HOW TO CHOOSE A DASH CAM

The Ultimate Buying Guide for Your Fleet

SURECAM

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Introduction

Dash cams have been one of the industry's primary incident reduction tools for years. They're an effective and reliable way to make sure that your fleet is protected from false insurance claims. Whether you're seeking to implement a new dash cam program or you're interested in how you can optimize your current system, we can help you make the best choice for your fleet. Dash cam technology is ever-evolving, so keeping up on the wide variety of data storage and camera types available can help you create a system that meets your needs.

Dash cameras for trucks can provide many unique benefits. Aside from ensuring your drivers are safe and sound, dash cams help you control your insurance costs. Plus, up-to-the-minute metrics for each driver can help you customize your training objectives. If you're just beginning to research the benefits of dash cams, the sheer number of choices available to you can seem daunting. There are pros and cons to each type of dash cam, so it's important that the provider you choose lets you customize your system.

Dash Cam Video Uses:

- Reduce insurance claims and drive down insurance premium costs
- Manage First Notification of Loss (FNOL)
- Acknowledge good drivers for good road awareness
- Exonerate drivers after an incident
- Supplement telematics data for a safety incentive program or driver scorecard program
- Coach drivers to mitigate risky behaviors
- Recognize hazardous road conditions or risky routes and delivery locations
- Spot check new drivers to ensure they meet your company's standards
- Enforce seatbelt and cellphone usage compliance

Step One: What Type of Camera Do You Need?

There are many different types of dash cams available. What type will work best for you depends on the needs of your fleet. First, you'll need to decide on the type of hardware you need.

SD CAMERAS

There are two main types of dash cam systems: SD cams and network-connected cams. SD cams use physical media, meaning that your access to the footage depends on the driver. He or she must remember to remove the card, transfer the data off of the card, and reinstall the card properly. And despite the driver's best efforts, cards can be lost or damaged during this process. In general, SD card cameras have lower quality hardware and less reliable equipment.

CONNECTED CAMERAS

However, with connected dash cams, the data is sent wirelessly to the cloud. Connected cameras use the cellular network, which gives you the ability to access live video and data. Network-connected dash cameras operate in the background automatically. This means your drivers won't have to incorporate anything new into their daily routines. Many connected camera systems, including SureCam, allow you to independently install and customize each dash camera's positioning and settings, too. This helps to cut down on setup fees, and gives you control from the start.

There's a difference between network-connected dash cams and wifi-connected dash cams. Network-connected cameras transfer data over the cell network, so you don't have to be connected to the internet or a hotspot to upload your videos. Wifi-connected cameras, on the other hand, must be connected to the internet in order to upload footage. Most of the time, when vendors use the term "connected cameras" they are referring to network-connected cameras.

Though both SD and connected dash cams can be helpful in the insurance claims process, connected dash cams have the advantage of allowing you to get out in front of the process more quickly than systems using SD storage. Since wireless dash cams are connected to the cellular network, you can have video and data within seconds. In the event of an incident, wireless systems give you the ability to get the footage you need right away. Incidents captured by SD camera systems must first be downloaded and reviewed, which can take anywhere from 12-24 hours. Connected cams give you the chance to resolve false claims fast.

PRO TIP: When deciding on the right type of camera, think about all the vehicles you might want cameras for, not just your heavy trucks.

If an incident does occur, it's vital that your dash cam system provides clear footage. Since SD cameras rely on physical media, there is a limited amount of data storage available. When you're working with limited storage, you've got to choose between two options: video quality or video quantity. This means that if you choose to record a driver's full route, image quality may suffer. But if you choose better image quality, you may not be able to record his or her entire shift. Connected dash cams give you the best of both worlds: clarity and efficiency. Connected dash cameras have the potential to offer you as much storage as you need, since this type of system uses cloud-based storage.

In addition to providing reliable incident footage, connected cams give you the chance to be proactive about driver safety. Network-connected dash cams incorporate an accelerometer, which lets you set custom triggers that detect risky driving. You can get relevant, timely notifications about the harsh driving behaviors that matter to you. Fully-managed SD cam solutions simply aren't able to match the immediacy of connected cams. The accelerometer does the work for you, automatically sending you just the relevant footage. With connected dash cams, you don't have to wait for--or pay for--fully-managed service.

EXTERNAL CAMERAS

Once you've chosen the type of storage that's best for your fleet, you have another important choice to make. What type of visuals will be most useful to you? External, internal, front-facing, dual-facing, in-cab? Each type of camera provides you with its own unique set of benefits. Internal cameras can be front-facing only, or dual-facing. Front-facing cameras do just that: face front. They record whatever happens to be in front of the truck, without any audio. Dual-facing cameras incorporate both a front-facing camera and an in-cab camera. In-cab cameras record visual and audio from the interior of the driver's cab. The installation of this type of dash cam has been shown to reduce risky driver behaviors dramatically.

External cameras can be mounted in many different areas on trucks, but the most popular type of external camera is the reverse view camera. This type of visual can help drivers increase accuracy and avoid damage when backing up. It can also provide valuable proof in the event of an incident. Some companies, including SureCam, are developing solutions for exterior multi-cam systems that can be incorporated into existing camera systems.

Step Two: What Features Will Work Best for Your Fleet?

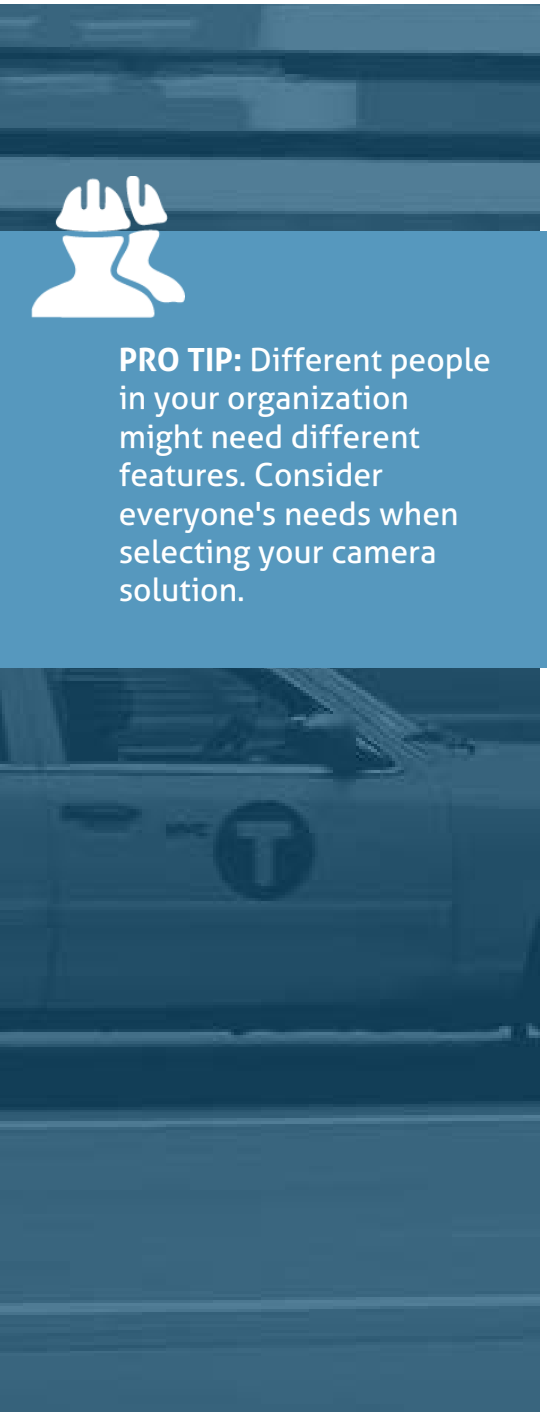
We know how important it is to get the features you need without paying for a lot of extras that you'll never use. These are the common features you'll need to decide on when choosing a dash cam:

1. SD Card-Only vs. Network-Connected: Most retail dash cams are SD card-based, where all the footage is stored locally on the device. SD-based cameras typically require fleet operators to manually download footage, or even physically remove SD cards to review videos. SD-based cameras are a cheaper option, but the operational costs and challenges add up when you factor in the manual work. Network-connected cameras use a cellular network to upload footage. In SureCam's case, this gives fleet operators real-time notifications and visibility. Connected cameras are better suited for commercial fleets, and include a monthly subscription to support video transmission and software. Visit our website to learn more.

2. Road-Facing or Dual-Facing: Depending on your reasons for installing cameras, you may want a camera that only faces the road, or you may want a secondary camera that faces inside the cab. Decide if you believe footage inside the cab would be helpful for your fleet. Some connected-cameras come standard as a dual-facing camera, and give you the option to turn off the inward facing camera. With SureCam, we give you the choice between road-facing or dual-facing, to ensure you only pay for the cameras you use.

3. Hardware Quality: Make sure the cameras you invest in have high quality footage. For example, SureCam's hardware is German designed and manufactured, and is equipped with full HD (720p), 30 frames per second, and a IP69 rating. You should also make sure that the hardware won't be easily damaged by water or dust. It's critical to have rugged, high quality hardware because vehicle cameras take a beating from vibrations and sun exposure. In addition to SureCam's hardware being German-made, it's also been tested over time to last through the conditions of being on the road.

4. Web Application and Ease of Use: If you select a network-connected camera solution, the software or web application should be straightforward and easy to use. It's important to make sure that the web application will be accessible for everyone on your team who will need access to your camera solution and videos. Be sure to understand if the web application provides you with the features you need, without limiting your access to important information. Can you adjust camera settings without calling an account manager? Can you access video and analytics anytime, anywhere?



PRO TIP: Different people in your organization might need different features. Consider everyone's needs when selecting your camera solution.

5. Installation: The installation process is an important factor to consider. Keeping your vehicles on the road is important, and complicated installations can equate to lost profit. Ask each camera provider about their installation process, whether it requires professional installation or can be self-installed, and how long the installation takes.

6. Audio Options: Do you want to record audio along with the video you capture? Some vehicle camera solutions allow for audio to be configured based on each fleet's needs. If audio is important to you, make sure that the camera solution you invest in will be able to meet your requirements.

7. Self-Managed Vs. Fully-Managed Service: Some video safety solutions require that your fleet use their fully-managed service, where the provider is reviewing and producing feedback for every video. SureCam offers fleets the choice between a self-managed and fully-managed service. Ask whether the added cost of a fully-managed service is worth it for your fleet. If it is, determine whether that managed-service is accomplishing what you need it to. For SureCam fleets that choose our self-managed solution, we let our technology do the heavy lifting, and provide customers with a simple and cost-effective solution.

8. Supporting Data: Speed, GPS position, and g-force data can be valuable pieces of information for your fleet. Make sure you understand what supporting information your camera solution will provide before you sign your contract.

Step Three: Does the Camera Integrate with Your Current Systems?

Having an onboard telematics system helps to reduce incidents. When you combine telematics with dash cams, the results are even more powerful. Telematics work hand-in-hand with cameras to give you the advanced insights you need. You can create driver scorecards, automatic reports, and set custom events using your telematics data. If you need to take advantage of these advanced features, it is essential that you select a camera provider who can integrate with your current telematics platform or ELD system.

Some dash cam providers may not dedicate the time and expense to developing multiple telematics integrations, instead opting to force clients into one or two telematics systems. If the potential dash cam provider does not integrate with your current or planned telematics system or ELD provider, you should consider alternate dash cam providers. Some providers have open APIs that will allow you to integrate with any system you desire. Make sure you understand what that process will look like and how long it will take before you sign a contract.

Step Four: Selecting a Vendor

It's important to compare products to find the best solution for your fleet, but a commonly missed step is assessing potential vendors. Many fleets find it helpful to ask each vendor similar questions so that they can easily compare and contrast what each vendor offers. You may also want to speak to other safety managers who have done business with each vendor. This can help you get an unbiased opinion on the reliability, stability, and customer support of each vendor. Use this vendor evaluation checklist to help compare the dash cam providers you are considering:

Vendor	Vendor One	Vendor Two	Vendor Three
Are dash cams a major component of their overall business?			
Do they have a proven track record in North America?			
Will you have a dedicate account rep?			
Where is the product manufactured?			
Can they provide you with references from current customers?			
Is technical support available?			
Do they have the documentation you will need to roll out the installation?			

Step Five: Select a Pricing or Financing Model

Price is a common concern when choosing a dash cam solution. There are two pricing models for connected dash cams: equipment leasing, and equipment purchase. Both of these pricing models also have a recurring monthly fee for the software service.

Under the lease model, the upfront hardware cost is eliminated, and fleets pay a higher monthly fee that includes both the hardware and software fees. By leasing the hardware, you can get the technology you really need, even if you don't have room in your current budget for a large purchase order. These options also provide more flexibility and better cash flow management.

The second pricing model is an upfront equipment purchase. Under this model, fleets purchase their cameras upfront and have lower monthly payments that includes the software service fee only.

With both models there might be additional installation costs if you don't have the in-house capabilities to do a self-install.

Step Six: Making the Case for Dash Cams to Your Leadership Team

After the recent ELD mandate, some fleet owners and leadership teams may be hesitant to invest in another safety technology like dash cams. As the safety manager, you understand the benefits a connected camera solution could have for your fleet. Now the challenge is to demonstrate a need for the investment to your final decision-makers.

It's always a good idea to inform the decision-makers as early in your research process as possible. If you wait until you have already selected a product and vendor to loop your fleet owner into the process, you may discover that there is no room in the budget or that the owner wants to go in a different direction. The first step to getting your ownership to sign off on the purchase order is to get on the same page as early as you can. Ask the owner what their short- and long-term business objectives are and tell them you will be researching connected dash cams.

After you've done your research and decided on a product and vendor that you think is best, it's time to get final buy-in from the decision-makers. Here are three tips to help in that conversation:

- **Calculate the Return on Investment (ROI):** There are many benefits to connected dash cams. Your leaders want a safer fleet, fewer incidents, and happier drivers, but they also need to protect the profitability of the business. Make sure that you understand what the ROI of a new dash cam system will be before you present it to your leaders. Most vendors have an ROI calculator they can use to help you with this.

- **Anticipate Questions and Objections:** Connected dash cams can be a large investment for some fleets. It's natural that your fleet owner, leadership team, or even your drivers may have questions and objections. Be prepared for these questions and objections by doing as much research as you can prior to meeting with your team. Write a list of questions and objections you think they may have and then find answers for each one. If you need help with this, your sales rep from the vendor should be able to help. They can help you identify common questions and help you find the answers you need.

  One more thing that you may want to research before your meeting with the leadership team is the success of other technology systems your fleet has already purchased. Pull as many reports as you can to help demonstrate how successful these technologies have been and to highlight why dash cams are still necessary.

- **Leverage the Vendor:** Most vendors are happy to provide backup when you present their product to your leaders. They may even have some collateral that they can provide you with to help speak to the specific concerns of your leadership team. Would it be helpful to do a second software demo for your fleet owner? Ask the vendor to provide one. Does your CFO or owner need more detailed information on payment, financing, or leasing options? Most vendors are happy to send a highly detailed quote or other documentation. Leverage your vendor as much as possible during this process.