Train Utility Truck Drivers With 21st Century Technology That Works

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Utility Truck Operator Challenges

Utility employees have potentially dangerous jobs while installing telephone lines, repairing downed power lines and performing maintenance for electric service, water, gas and communications while working from their vehicle—often in extreme weather conditions. The more utility vehicle operators drive, the more exposure your organization has for crashes. When you add distracted driving to that equation and the potential for crashes, costly lawsuits and personal injuries are even greater.

The Goal: Protect Your Fleet Drivers and Bottom Line with Effective Hazard Recognition Training

Driving accidents are preventable. It is not enough to have a list of the employees that received training—you must be certain they learned during training. Classrooms provide information, not training. Web-based courses demonstrate that someone can learn the answer and click the mouse—not quickly identify a hazardous situation at 45 miles per hour. If you want to be sure, you need to provide the most engaging user experience: interactive, hands-on simulation training. Simulation puts the students in dangerous situations and watches what they actually do, verifying competency.

Does Simulation Training Work?

Yes! Recent research has investigated the training benefits to corporate fleet drivers that driving simulators provide. There is compelling evidence that simulator-based instruction provides a high transfer of learning rate on new and experienced drivers. In addition, it has been proven that making

mistakes is a key dimension to learning. Flach et al. (2008) stated: "This is likely to be one of the values of simulators—they offer an opportunity to learn from mistakes in a forgiving environment."

Virtual training is more than just simulation. It is a progressive learning method that combines leading-edge graphics with fully interactive multimedia, providing the most effective learning experience possible.

Utility Fleet Case Study

Bright House Networks is the sixth largest owner and operator of cable systems in the U.S. and the second largest in Florida, with technologically advanced systems located in five states including Florida, Alabama, Indiana, Michigan and California. Bright House Networks serves more than 2.4 million customers who subscribe to one or more of its video, high-speed data and voice services. The company also offers a full suite of phone, Internet, Ethernet and cable television services to businesses of all sizes.

Bright House Networks is committed to improving distracted driving with its "Safety Solutions" driver safety program. It has 3,600 vehicles and 4,500 drivers that are trained as new hires and as refresher courses as driving incidents occur. Vehicle types include vans, F450 bucket/pickup trucks and Ford Transit trucks. Distraction is their number one issue and includes not only cell phones and texting but also laptops and in-vehicle electronics.

Virtual Driver Interactive Inc. (VDI), a provider of simulation training solutions for commercial and education applications, is working with Bright House Networks' Corporate Safety Department to reduce driving errors, save money, and, most importantly, save lives with its Virtual HD simulator.

"When we looked at the potential benefit to Bright House Networks of a new and creative way to address the challenge of distracted driving and the possible payoff, measured in terms of human life, property damage, operations hindrance and impact to brand name, it just made sense to add VDI's Virtual HD simulator to our safety program," said Jeff Spackman, Bright House Networks' director of Corporate Safety."

Benefits of Simulation and Virtual HD Training

Simulators today can transfer knowledge in a shorter time period using compelling technology to reinforce teachable moments:
• Multiple points of view,
• Using your own voice control to identify hazards in real-time,
• Slow motion,
• X-Ray (to see through an object blocking vision), and
• Ghosting (to play out what would have happened).

Only in simulation can employees practice techniques in a variety of real world situations that would be impossible to generate in a traditional, behind-the-wheel training course. They can train in multiple environments such as city, highway, commercial/residential and rural, and varying weather/time of day. The high-definition graphics provide a super high retention of lesson experiences.

VDI's Virtual HD voice integrated training portfolio is designed for corporate fleets of any size. Virtual HD is a voice controlled, interactive, simulation-based driver safety program designed to improve hazard

recognition skills, lower fleet accident rates and reduce distracted driving. This driver training program focuses on eliminating the primary reason why drivers become involved in a crash: a failure to recognize and react to hazardous driving situations.

Virtual HD has an entire lesson devoted to reducing distracted driving and includes reality and consequence videos proven to change driver behavior. In addition, it includes a black out technique to reinforce cognitive blindness that occurs when driving distracted. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), drivers make more than 200 decisions during every mile traveled. Drivers can't afford to be distracted.

Shorter Training Times, No Trainers, No Travel and Fewer Crashes

Using innovative training including simulation is the optimal way to engage drivers and teach them new concepts. Simulation provides the challenging training they desire in a controlled, safe environment. The result: reduced training costs, better drivers and a significant reduction in crashes.

About Virtual Driver Interactive

Virtual Driver Interactive (VDI) continuously enhances its product portfolio, resulting in technologically advanced, interactive and highly engaging driver training programs. From experienced corporate fleets to new teen drivers, VDI delivers effective driver safety training. By offering a wide range of system hardware options, VDI's customers can expect highly portable, affordable and effective solutions.

For more information about VDI or other driver safety products, click here to go to Utility Products' Buyers Guide.