FLEET

THE FLEET PROBLEMS THAT COST THE MOST

Your trucks are your biggest moving advertisement and one of your largest risks.

THE COST OF A CRASH

Most fleet budgets focus on fuel and payments. A single serious crash can dwarf both. The Network of Employers for Traffic Safety estimates that motor vehicle crashes cost U.S. employers $62 billion in 2023, on and off the job. Distracted driving alone accounted for $16 billion.

The group's 2019 report put the average on-the-job crash at about $26,000, and about $78,000 per on-the-job injury, in 2019 dollars. Those figures include benefits, other direct costs and liability. They don't include a damaged reputation, a truck out of service or a technician out for months.

A truck with your name on it also creates liability when your driver causes a crash. A serious claim can raise your insurance for years.

HIRE CAREFUL DRIVERS

Before you hand someone the keys:

- Check the motor vehicle record, as permitted by law and your insurer.
- Ask your insurer what their standards are, in writing, before you make an offer.
- Do a short road test.
- Check records periodically, with the proper authorization, and act on what you find.

A strong technician with a bad driving record may be uninsurable on your policy. It's better to know that before they start.

PUT THE POLICY IN WRITING

A good driver policy is short and specific:

- Seat belts, always
- No handheld phone use, and no typing or reading in the app while moving
- Rules for dispatch contact while driving
- Who may ride in the truck
- Personal use of take-home vehicles
- Alcohol and drug rules
- What to do after a crash, step by step
- What happens after violations

OSHA and NETS publish a 10-step guide that employers can use as a starting point. Have every driver sign the policy every year.

FIX THE WAY DISPATCH WORKS

Your office may be causing distracted driving without realizing it. If dispatchers call or text techs while they're on the road and expect fast answers, then your process is at odds with your policy. Use status updates that techs can handle when parked, and teach everyone that an unanswered message from a moving truck is the right behavior.

USE TELEMATICS FOR MORE THAN TRACKING

GPS and vehicle data can show speeding, hard braking, idling and unauthorized use. Fleet publications also point to better maintenance scheduling and fewer unexpected breakdowns, since diagnostic alerts can reach someone before a problem strands a truck.

Introduce it carefully. Techs often assume it's about catching them. Explain what you'll track and why. Use the data for coaching. Reward good drivers. Check state rules on employee monitoring, and be careful about tracking personal time in take-home vehicles. GPS data may also affect wage and hour records, so read cutting wage and hour risk.

TREAT MAINTENANCE LIKE REVENUE PROTECTION

A broken-down truck in July doesn't only cost a repair. It costs every job on that truck's schedule.

- Schedule service by mileage or by engine hours.
- Have techs complete a quick weekly inspection in the app.
- Track repair costs by vehicle, so you know which to replace.
- Establish accounts with a mobile mechanic or a nearby shop that will prioritize you.
- Keep a spare van if your fleet is large enough to justify one.

CONTROL THEFT AND LOSS

Tools and copper make service vans a target. Use good locks and interior partitions, and park in lit areas. Log expensive tools by serial number. Decide what stays on the truck overnight, and review what your insurance actually covers. A commercial auto policy may not cover the tools inside the van.

MAKE THE TRUCK SELL

Clean, well-marked trucks are marketing you've already paid for. Set a standard for appearance, and check it. A dirty, dented van with a broken ladder rack says something about how the work will be done.

ASSIGN SOMEONE TO OWN IT

Even a five-truck shop needs one person responsible for the fleet: renewals, inspections, repairs, driver records and accident reports. Put it in a written job description, and give it time on your monthly agenda.

Sources: NETS, Cost of Crashes 2026; NETS, Cost of Crashes 2019; OSHA and NETS, Guidelines for Employers; Automotive Fleet, telematics. General information.

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MAKE IT A HABIT

What good looks like

> Consent recorded for every text and marketing call.

> Do-not-call lists checked before every campaign.

> Opt-outs honored right away, in every channel.

The habits

1. Scrub lists against the national and state do-not-call registries before calling.
2. Keep a record of consent for marketing texts and calls.
3. Honor opt-outs fast, however the customer asks.
4. Call only within allowed hours in the customer's time zone.
5. Watch the Updates page for rule changes and dates.
6. Ask your attorney when a rule is unclear.

Signs it's time to get help

- You don't know when your lists were last scrubbed.
- Opt-outs are tracked in someone's head.
- Marketing texts go out without recorded consent.

Where we fit: Service ProCall scrubs every list against the do-not-call registries before a single call, and follows a written calling policy.

More on calling rules and compliance