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Telematics & AI Video in Fleet Safety

What the Data Proves – And Why Year Three Is the Leadership Test

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Core Position

Telematics, ELDs, geolocation, and AI video are foundational. They create visibility and change behavior. Rhythm Innovations helps fleets turn that visibility into governed decisions, ownership, action, proof, and closure.



Opening Connection: Four Eyes, Then Two Eyes and Technology

Think back to high school driver education. Or think about your mom or dad sitting next to you in the passenger seat. Permit in hand. Newly minted driver. Two hands on the wheel. Every turn felt important. Every stop sign mattered. Every lane change had an audience.

Why? Because there were four eyes in the vehicle.

When the dust wore off, were you as careful as that first day? You should have been. You had more experience. You knew the road better. But experience can also make people comfortable. Comfort can create drift.

Fast forward to 2026. In many fleet operations, the driver has two eyes in the vehicle – and technology watching the operating environment: telematics, ELDs, geolocation, and cameras. Are drivers more careful when they know the operation is visible? Of course they are.

Until the visibility becomes normal. Until the alerts become routine. Until coaching becomes inconsistent. Until the operation starts reviewing information instead of governing decisions.

That is the real issue this paper addresses. These technologies work. The proof is strong. The question is whether the fleet has the operating discipline to keep improving after the first wave of behavior change.



Executive Summary

Over the past decade, telematics and AI-enabled video have fundamentally changed fleet safety. The data is clear: crashes go down, risk behaviors drop, visibility increases, and coaching improves outcomes.

This is not theoretical. It is proven across millions of miles and thousands of fleets. At Rhythm Innovations, we are strong proponents of these technologies. They are not optional. They are foundational.

However, there is a critical gap in the market conversation. The question is no longer whether these systems improve safety. The evidence says they do. The better question is what happens after the first wave of improvement.

This paper does not claim that every fleet stalls in year three. That would be too broad and too difficult to prove. The stronger and more accurate position is this: year three is the leadership test. It is the point where a fleet should determine whether early gains have become sustained operating discipline, whether performance has stabilized, or whether risk is starting to drift back into the operation.



1. What the Industry Data Actually Shows

The strongest evidence from telematics and AI video providers shows that visibility, feedback, and coaching can produce meaningful reductions in crashes and risk behaviors.

Samsara reported that customers adopting Samsara typically see a 35–40% aggregate reduction in crashes over time. The same report states that fleets with 175 or more vehicles using the complete AI safety solution – including dual-facing AI dash cams, in-cab alerts, and AI coaching – saw a 73% decrease in crashes over 30 months. [1]

Samsara also reported that harsh events and mobile usage decreased substantially over the same maturity period. Within the first six months, fleets saw a 48% decrease in harsh events and an 84% decrease in mobile usage. By month 30, those reductions reached 69% and 96%, respectively. [2]

Lytix reported that its 2026 Road Safety Report was drawn from more than 341 billion miles driven by 6.3 million commercial drivers. The report showed that severe crashes per mile fell 4%, while moderately severe collisions fell 41%. [3]

Independent research also supports the role of onboard monitoring and coaching. Virginia Tech Transportation Institute / CMV Driving Safety guidance reported that onboard safety monitoring combined with feedback and coaching produced a 52.2% reduction in safety-related events per 10,000 miles and up to a 59.1% reduction in the most severe events. [4]

Geotab reported safety benchmarking reductions that include collision rates down 19.1%, harsh braking down 11.8%, harsh cornering down 5.6%, and speeding down 6.4%. [5]



Real Business Impact

Each prevented event matters. FMCSA large-truck crash cost estimates in 2023 dollars include the following: [6]

Crash Type	Estimated Large-Truck Cost
Non-injury crash	~\$49,398
Injury crash	~\$326,810
Fatal crash	~\$15.23 million



These are not just safety numbers.

These are business outcomes.

2. Why These Technologies Work

The reason is simple. These technologies change behavior because they make the operating environment visible. Drivers know events are captured. Leaders have real examples to coach from. Patterns can be tracked. Risk is no longer hidden inside the day-to-day motion of the fleet.

That first transformation matters. It moves the fleet from a blind operation to a visible operation. For many organizations, that alone produces meaningful improvement because unsafe behaviors that were previously unseen are now captured, reviewed, and discussed.



But visibility is not the same as control. Visibility shows what happened. Control requires a decision about what happens next.



3. Why Year Three Is the Leadership Test – Not a Guaranteed Stall Point

This point needs to be stated carefully. The available data does not prove that every fleet stalls in year three. It would not be accurate to say that year three is a guaranteed failure point.

What the data does support is that major measurable improvement can occur through the first 24 to 30 months after technology, alerts, coaching, and safety workflows become active. Samsara reports continued gains through month 30. That makes year three the natural point to test whether the fleet is still improving, has reached a stable level, or is beginning to drift.

In other words, year three is not the proof of failure. Year three is the proof point for leadership. It is the moment to ask whether early gains have become a governed operating process, or whether the organization is simply maintaining the improvement created by the initial technology rollout.

The better language is not “the year-three stall.” The better language is “the year-three leadership test.” That keeps the argument honest, credible, and useful for fleet leaders.

The Year-Three Leadership Test

A simple three-year review can reveal the pattern. The core exercise should stay at three years because it is simple, current, and decision-ready. Larger fleets may also review four to five years for deeper trend validation, but the leadership decision should remain anchored to the most recent three-year pattern.

Metric	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Total crashes			
Preventable crashes			
High-risk driving events			
Claims count / cost			
Repeat driver events			
Coaching completion / proof			

4. The Core Gap: Signal vs. Decision

Telematics and cameras generate signals. Fleets need decisions.

Without structure, the flow is too often simple: event, reporting view, awareness, and then no consistent action. The issue may be seen, but it is not always owned. It may be discussed, but it is not always closed. It may be coached once but not governed if it repeats.

This is where performance stalls or stabilizes too early. The signal is present, but the operating model is incomplete. The missing pieces are ownership, action, due date, proof, escalation, and closure.



5. The Next Evolution: From Visibility to Control

At Rhythm Innovations, we view telematics as step one, not the end state. The next evolution is to move from signals to governed decisions.

Every meaningful event should become an identified issue with a named owner, a due date, a required action, proof of completion, and verified closure. That is how behavior change becomes sustained performance.

This matters because fleets do not protect themselves with data alone. They protect themselves when the data creates action that can be proven.

6. The Rhythm Position

Rhythm Innovations is clear in its stance: telematics and AI video are fundamental. They are essential to modern fleet safety and risk control. But they are not sufficient on their own.

They create visibility. They support behavior change. They give leaders a better operating picture. But discipline requires a structured operating model.

In the SaferFleet™ model, incoming signals are not allowed to sit as information. They are translated into governed work: issue, owner, due date, action, proof, and closure.



7. What Sustained Performance Looks Like

Fleets that continue improving beyond the initial technology lift do three things consistently.

First, they govern repeat exposure. The same behavior from the same driver or unit is not treated as a new isolated event each time. It is treated as a pattern that requires escalation.

Second, they enforce ownership. Every issue has a named owner, and that owner is accountable for moving the issue to closure.

Third, they require proof. Coaching is not assumed. Repair is not assumed. Follow-up is not assumed. The fleet confirms what was done and whether the exposure was closed.

That is the difference between a fleet that has visibility and a fleet that has control.



8. Bottom Line

The industry has already proven that telematics and AI video work. The real question is no longer “Do these systems improve safety?” The answer is yes.

The better question is this: can the fleet sustain and govern that improvement over time?

Year three should not be presented as a guaranteed stall point. It should be presented as the leadership checkpoint. If improvement is still compounding, the operating model is working. If performance has flattened, the fleet has reached its current level of control. If performance is drifting backward, the fleet is already late.

The right time to engage is not after claims rise, premiums change, or renewal pressure

increases. The right time to engage is when improvement slows, when repeat exposure appears, or when the organization can no longer prove that every meaningful signal became a decision, an owner, an action, and a closure.

Final Statement

At Rhythm Innovations, we believe you cannot control what you cannot see. But seeing alone is not control.

Control comes from decisions, ownership, action, and proof. That is how fleets move from early improvement to long-term performance.

Telematics and AI video create the signal. SaferFleet™ helps turn the signal into governed action.

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