


**BIG
BUS**

 INDUSTRY
PASSENGER TRANSPORT

 FLEET SIZE
68

BIG BUS COMPANY CONTINUES ITS FLEET SAFETY JOURNEY WITH SMARTDRIVE SYSTEMS

Big Bus Tours Ltd, the largest operator of open-top sightseeing tours in the world, has taken the next step in its ongoing commitment to road safety by investing in SmartDrive Systems' video-based driver risk management programme across its entire London fleet.

Big Bus Tours has installed SmartDrive's highest level of fleet protection, the SmartDrive® Assurance programme, in each of its 68 London buses. This combines forward-facing and interior cameras with a fully managed analysis service, as well as the SmartDrive Extended Recording option.

Although the driving environment is much slower and has different pressures for tour bus drivers than for service drivers, Big Bus Tours' drivers are nonetheless surrounded by vulnerable road users and are operating in a busy urban environment.

"We are very safety conscious," says Big Bus Tours' executive vice-president of operations Gerry Price.

"We believe SmartDrive's expert analysis of video-based driving events can help the company continue to reduce its work-related road risk. "We rank our drivers, fleets and cities by safety performance," says Price. "SmartDrive gives us another layer to our driver safety programme."

The SmartDrive system captures 'triggered' events, such as harsh braking or sudden course corrections, which causes 20 seconds of video to be captured,

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typically 10 seconds either side of the event. This is uploaded automatically via the cellular network, along with GPS positioning and base telematics data, to SmartDrive's own review centre, where it is reviewed by its highly trained safety team.

The footage is analysed against dozens of pre-determined 'observations' or driver behaviours and assigned a risk-score in line with Big Bus Tours' corporate policies, which is fed back to the company via a dedicated, secure on-line portal for use in driver coaching.

“The biggest flag for us is drivers using mobile phones. That’s probably true for every fleet but it’s exacerbated by the fact that our drivers are encouraged to move slowly and are often sitting in city traffic. Mobile phone use is the biggest issue we coach against.”

- Gerry Price, Executive Vice-President of Operations, Big Bus Tours

Critical events, such as high-impact collisions will trigger an immediate alert to relevant parties. Drivers can also manually trigger footage capture if necessary.

Big Bus Tours has used SmartDrive Systems' platform in its US fleet for three years, where it faces much higher insurance premiums than in the UK. Its US specialist in insurance and driver behaviour has worked with the SmartDrive system extensively and believes it is a distinct enhancement to the fleet's safety portfolio.



Despite Big Bus Tours' excellent safety record, the company is nonetheless often a target for fraudulent claims, which are hard to defend against without video footage. This is the second factor behind Big Bus Tours' decision to install the SmartDrive Systems programme.

“We have a big name on a big bus and so we are a target for people who make unrealistic or inaccurate claims. With the kind of objective insights the SmartDrive programme provides we can instantly disprove many of these,”

- Gerry Price, Executive Vice-President of Operations, Big Bus Tours

“We will likely break even on our investment with the SmartDrive system on the London fleet, simply by being exonerated on two or three minor insurance claims,” he concludes.

Although Big Bus Tours already receives a very competitive premium from its broker, the company believes the SmartDrive programme will save it considerably more in self-insured amounts and by reducing the frequency of claims.

Big Bus Tours has chosen to also implement SmartDrive Extended Recording, which gives them additional pre and post-event video insights to incidents and collisions. In their operating environment this means they can defend more easily, not only against incidents which are captured in the standard footage, but can also against claims where, in fact, no incident took place.

The interior-facing cameras, which give an unobstructed view of a driver's actions, are a valuable coaching tool.