



Safety Culture Transformation Nets Clear Results for Volkert, Inc.



Table of Contents

- Introduction 1
- Key Drivers for a New Approach to Telematics. 2
- Laying the Groundwork for a Safety-First Culture 3
- Key Considerations for Vendor and System Selection. 4
- Rollout and Early Implementation 5
- Using Data for Improvement 6
- Key Takeaways and Next Steps 8
- Appendix: AI Dashcams Communication 9



Introduction

Civil engineering firm Volkert, Inc., tripled in size between 2015 and 2024. But a costly challenge accompanied its explosive growth. As its vehicle fleet size and miles driven increased, so did its collision rate.

The firm's initially proposed solution – to offer employees stipends for using personal or rental vehicles – merely shifted the risk instead of reducing it. So, Volkert began considering a new telematics program.

Under the new program, Volkert has made stunning safety improvements. Today, the firm boasts a declining vehicle incident rate, even as its drivers continue to log more miles. Volkert's experience planning and implementing its new telematics program illustrates how a new, technology-driven initiative can drive profound change in commercial fleet operations when paired with a people-centric strategy.

Company Snapshot

- **Industry:** Civil Engineering, specializing in the design and inspection of public works projects
- **Annual Revenue:** Approximately \$327M
- **Operational Footprint:** 70 offices located primarily in the eastern half of the United States
- **Workforce:** Over 1,600 employees, with more than 900 authorized drivers
- **Fleet Scale:** 760 vehicles, mainly light-duty pickup trucks
- **Annual Mileage:** 14+ million miles per year
- **Vehicle Use:** Vehicles function as "mobile offices" for inspectors on diverse and often challenging project sites. Employees often perform administrative work in their trucks, requiring constant climate control
- **Telematics Provider:** IntelliShift software and hardware, GPS, road-facing dashcams, driver scorecard



Key Drivers for a New Approach to Telematics

Today, more than 900 employees drive 760 light-duty pickup trucks and SUVs over 14 million miles a year in 22 states for Volkert, which specializes in the design and inspection of major infrastructure projects.

Volkert's engineers and road infrastructure specialists do highly varied work. They can spend years on a single, multiyear highway project, or follow mobile crews to new job sites daily. In 2024, in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Volkert crews removed debris and assisted with clean-up in several southeastern states. Whatever the job, Volkert drivers rely heavily on their vehicles. They use them as mobile offices during the day and typically park them at home when off the job.

With a large fleet at the core of its business, Volkert had to change its ways. Rising collision rates and the shortcomings of legacy technology systems were the biggest factors motivating Volkert to rethink its approach to fleet safety.

Increases in Collision Rate, Risk, and Costs

The firm urgently needed to address its vehicle collision rate. The increase in collisions contributed to a high Experience Modification Rate (EMR) of 1.5, a critical metric that not only inflated Workers' Compensation insurance costs but also threatened the company's ability to compete for new contracts. The firm had a fairly robust safety program, but faced several barriers to making the needed changes.

Inconsistent, Fragmented Data

Fragmented data was a top issue. The firm was then using three different Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) telematics systems, which resulted in inconsistent data streams. Leaders were not able to compare vehicle performance metrics or define a consistent way to determine driver scores.

Without a clear, unified view into driver performance, Volkert had not developed a merit-based framework to incentivize behaviors that exceeded baseline compliance, nor did the firm formally recognize exemplary safety performance.

Ineffective Sticks, No Carrots

Instead of rewarding positive driver behavior, the legacy telematics system was wielded as a punitive tool, where in-vehicle monitoring devices, referred to internally as "gizmos," were installed in a driver's vehicle only after an incident occurred, as a form of punishment. This reactive, "stick"-based approach proved highly ineffective, particularly without any "carrots." It failed to drive meaningful behavior change and, worse, fostered significant resentment.

This perfect storm of escalating risk and the shortcomings of past fleet management initiatives compelled leadership to seek a new, holistic solution that could protect both their employee drivers and the company itself.

To catalyze much-needed change, the corporate safety team, headed by Austin Conrad, Vice President of Safety and Fleet, along with Charlie Capps, Corporate Fleet Director, aimed to integrate new technologies in ways that could result in measurable safety improvements, strong employee engagement, and increased employee trust.



Laying the Groundwork for a Safety-First Culture

Volkert's executive leadership understood that the success of a new telematics program depended on their ability to earn the trust and buy-in of the nearly 1,000 employee drivers the program would impact every workday. So, they placed empathetic change management at the heart of their implementation strategy.

As a critical first step, Volkert used input directly from drivers to inform how the program would function, rather than trying to get drivers on board with decisions leaders had already made. The corporate safety team held numerous town hall-style meetings across multiple job sites where employees could raise concerns and ask questions. Volkert learned in these meetings that drivers were most anxious about privacy: they did not want driver-facing cameras.

Volkert leaders also pointed to its Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) to communicate that every dollar saved on collision claims directly benefits the employee-owners themselves. Volkert considers its ESOP, established in 1975, as part of its deep-seated commitment to safety and quality – a corporate value Volkert has prided itself on since its founding in 1925.



Key Considerations for Vendor and System Selection

With vital driver input in hand, Volkert began its search for an integrated, user-friendly telematics solution to help leaders build a sustainable, trust-based system. The firm wanted a system with roadway-facing cameras only that did not record audio. Volkert also needed a vendor with a robust installer network, since it would not be able to equip the vehicles in such a large, highly distributed fleet itself. And, critically, Volkert sought to meet these needs with a single vendor. First, they needed a consistent, integrated data stream. Second, they wanted to avoid being shuffled between hardware, software, reseller, and installation partners whenever issues arose, as they had been with the legacy system.

Volkert selected Intellishift as its new vendor following a formal Request for Proposals (RFP). Intellishift already stood out when Volkert reviewed bidders'

cost proposals, and the vendor met other criteria, too. They offered dedicated project management and a national installer network, and controlled the entire product vertical – no more messy data, no more finger-pointing among vendors.

But Intellishift's biggest differentiators were flexibility and partnership. To help Volkert gain employee trust with the new program, the vendor fully redesigned the housing on its dashcam units – rather than just capping the lenses of driver-facing cameras – to make them physically incapable of recording inside a vehicle. This custom solution preemptively countered any potential concerns, showing that leadership took drivers' privacy seriously. Volkert valued the true partnership mentality that Intellishift demonstrated with its willingness to custom-manufacture units to meet the firm's unique needs.



Rollout and Early Implementation

Seamless installation and strategic communications contributed to a strong program launch. Volkert also leveraged the new system data to design a new performance incentive system and related disciplinary process.

IntelliShift completed installation in all Volkert vehicles a full two months ahead of schedule, helping Volkert minimize vehicle down time. Leaders gained widespread acceptance and support from drivers for the new program by highlighting the custom-designed cameras to alleviate any remaining privacy concerns. They also shared stories of program successes. For example, one driver received immediate assistance after hitting a deer by using the “panic button” on the dashcam, demonstrating the system’s value in protecting lone workers.

Driver Scorecard Provides Clear Performance Record

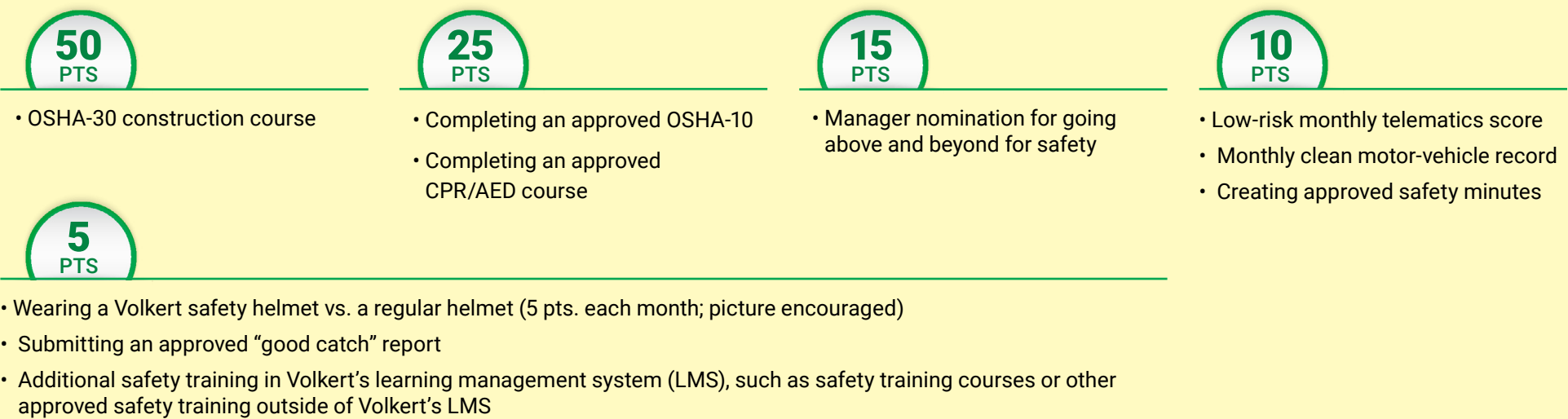
Volkert used its now-clearer system data as the basis for a comprehensive, new Driver Scorecard. The Scorecard, which captures key behaviors – such as speeding, harsh maneuvers, and seatbelt use – serves as the basis for a positive incentive system and a progressive disciplinary process for drivers with performance issues.

Drivers earn incentive points for strong telematics scores, completing extra training, and other positive safety behaviors (Figure 1). Drivers also earn points for submitting “Good Catch” reports, in which they proactively document near-misses and other context for incidents the system might flag, such as braking quickly to avoid a hazard. The safety team then reviews the corresponding video footage to share with the driver and supervisor as a positive example of defensive driving.

Drivers can redeem their points for prizes, and a monthly raffle system further encourages friendly competition and reinforces safe habits.

The Driver Scorecard also helps Volkert target high-risk drivers for support and disciplinary action. When a driver’s behavior is flagged as “high risk,” their supervisor is notified and must have a documented one-on-one conversation with the driver. If the behavior continues, a formal meeting is held with the employee, their supervisor, the Corporate Fleet Director, and a regional safety specialist for a more detailed intervention. This process has proven highly effective: very few employees remain in the high-risk category for long following this intervention.

Figure 1: Incentive-Based Safety Performance



Using Data for Improvement

Prior to launching its new program, Volkert's legacy systems collected data the firm found unusable, potentially creating risk without providing insights or building employee trust. Today, Volkert's integrated telematics program has enabled the kind of continuous improvement cycle that leaders envisioned. The technology provides clear data they use to inform constructive coaching and learning and, in turn, reinforces a positive, proactive organizational culture centered on the safety and well-being of every employee-owner.

Under the new program, drivers' performance has measurably improved. As a result, the firm's vehicle incident rate has significantly declined, even as miles driven continue to increase. In addition, video evidence has helped Volkert avoid costly liability and resolve claims faster.

Clear Data Enables Effective Coaching

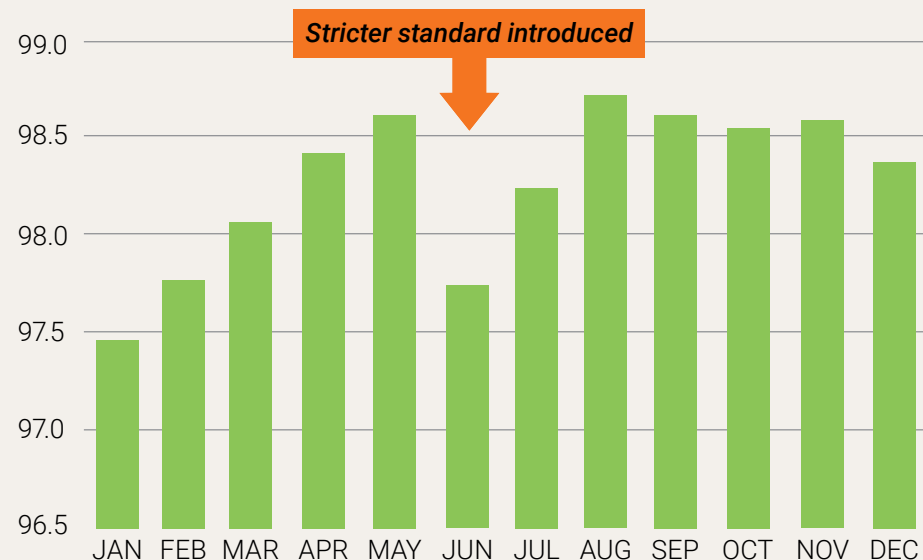
The new program's clear data helped Volkert take a fair and consistent approach to rewarding positive behaviors and correcting negative ones. The old telematics system flagged high-G force events but lacked contextual data, so that drivers were sometimes penalized for necessary safety maneuvers, such as avoiding pedestrians. Video from the new dashcams enables the fleet safety team to evaluate the visual context in these instances. This way, they can correct algorithm biases and ensure driver performance metrics are both accurate and fair.

Volkert's safety team has also used the data to uncover site-specific operational risks they can now coach drivers on. For example, the team realized that patterns of harsh acceleration and braking in the data pointed to project sites with

dangerously short highway merge lanes. These insights enabled them to raise drivers' awareness of those specific risks with targeted safety interventions.

After the program's scoring parameters were intentionally made stricter, initial driver scores decreased as expected. However, in the months that followed, scores began to progressively improve across the fleet (Figure 2). This trend demonstrates tangible, positive changes in driving habits as employees responded to the program's coaching, feedback, and incentive mechanisms.

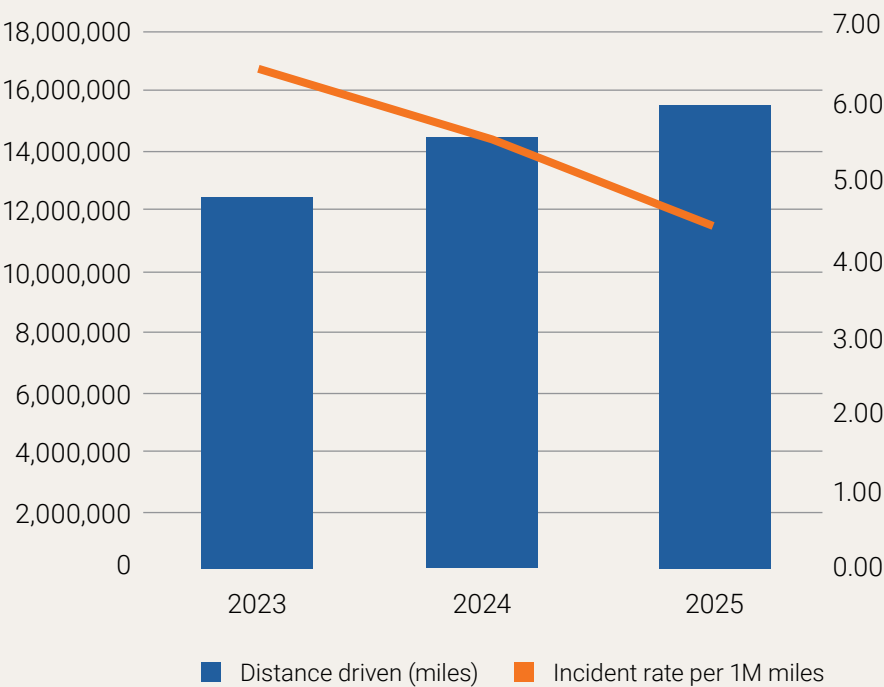
Figure 2: Effect of Stricter Scoring Parameters on Driver Scores (max. 100 points)



Significant Reduction in Incident Rates

Since the full implementation of the driver scoring, incentive, and disciplinary programs, the company has seen a measurable reduction in its motor-vehicle incident rate, even as miles driven continue to increase (Figure 3). These results demonstrate the program’s positive impact on employee safety and a corresponding reduction in roadway risk exposure.

Figure 3: Total Miles Driven and Incident Rate



Claims Management: Video Provides Clear Evidence and Faster Resolutions

Video evidence has revolutionized the company’s incident response process. Having immediate, indisputable visual context removes doubt, clarifies liability, and creates transparency for all parties involved.

“There have been instances in the past when we didn’t have the dashcams, unfortunately, and it cost our business money that we could have otherwise saved if we had clear and indisputable evidence of what actually took place.”

—Charlie Capps, Corporate Fleet Director

Drivers have become proactive in reporting incidents themselves – not only in “Good Catch” reports but also when they are at fault. In one instance, an at-fault employee driver proactively reported having been on their phone while driving when a collision occurred, which allowed the company to accept responsibility and settle the claim quickly and efficiently. In another case, video footage clearly showed another party running a stop sign, exonerating Volkert’s driver and saving the firm from significant liability. In both scenarios, the video accelerated the path to resolution.

Overall, Volkert drivers appreciate the insights the firm gains from the video evidence. To date, not a single existing employee has cited the dashcams as a reason for poor job satisfaction.

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

By treating the initiative with the strategic importance it deserved, Volkert transformed a significant operational risk into a powerful competitive advantage built on safety, accountability, and efficiency. For fleet professionals facing similar challenges, Volkert's experience offers valuable insights on how to avoid common pitfalls and maximize success and return on investment in a fleet safety program:

- **Seek driver input early:** Volkert recommends that leaders listen carefully to drivers' privacy concerns – and be prepared to make meaningful concessions to address them. Volkert found that drivers responded well when they communicated the “why” of the program, making clear how the new telematics program would help meet shared goals like personal safety and the financial well-being of all employees.
- **Consider vertical product integration:** Choosing a single partner responsible for hardware, software, and installation ensures total accountability and eliminates potential friction among vendors.
- **Develop a detailed installation plan:** Companies that will rely on telematics vendors for installation should outline clear expectations for minimizing vehicle downtime and require that the vendor identify a dedicated project manager to oversee the rollout. This builds operational credibility and prevents implementation hiccups from undermining the program's goals.
- **Build trust by consistently using a clear, single source of data:** Selecting a single, standardized aftermarket hardware platform was essential for Volkert to ensure that all drivers are being measured by the same yardstick. Consistent, reliable data serves as the foundation for its now-trusted program.
- **Offer carrots as well as sticks:** An effective program requires clearly defined processes for both positive reinforcement (incentives) and corrective action (coaching, training, progressive discipline).

The integrated telematics and dashcam system has acted as a powerful catalyst for organizational change, positively influencing driver accountability, operational efficiency, and the very fabric of the company's safety culture. As the firm enters its second century of operations, leaders are pursuing additional ways to deepen the program's impact:

- **Automated, event-based training:** The company plans to configure its system to automatically assign training modules to drivers based on specific flagged events, providing real-time, tailored coaching to correct behavior.
- **Certified in-cab coaching:** Volkert is working to certify its regional safety specialists as in-cab coaches, enabling them to conduct ride-alongs and provide direct feedback to employee drivers who need it most.
- **Reinforcing positive behavior:** The fleet team is creating a video montage of “Good Catch” moments captured by the dashcams to demonstrate the value of the telematics system in identifying examples of defensive driving and other desired behaviors.
- **Expanding operational use cases:** Volkert is also exploring how to further integrate the system into its daily functions, such as verifying roadway sign location and guardrail inspections.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** By adding an AI capability to dashcams, the firm aims to reduce false positives in event detection and analyze driver data for predictive risk modeling (see the downloadable template memo explaining the use of AI for fleet monitoring under Additional Resources).

These new efforts reflect Volkert's ongoing commitment to transforming data into actionable insights and embedding a safety-first mindset into every aspect of fleet operations.

Company vehicle drivers,

As we continue to prioritize safety within our fleet, we're excited to share an important initiative that will not only enhance the safety of our drivers but also empower each of you to drive with confidence and peace of mind.

We think of your vehicle as an extension of any work site or work zone, therefore, we are dedicated to making it a safe place for you to drive, work, and operate out of as part of your job.

We understand that the prospect of having AI video dash cameras in your vehicles may raise concerns or questions. We want to assure you that our primary focus is on your safety and well-being, and the implementation of these cameras is a proactive step towards ensuring the highest standards of safety and accountability across our fleet.

Here are some key points to consider:

1. Enhanced Protection on the Road:

- The AI video dash cameras are designed to provide an additional layer of protection for you and your fellow drivers on the road. By capturing footage of driving incidents and events, these cameras can help mitigate risks, prevent accidents, and provide valuable evidence in the event of an incident or dispute.

2. Driver Coaching and Training Opportunities:

- The footage captured by the AI video dash cameras can also be used as a valuable coaching and training tool to help drivers improve their skills, address unsafe driving behaviors, and promote safer driving practices. This not only enhances your own safety but also contributes to the overall safety culture within our organization.

3. Protection and Exoneration Against False Claims and Accusations:

- In the unfortunate event of a collision or incident, the footage recorded by the AI video dash cameras can serve as objective evidence to protect you against false claims, accusations, or liability. It provides an unbiased record of what occurred, helping to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.

4. Privacy and Confidentiality:

- We understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality, and we want to assure you that the footage captured by the AI video dash cameras will be handled with the utmost care and discretion. It will only be accessed and reviewed for safety and compliance purposes, and strict protocols will be in place to safeguard your privacy rights.
- The selected cameras are forward facing only and do not record audio.

5. Continuous Support and Communication:

- Throughout the implementation process and beyond, we are committed to providing ongoing support, resources, and open communication channels to address any questions, concerns, or feedback you may have regarding the AI video dash cameras.

Your input and feedback are invaluable to us as we strive to create a safer and more secure environment for everyone.

Our ultimate goal is to ensure that each and every one of you returns home safely to your families at the end of each shift. The introduction of AI video dash cameras is just one of the many ways we are working towards achieving our Mission Zero goal, and we sincerely believe that it will contribute to a safer, more secure, and more confident driving experience for all.

We appreciate your understanding, cooperation, and commitment to safety as we embark on this journey together. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the AI video dash camera initiative, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Safety & Fleet team.

Thank you,
Your Safety & Fleet Team