

WHITEPAPER

WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? **USING DATA TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR FLEET SAFETY.**

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Context can change what we think we know. Learn why looking at your fleet safety through a contextual lens is important for your safety program.

Why does context matter? Imagine getting a text from a friend that reads, “I can’t believe it!” You have a multitude of ways to interpret this. Is it in reference to a previous conversation? A major news event? Is it conveying surprise, happiness, anger? It’s hard to get all of the information you need just from this simple communication.

In much the same way, context plays an important role in fleet safety. It provides the necessary background, circumstances, and conditions to help us interpret, understand, and effectively respond to information. It can add layers of meaning, interpretation, insight, and behavioral understanding to important actions or events.

Context can help deepen your understanding of fleet safety and inform best practices. Let’s look into the significance of context in fleet safety and how it influences safety management.

Summary.

Ensuring the safety of drivers and vehicles is paramount to the success of any company managing a fleet. Innovative technologies play a crucial role in helping companies improve efficiencies and reduce risks. T-Mobile Fleet Management from Geotab provides telematics solutions that empower businesses to streamline their safety programs and consequently improve their bottom lines.

This article explores the importance of having the right context surrounding your telematics data and how it leads to enhancing overall fleet safety and performance.

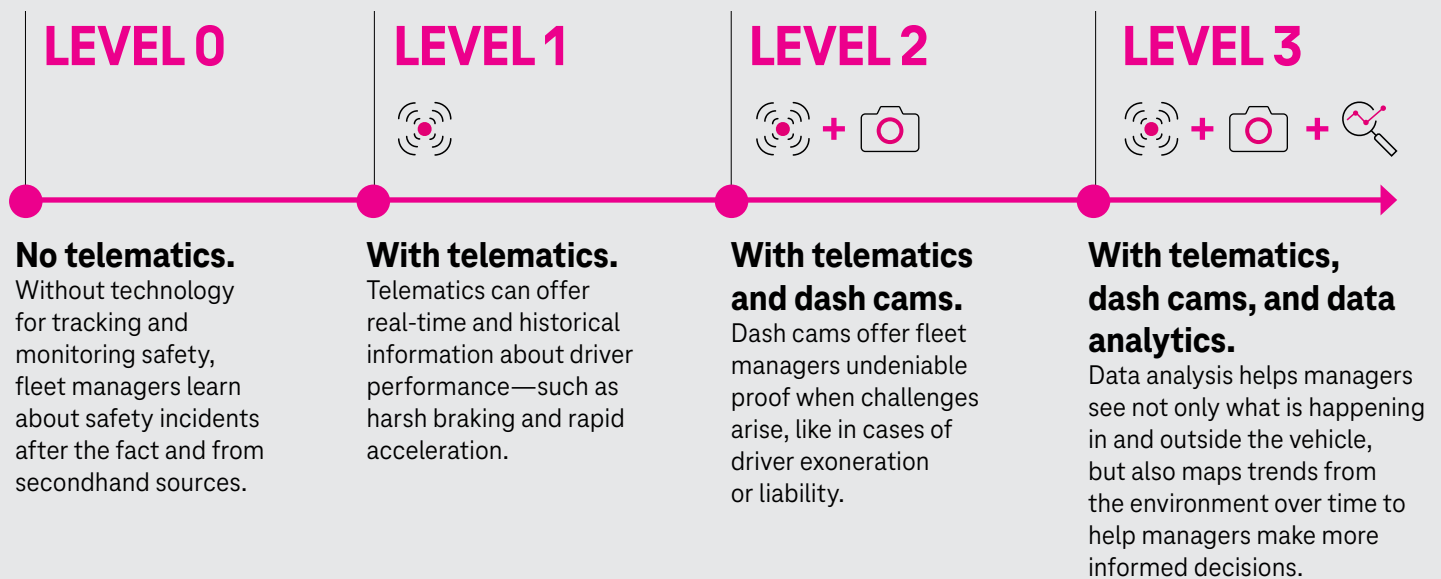
Why is context important when talking about fleet safety?

While you may already have a great fleet safety program in place, have you considered whether you're accounting for the context of your fleet's daily tasks and routes? To consider the influence of context on fleet safety, it's important to ask yourself three questions:

- **Is this vehicle safe?** Fleet managers should prioritize regular maintenance on their fleet vehicles to make sure they are in good working condition.
- **Is this behavior safe?** Monitoring driver behavior promotes cautious driving, maintaining the safety of both drivers and others on the road.
- **Is this environment safe?** High-stress situations like stop-and-go traffic or poor road and weather conditions can have a significant effect on fleet safety.



How can you add context to your fleet safety?



The easiest way to add a contextual layer to your fleet safety is through information-rich data from telematics and other important systems. We're going to walk you through the different stages of adding contextual data to your fleet safety program to show you how these different elements can work together to inform your fleet management.

LEVEL 0: **Bare bones.**

Let's say one of your drivers is in a collision on a slippery road, claiming it was unavoidable due to another vehicle swerving into their lane. Without technology for tracking and monitoring safety, fleet managers only hear about such incidents secondhand from the driver.

Without physical or data-driven evidence, fleet managers face challenges in proving whether their drivers could have prevented or caused the event. For both the fleet and insurance company, the lack of reliable collision data to exonerate the driver results in a weaker defense against liability claims.

Without technology riding shotgun in the cab, it's also hard for a fleet to develop proper driver training. Safety training remains limited to the basics and doesn't adapt to a driver's specific needs. This lack of technology puts these fleets at a disadvantage compared to similar fleets that do use technology to monitor and manage fleet safety.

Any context that these fleet managers have comes directly from their drivers who could be tempted to bend the truth if it means keeping their job. In this case, context is nonexistent.

LEVEL 1: **Bringing telematics on board.**

When you adopt a telematics solution, context becomes more abundant. Telematics offers up-to-date information about what is happening in a vehicle both on the road and off. In the case of the driver above, you could check the vehicle's speed before the other driver entered their lane or right when the vehicle hit the icy patch. Telematics can back up your driver's claim that they slammed on the brakes at the exact right moment, giving you undeniable evidence.

Telematics also helps inform fleet managers about where driver skills are lacking and what to focus on in future training sessions. In this case, it might be useful to provide safety training that coaches drivers on how to adjust their driving during specific weather conditions and telematics provides managers with the data they need to justify the added expense. It can also provide fleet managers with a Driver Safety Scorecard, which ranks drivers based on their on-road safety, so managers know exactly who on their team needs additional training and support.



Including telematics as a part of your safety program can also contribute to the prevention of incidents. Fleet managers can use telematics to assess the safety of a vehicle using preventative maintenance tools. They analyze data points to report on major vehicle components like battery life, tire pressure, and more. Having this information means being able to catch potential failures before they happen, keeping your drivers and others on the road safe.

Telematics provides real-time updates and alerts; in this case the fleet manager would have been informed of the collision immediately. This way, fleet managers have critical information about the circumstance without needing to rely on a driver's testimony hours after it took place.

The adoption of a telematics solution alone can greatly benefit fleet managers. Now, let's explore additional scenarios that provide even more context for fleet safety.

LEVEL 2: Adding cameras to the mix.

Dash cams not only add more context to the happenings in your fleet while drivers and vehicles are on the road, they also offer managers proof that they can use in case any challenges arise. Video proof can be used to validate driver testimony, be given to authorities after a collision, or be used in court during a legal process.

In our scenario, you'd be able to gather video or static images from the exact moment the other vehicle swerved into your driver's lane. This would be paramount evidence in an investigation and could help prove your driver's innocence without needing to go to court.

Telematics can pinpoint the exact moment of a collision or on-road event and generate a collision reconstruction report, including the vehicle's location history, collision data, speed profile, and accelerometer and RPM graphs. It can also provide one source of data for truth. Telematics will give you more precise data points around harsh braking or acceleration, but cameras provide undeniable evidence for seatbelt usage when using cab-facing dash cams.

Together, telematics gives you the *where* and *when*, while cameras give you the *what* and *how*.

LEVEL 3: Additional data analysis.

We've talked about how both telematics and cameras can make a difference when it comes to fleet safety, but there is an additional aspect that could be the ultimate determining factor in cutting down on collisions and other incidents.

Using data analysis to monitor, measure, and compare the data collected by a telematics solution can provide even more context. Using our example, you might start to notice that a lot of your drivers are involved in on-road incidents at this particular spot. You pull up similar incident reports to see how often these events are happening, check trip histories to see how often your drivers are using this road, and cross-check their scorecard ratings to ensure they are in good standing. As it turns out, this road actually has a blind turn and is not well maintained during the colder months. Using this information, you can plan an alternate route for your drivers that doesn't put them in danger.

Partnering with a telematics solution that has a large ecosystem of other fleets proves valuable when it comes to data analysis. It allows you to compare your safety ratings with other fleets and identify emerging training trends.

Having the data is only one piece of the puzzle, being able to analyze it and use it to make better decisions in the long run is the most important piece.





Transform your approach to fleet safety.

Adopting an integrated approach to fleet management allows companies to not only collect critical data but also put that data in the right context to make informed decisions. By leveraging contextual data and integrating advanced telematics, companies develop a deeper understanding of driver behavior, vehicle performance, and external conditions—creating a safer, more efficient fleet operation.



T-Mobile for Business helps Geotab deploy solutions to keep your fleet operations running smoothly, safely, and on budget. Our nationwide network provides the speed and capacity needed to transmit critical data and video from virtually anywhere in the US to the Geotab platform for consumption and evaluation. With more than a decade of connecting fleets like yours with the Geotab intelligent platform, T-Mobile has earned a reputation in the industry as a critical, reliable business partner. Our ultimate goal—deliver connected solutions and achieve better outcomes and return on investment for your business today and tomorrow.



Geotab is advancing security, connecting commercial vehicles to the internet, and providing web-based analytics to help customers better manage their fleets. Geotab's open platform and Marketplace allows both small and large businesses to automate operations by integrating vehicle data with their other data assets. Processing billions of data points a day, Geotab leverages data analytics and machine learning to help businesses improve productivity and enhance driver safety.

For real-life advice on how your fleet safety can accelerate your business, visit T-Mobile.com/Geotab.