may be making a comeback, however: Hovertravel, a company based in the south east of England, is running a 78-seater, year-round, 10-minute service from Portsmouth to Ryde on the Isle of Wight.

"There are more passenger hovercraft services around the world than people realise," says the company's chief pilot, Ben Avery. "There are quite a lot of passenger services that operate between China and Russia. We've got a customer out in Canada who operates a year-round service. It's also not scheduled, but it is year-round."

With the global rise in sea levels, and the blurring of the boundary between land and sea that will result, the use of hovercraft for passenger and freight use is set to grow its niche further.



And one for the future...

POWER-TO-X

While not quite there yet, one innovation scientists already view as a potential breakthrough in sustainable transport is Power-to-X.

It's a technology that helps tackle one of the key issues facing fleets of electric vehicles: how to store renewable energy. Power-to-X could change the future of sustainable transport forevermore.

For Neste, the company's Power-to-X scheme harnesses the power of electrolysis, powered by renewable energy, to convert CO₂ into zero-emissions fuels to be used in vehicles with internal combustion engines.

Neste is also exploring how to turn carbon dioxide into chemicals and other materials. With almost unthinkable potential, Power-to-X is an energy source of the future, and something that could materially change the future of sustainable transport forevermore. ■



Strategic planning

the key to future-proofing fleet management

Strategic planning is critical for fleet managers to help them navigate rapid technological advancements and evolving regulations. With a focus on managing the shift to electric vehicles (EVs), leveraging AI-driven platforms and prioritising sustainability, platforms such as Webfleet that offer everything from advanced route optimisation to CO₂ Report can prove indispensable. By investing in scalable, future-proof solutions managers can ensure compliance, efficiency, and readiness for emerging industry challenges.

 **webfleet**



Beverley Wise

Webfleet Regional Director
for Bridgestone Mobility
Solutions

For more
information,
click or tap
[here](#)

Today's fleet manager faces the challenge of staying ahead in an environment marked by rapid technological advancements and evolving regulations.

As the industry undergoes significant transformation, driven by the rise of electric vehicles (EVs) and artificial intelligence (AI), strategic planning is crucial.

Rather than merely reacting to current trends, fleet managers must adopt a forward-thinking approach to future-proof their operations and secure their roles in a transforming industry.

The transition to EVs exemplifies the industry's shift. With increasing pressure to reduce carbon emissions, fleet managers must manage not only the immediate switch to EVs but also the ongoing operational demands that accompany this change.

This involves understanding battery management, ensuring access to charging infrastructure and using advanced route optimisation tools – integral to platforms such as Webfleet. These tools help fleets operate efficiently while minimising their environmental impact.

AI-driven platforms also present significant opportunities for optimising fleet operations. These technologies enable faster, more cost-effective services by leveraging data-driven insights.

As compliance becomes increasingly complex with stricter

environmental and safety standards, fleet managers must stay ahead of evolving regulations. This requires investment in comprehensive software platforms that offer features such as certified CO₂ reporting tools and continuous monitoring systems for critical components.

The upcoming requirement for laden roller brake tests or Electronic Brake Performance Monitoring Systems (EBPMS) from April 2025, for example, underscores the importance of staying ahead of the game.

Elsewhere, sustainability has also become a strategic priority. The UK's commitment to carbon reduction necessitates that fleets track and actively reduce their environmental impact. Tools such as the Webfleet CO₂ Report are indispensable, offering precise emissions tracking and identifying reduction opportunities. By integrating sustainability into their strategic planning, fleet managers can align with broader industry trends and ensure their operations remain future-ready.

Ultimately, the path forward for fleet managers involves investing in adaptable, scalable solutions that meet the demands of a rapidly changing industry. Strategic planning and the right technological investments are key to ensuring fleets are compliant, efficient and prepared for future challenges. ■

MAC



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The Top 5 tech questions

1

A new Vehicle Unit (VU) was fitted to our vehicle earlier this year and the driver has incurred the same infringement four times now for ‘security breach attempt’. The VU has been to the workshop twice and they have confirmed that it is a known issue and we can continue to use the vehicle – is this correct?

DVSA has issued a bulletin on this, which can be viewed scanning the QR code below.



<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/3881591>

Our understanding is that as long as the issue did not affect the recording of the drivers’ hours rules and whether DVSA can determine compliance with them, the vehicle could be used, however if DVSA was unable to determine compliance with the drivers’ hours rules a TE160DH, £100 fixed penalty notice would be issued to the driver and the operator would receive follow up enquiries. We would suggest the vehicle is seen by an approved centre to determine the functioning of the tachograph is all in order and a printout to be done when the error message occurs.

2

We have recently had fatigue monitoring cameras fitted to the windscreen, however the company that has fitted them has placed them in the centre of the screen, stating that this is the most effective position for them to work in. Is this permitted?

There is a list of acceptable features that are detailed in DVSA’s HGV/PSV inspection manuals and the Categorisation of Vehicle Defects that are allowed to intrude into the swept area of the screen, providing that they do not seriously or materially impair the driver’s view. Driver monitoring systems may appear to qualify as an acceptable feature; however, consideration should be given as to the placement of the devices.

Based on the image, this is likely to be interpreted as being in a position that could materially impair the driver’s view and could potentially attract a prohibition at the roadside.

With regards to the effectiveness, research suggests that being located centrally and above the driver’s eyeline would not impact their ability to monitor effectively, however this may differ between different equipment.

3

We have purchased new vehicles which have had the traditional external mirrors replaced by cameras. A driver asked the question that if the camera monitor in the cab was broken, could the vehicle still be driven?

The vehicle should not be driven as the camera system would be treated by DVSA the same as a mandatory mirror. In DVSA’s Categorisation of Vehicle Defects, it states that an immediate prohibition would be issued if there was no adequate view to the rear, side or front as required, for any external mandatory mirror, glass or other external indirect vision device being insecure, damaged or the view being obscured. For these purposes, an ‘indirect vision device’ is defined as a device to observe the traffic area adjacent to the vehicle which cannot be observed by direct vision. These can be mirrors, camera monitors or other devices (but not a periscope) able to present information about indirect field of vision to the driver.



4

One of our drivers has asked if they could fit a CB radio into their vehicle so that they can communicate when on site. Our worry is that they will be using it whilst driving on the public highway. Is this allowed?

There is an exemption for two-way radios which are designed or adapted:

For the purpose of transmitting and receiving spoken messages.

Operates on any frequency other than 880 MHz to 915 MHz, 925 MHz to 960 MHz, 1710 MHz to 1785 MHz, 1805 MHz to 1880 MHz, 1900 MHz to 1980 MHz or 2110 MHz to 2170 MHz's.

However, it is important to note, that even if the device you are using complies with the legislation above, with or without a hands-free device, you can still be prosecuted for not being in proper control of your vehicle, careless driving, or dangerous driving. The latter two offences carry much higher penalties. If you are the cause of a fatal road traffic collision, where the use of a mobile phone, including texting or using a two-way radio was a factor in the incident, a lengthy prison sentence may follow.

5

Our refuse collection service is about to introduce mounted tablets into our fleet of refuse collection vehicles in order for drivers to be able to tap to record collections/aborted collections of bins etc. This clearly could cause potential issues in terms of legal compliance with operating a handset with the vehicle not 'parked' and the engine turned off.

We would like to know if you are aware of any exemptions with regard use of such a device, that would be fitted and clamped into the vehicle, for service such as refuse collection.

In short, the answer is there are no exemptions regarding the use of hand-held devices fitted in a vehicle in scenarios like these. Currently, the only exemptions are for contactless payment where a good or service is received immediately after this is completed, or to make an emergency call to the relevant service. Both of these exceptions require the vehicle to be stationary.

The legislation has been adjusted to state that any device capable of interactive communication is now within scope of the rules. As such, the vehicle would need to be securely parked. The Highway Code (please scan the QR code below), rule 239, states 'you **MUST** switch off the engine, headlights and fog lights'.



<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

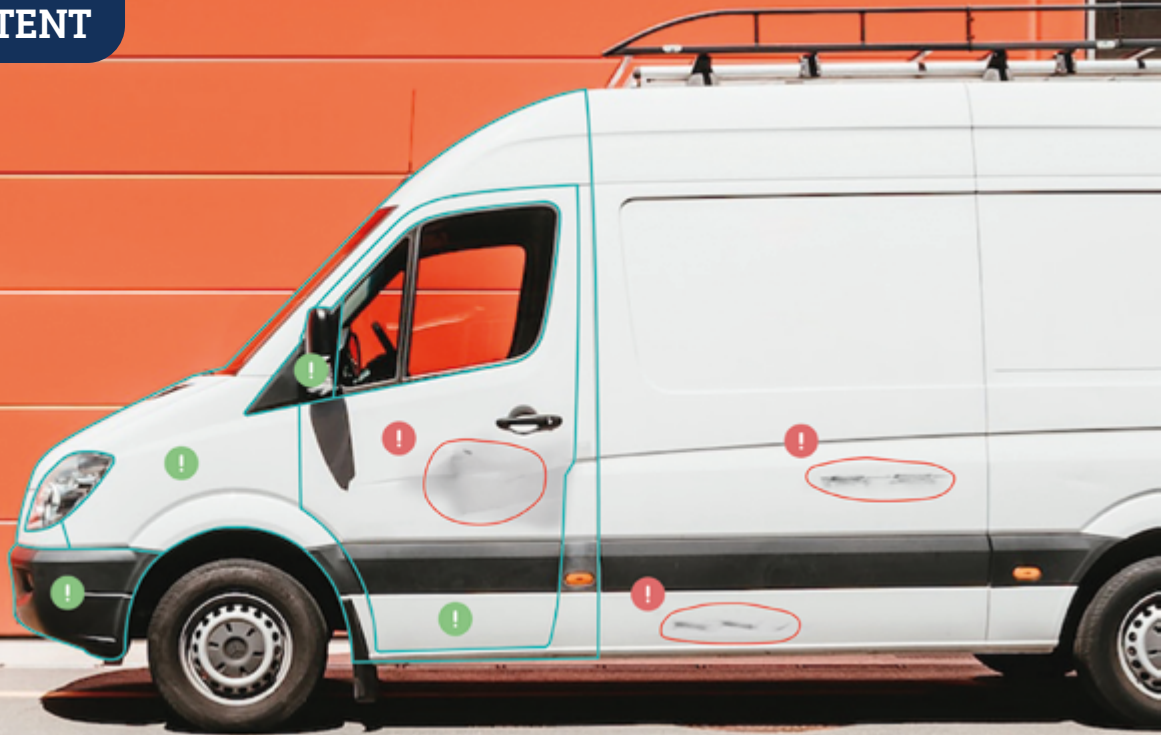
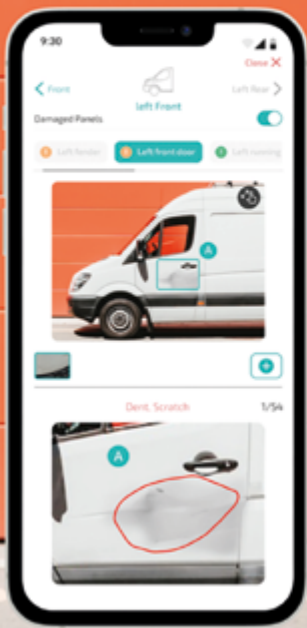
The main concern surrounding this legislation is the interpretation of 'hand-held'. The regulation states 'a mobile telephone or other device is to be treated as hand-held if it is, or must be, held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function'. This will ultimately come down to interpretation as if the device needs to be steadied by the hand while in the cradle, this could contravene the regulation, but would it be down to a court of law to rule on this.

Even when the device is secured in a cradle, the potential for distracted driving is still high, especially if the screen is illuminated and updating with messages that could take the operative's attention away from the road for any period. Should the vehicle be involved in an incident, and it was evidenced that a distraction from the device played a part, then there would still be the potential for being charged with driving without due care and attention, careless or even dangerous driving which would have serious consequences.

Anything that requires the driver to concentrate on anything other than driving should be undertaken when the vehicle is stopped or delegated to a crew member to complete. If the device is to be removed from the cradle to be operated, then this would need to be done when the engine was stopped, and the vehicle was safely parked. This offence can also be extended to a passenger when supervising a learner driver as both people should always be paying attention to the road.

It should also be noted that being stopped in queuing traffic, such as traffic lights, or to pick up waste is legally considered to be 'driving', but it would be down to individual enforcement agencies to enforce this.

Further details can be found in rules 149 and 150 of the Highway Code. ■



Eliminating unreported damage in fleets

With the upcoming “peak” season for logistics firms, unreported damage may become a silent killer with respect to fleet maintenance costs. Firms spend an estimated £2,500-3,000 per light commercial van (and more for larger trucks and trailers) just on unreported damage each year. This is a hard problem to solve, ie requires significant manual and administrative effort to track and manage effectively. That’s until now. With AI, there are ways to eliminate unreported damage and improve driving behaviour, without a ton of manual effort.



Venkat Sreeram
 Founder, ClearQuote Technologies Limited

Why is unreported damage a problem worth solving for commercial fleets? For starters, its additional cost of maintaining the fleet. There is a negative perception of having your brand liveried vehicles running around town carrying visible damage. What’s not measured and tracked cannot be controlled – leaves drivers with no accountability for their vehicles and encourages bad driving habits. In the end when vehicles go off lease, there is a huge repair bill to put up with.

It’s difficult to track unreported damage because multiple drivers handle the same vehicle, especially in the logistics domain. Manual pre- and post trip checks to document vehicle condition are largely manual and take up admin effort. Traditional vehicle inspection apps end up reporting the same damage or defect multiple times and it’s not easy to track which damage is new. There is an added risk of drivers not reporting damage at all.

With AI (specifically computer vision), it is possible to automatically document the condition of a vehicle at different points in time effortlessly – either by capturing images using an app or via fixed cameras (don’t think gantry, think of something like your ANPR cameras at the gatehouse). These images are



processed to identify damages on the vehicle uniquely and also classify them as new or pre-existing. Fleet managers can get alerted when a vehicle shows up with “new” damage.

Improved tracking ends up being a deterrent for drivers, encouraging them to take more accountability, thereby reducing damage as well. The added benefit of effortless tracking, transparent recharges all contribute to significant ROI (proven 3-8x) for the logistics or fleet operator. ■

For more information, click or tap [here](#)

