

Here's how fleet managers can prevent reckless driving while speed cameras are offline

By [Justin Manson](#)

13 Jun 2022

Earlier this year, the Johannesburg Metro Police Department announced that motorists who have been exceeding the city's speed limits had not been fined for infringing the law for almost a year. That's because the city hasn't had any functioning speed cameras since May 2021.



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"While Johannesburg motorists who have broken the law are probably off the hook, these offline speed cameras mean that road users no longer have a deterrent to help them avoid reckless driving. Speed cameras work to reduce road accidents, injuries, and even fatalities by deterring drivers from speeding. Without them, road users' traffic speeds increase, which incurs additional costs for the transportation industry and causes more accidents, severe injuries, and deaths.

Just because commercial drivers can't incur the high costs of speeding fines doesn't mean businesses aren't suffering the actual price of reckless driving behaviour.

For example, in May this year, numerous motorists filed police reports against a truck driver who was endangering the lives of road users on the N11 in Mpumalanga. A motorist recorded the truck recklessly overtaking several vehicles at high speed, including other large trucks. The driver eventually hit and damaged a trailer attached to a white bakkie but continued to speed away until the police stopped and arrested him.

Here are some ways fleet managers can proactively prevent drivers from falling into the trap of driving recklessly and speeding while the city's traffic cameras are offline.

Driver training programmes

Speeding contributed to last year's high number of road fatalities, with light delivery cars and trucks accounting for more

fatalities per crash than any other type of vehicle. That's why it's more crucial than ever that fleet managers train drivers to abide by traffic laws and reduce their likelihood of contributing to South Africa's high road accident rate.

Fleet managers can enrol drivers in training, development, and support programmes that will equip them with the skills they require to improve their driving behaviour while adding value to the companies they drive for.

Driver programmes, like MasterDrive, offer truck drivers world-class safety and efficiency training that will help them mitigate accidents and increase productivity.

Geofencing high accident zones

Since heavy trucks are more dangerous on the road than light vehicles, fleet managers can use geofencing technology to define high accident zones or areas with steep descents. Geofencing allows managers to receive alerts when vehicles enter pre-defined zones and, in turn, alert drivers to maintain or revert to a custom set speed limit to lower the risk of an accident.

Although this technology fills the current gap created by offline speed cameras, it can be as effective when the city's speed cameras are back online by reminding drivers to reduce their speed.

This technology has shown so much promise in reducing road accidents and reckless driving behaviour that Ford recently trialled connected geofencing technology that could one day automatically reduce a vehicle's speed in line with the geofenced zone.

In-cab AI cameras

A recent Zutobi survey ranked South Africa as the most dangerous country to drive in out of 52 countries. Unfortunately, Johannesburg's offline speed cameras add to the country's hazardous road conditions.

Fleet managers and drivers can create safer driving conditions by pairing telematics technology with AI-based vehicle video cameras, like CAM 50. This technology identifies risky driving and delivers real-time audio and visual warning alerts when the driver speeds, brakes or steers harshly. It also sends feedback to the driver when engaging in distracted driving behaviour that endangers the lives of other road users.

Drivers navigate countless factors on our country's roads, and offline speed cameras are just another item on that list. As a result, fleet managers are under immense pressure to protect employees while making sure they drive responsibly. Thankfully, fleet managers have access to countless solutions that encourage safe driving behaviour and protect South African road users.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Justin Manson, Sales Director at Webfleet Solutions

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