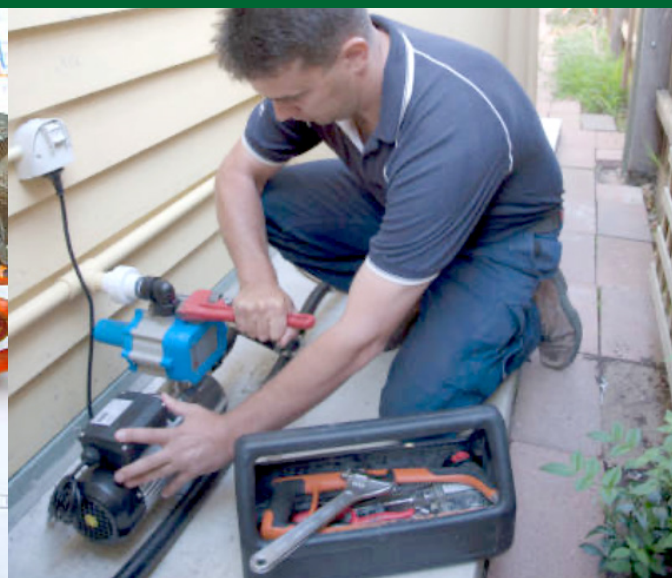
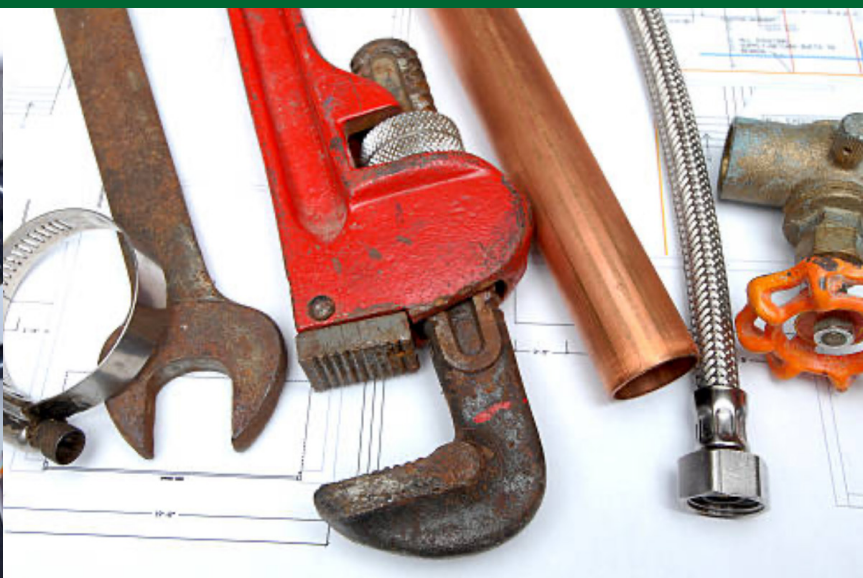




# Telematics Helps Plumbing and Pumping Company Engineer a High-Performance Safety Culture



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# Introduction

An exorbitant legal settlement was the last straw for Raider Rooter, a plumbing and pumping company based in Palm Beach County, Florida. The company had no video footage to prove a claim about a minor incident was grossly exaggerated—and, as a result, got stuck paying \$650,000.

Imagine the risk if any of the company's 70–80 vehicles could be involved in such a claim at any time. Raider Rooter technicians drive these vehicles between 500,000 and 800,000 miles a year. CDL-regulated, high-capacity vacuum trucks make up about 30 percent of the fleet; service vehicles like Sprinter and Transit vans comprise the other 70 percent. Leadership needed a solution to dramatically reduce risk and quickly realized a telematics system could fit the bill.

Here is a deeper look at the factors that led Raider Rooter to invest in telematics, how the company built a safety-first culture through new driver policies and programs, and how they now use system data for benefits they had not even envisioned when they started out.

## Company Snapshot

- **Business Focus:** Full-service plumbing, septic/grease pumping, lift station maintenance, installation of plumbing/piping systems
- **Location:** Palm Beach Co., Florida
- **Workforce:** 120+ drivers
- **Fleet Size:** 70–80 vehicles
- **Active Daily Deployment:** 50+ vehicles
- **Annual Mileage:** 500,000–800,000 miles
- **Fleet:** 30% CDL-regulated (such as 2,000- to 4,500-gallon pump trucks); 70% non-CDL vehicles (Sprinter and Transit vans, heavy-duty pickups)
- **Telematics:** Samsara hardware and software, GPS, driver alerts, outward/roadway-facing dashcams, driver scorecard



# Key Driver for Telematics Adoption: A Need for Better Data

In 2024, Raider Rooter's fleet grew substantially when it acquired another environmental services company in southeast Florida. This growth spurred the company to formalize its approach to fleet safety—and magnified existing needs for better fleet-related data.

Raider Rooter needed video evidence to defend from costly legal claims. They also needed evidence to provide customers with proof of service and improved fleet documentation for new insurance requirements.

Addressing the risks associated with legal claims is especially important in states that have reputations in the industry for high settlement costs and astronomical, “nuclear” jury verdicts. Florida, where Raider Rooter is based, is one such state. In this environment, any commercial vehicle could be a high-value target for legal claims, even in very minor incidents. In the settlement that cost Raider Rooter more than half a million dollars, its vacuum truck was moving less than 10 miles an hour and caused little physical damage. But, without video evidence, the company could not clearly disprove the claim.

Raider Rooter also needed a solution to address its sometimes “invisible” work. A customer returning home from work cannot see that the company had serviced the septic tank outside their home that day, for example. Customers occasionally questioned invoices when they were not certain a job had been performed. Without timestamped location data or photographic proof, Raider Rooter's staff could not verify technician movements or defend the integrity of their work. Leadership realized that telematics could raise employee accountability while also improving customer trust.

The final push to adopt telematics came from the company's transition to a captive insurance pool. Captive groups typically have much higher thresholds for safety documentation, and require more proactive risk mitigation, than traditional insurance models. The company's growth, combined with the need to reduce litigation risks, document proof-of-service, and meet the criteria for the captive pool changed Raider Rooter's calculus for the return on investment telematics could provide.



# Laying the Groundwork for a Safety-First Culture

To prepare for a successful telematics program rollout, Raider Rooter sharpened its fleet management policies and outlined a communications plan to address drivers' apprehension about the cameras the new system would have.

## Formalizing Fleet Safety Policy

The CEO, the Director of HR, and the Fleet Manager recognized that telematics data is only as effective as the policy framework that supports it. They developed formal fleet policies, codifying the expectations for safe driving behavior—along with incentives for excellent performance and consequences for non-compliance—for both CDL and non-CDL operators. The resulting new Driver Safety Handbook departed from the company's previous “mom-and-pop” operational style to establish a culture in which safe driving behavior was no longer a verbal recommendation but rather a condition of employment.

## Strategic Communications: Cameras Protect Drivers

Evan Warren, Raider Rooter's HR Director, knew that technicians are often sensitive to surveillance, and strategic communications were needed to counter drivers' fear of being watched. Warren and his fleet management colleagues intentionally framed the new dashcams as a “driver protection” initiative—a defensive shield for the technicians themselves, providing objective proof of professional conduct, rather than as a tool for catching mistakes. When the technicians understood that the dashcams could protect their livelihoods by exonerating them from false accusations, their initial apprehension dissipated. In addition, Warren emphasized that cameras would face only the roadway, not the drivers.

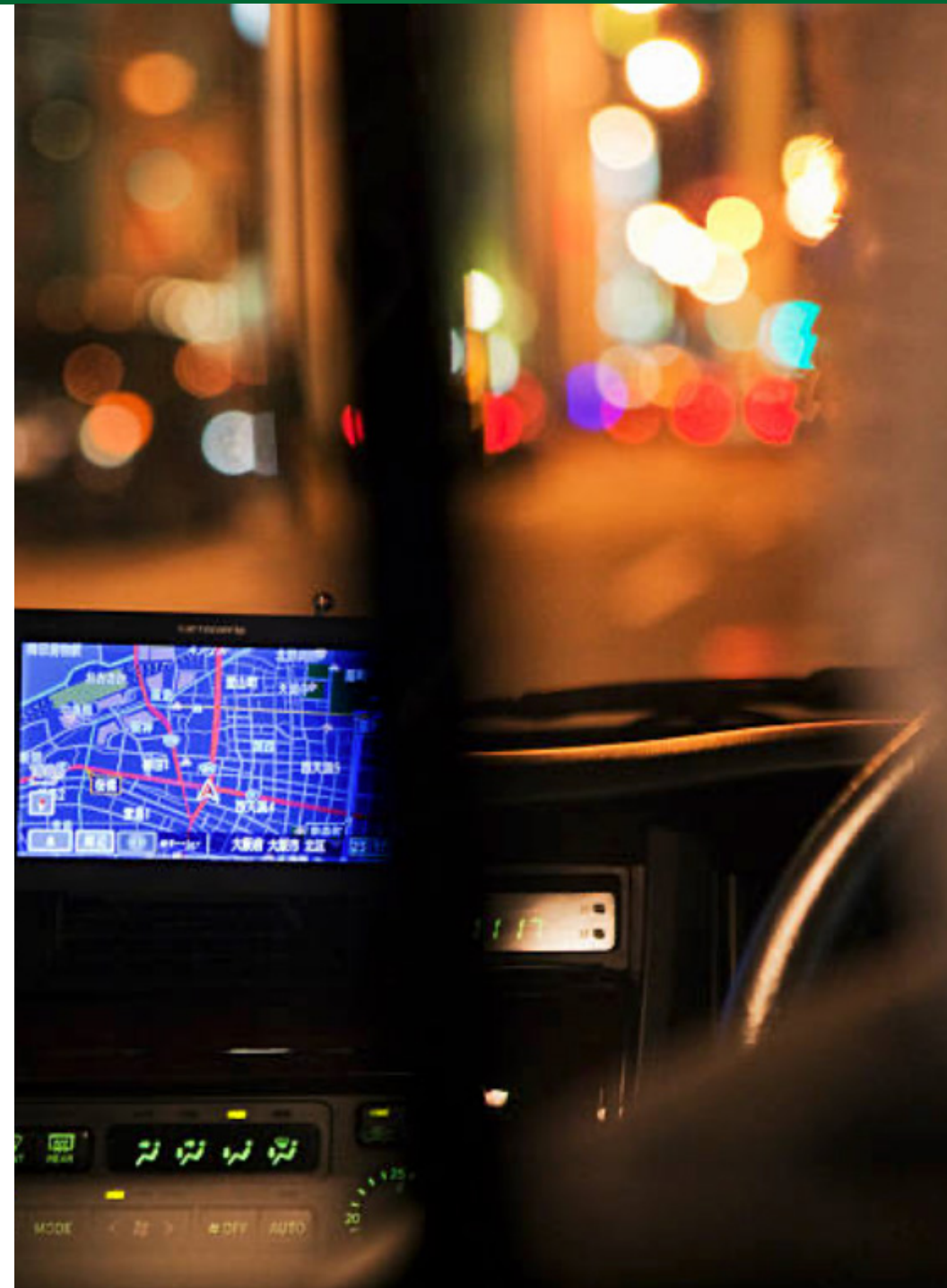


# Key Considerations for Vendor and System Selection

Raider Rooter knew from the start that cameras would be a “must have” feature of any new telematics system, given the company’s needs for video evidence. GPS tracking to gain real-time visibility into vehicle locations would also be key from proof-of-service and efficiency standpoints.

In addition, the company wanted clear driver scorecards to use in its new incentive and disciplinary programs. Beyond these requirements, the company simply sought an intuitive, integrated, and user-friendly system that was also cost-effective.

Raider Rooter ultimately selected Samsara based on results from a testing phase. Before committing, leaders strategically pilot-tested Samsara technology in about 10 vehicles to ensure it met their administrative and operational needs. The pilot confirmed that Samsara’s all-encompassing platform provided a seamless, user-friendly interface for real-time management of fleet vehicles and drivers.



# Rollout and Early Implementation

The same leadership team that developed the new fleet safety policies and oversaw the pilot also led the rollout. They approached implementation holistically, launching the hardware and software along with the new policies and incentive and coaching programs. By the end of the rollout, every asset in the fleet, from the smallest service van to the largest pump truck, was a node connected in a digital safety network.

The platform quickly became fully integrated into the daily rhythms of the business. This technological foundation enabled Raider Rooter to leave behind its reactive approach—investigating safety incidents only after they occurred—and reinforce a new, proactive model of coaching and preventative safety.



# Using Data for Improvement

Over time, Raider Rooter's telematics platform began to deliver a multi-dimensional return on investment that exceeds the initially envisioned benefits. The technology—and accompanying policy and training changes—helped the company engineer a shift in organizational behavior, turning raw telemetry into actionable intelligence. This shift has not only insulated the company from financial risk but has also elevated the quality of service provided to its commercial and residential clients. Thanks to telematics, Raider Rooter has also reduced its fuel costs and vehicle downtime.

## Radically Lower Financial Exposure

Raider Rooter has met its first goal with its new telematics system: to dramatically lower financial exposure in the event of a collision. High-definition video from its outward-facing cameras enables the company to defend its technicians against false accusations of distracted driving or negligence, directly preventing the type of extremely costly legal settlements that previously threatened the firm's stability. Mitigating risk in this manner in turn keeps insurance premiums manageable and the company's reputation intact.

## Stronger Safety Culture

Raider Rooter leaders have seen huge improvements in safe driving behavior with real-time, AI-informed alerts and telemetry. Drivers receive notifications for specific high-risk behaviors—such as harsh braking, harsh turns, harsh acceleration, rolling stops, and speeding—and can self-correct in the moment. The Fleet Manager reviews these safety-critical events daily to identify patterns of risky behavior. This proactive monitoring, combined with quarterly safety meetings, has created a culture of consistent driver vigilance.

A cornerstone of the safety improvement is Raider Rooter's "Coaching and Incentives" model. Each month, the company generates safety scores (ranging from 0 to 100 points) based on the system's driver scorecard. The top five performers receive a \$100 "Rockstar" bonus to celebrate their excellence. Conversely, the 10 worst performers are brought in for targeted coaching. The Fleet Manager and HR Director use these sessions to identify the root causes of repeat offenses. While repeat offenders can face progressive discipline, including formal write-ups or suspensions, the primary focus remains on behavior modification (Figure 1). This approach has fostered a new, safety-first team culture among technicians who previously operated with a more individual mindset.



Perhaps the company's most impactful training innovation has been the use of its own dashcam footage—anonymized clips of actual incidents involving company drivers—in its quarterly safety meetings. When technicians see a collision involving a truck they recognize, driven on a route they frequent, the impact is visceral. By following these clips with a transparent breakdown of the associated legal and insurance costs, leadership provides the “shock value” necessary for drivers to internalize the message. Leaders report that this internal transparency has been a powerful tool for reinforcing a strong safety culture.

### Service Verification and Dispute Resolution

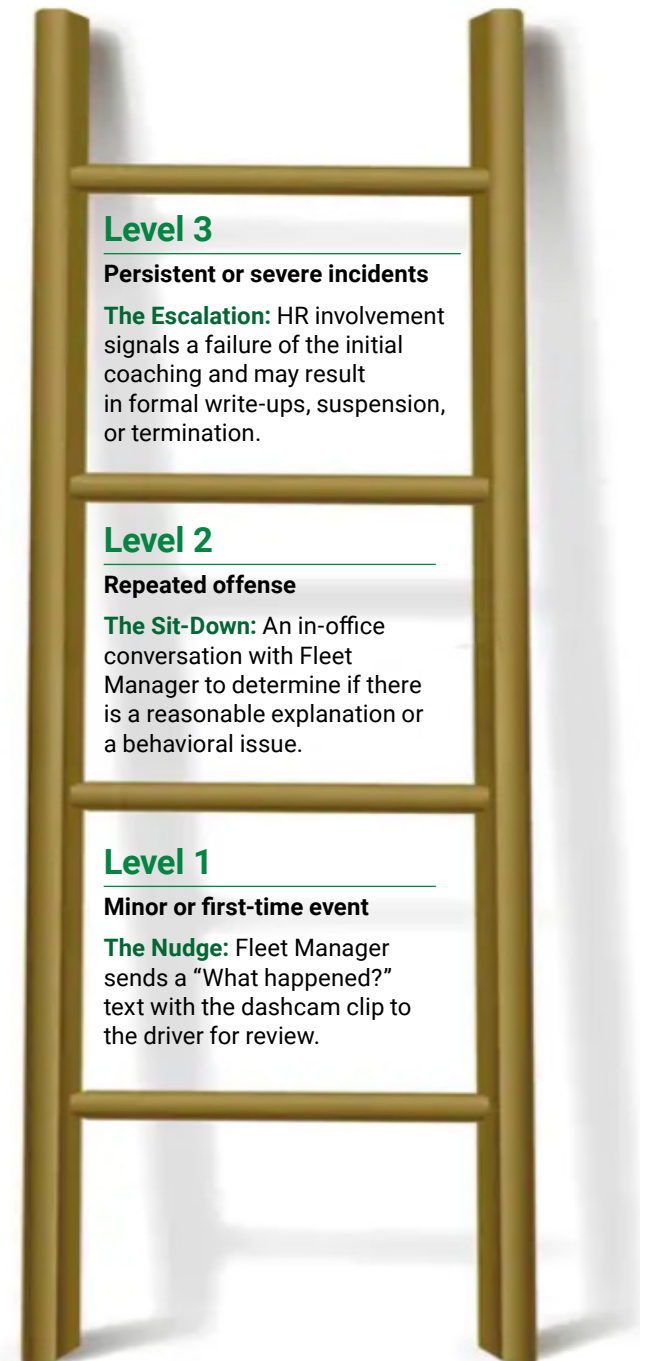
Telematics has also met Raider Rooter's initial goal to offer customers clear proof of service. The dispatch team can now produce a report showing the exact arrival and departure times for any service call by using GPS “breadcrumbs” and timestamped photo evidence. Leaders consider this transparency a competitive advantage because it demonstrates the company's integrity and accountability in every service call.

### Idling Management and Asset Longevity

Reducing idling time was not a top goal for Raider Rooter when the company first selected its telematics system. Today, however, leaders consider this operational efficiency gain a top benefit.

To educate drivers on the true cost of leaving a vehicle running—both in terms of fuel consumption and mechanical wear on expensive assets, such as a pump truck with a GVWR of 66,000 pounds—management implemented idling monitoring with a strict, 20-minute threshold. By reducing excessive idling, the company has lowered its fuel costs, cut emissions, and extended the preventative maintenance lifecycle of the fleet, ensuring higher uptime and productivity.

**Figure 1:**  
*The Coaching Ladder*



## Next Steps: Expanding Video Evidence and Asset Tracking, Adding Driver App

Raider Rooter leaders understand that they must keep innovating to keep reducing risk, especially given that the chance for vehicle incidents grows as the company's fleet grows. By staying ahead of the technological curve, and by cultivating a culture where excellent driver safety confers "Rockstar" status, the company can bolster its long-term resilience. Raider Rooter's commitment to a continuous improvement mindset drives its ongoing investment in the technology and the people that power its success.

As the company looks to the future, it plans to add driver-facing cameras in all vehicles, install asset-trackers on valuable equipment, and train its technicians on the system's app.

Cameras that face both drivers and the roadway represent an annual investment of \$8,000–\$10,000. Especially considering the potential cost of a single legal claim, this cost seems reasonable for the level of risk mitigation the cameras provide. Driver-facing cameras will add an additional layer of protection, since footage can prove that drivers were not distracted, were wearing seatbelts, and were fully engaged when an incident occurred.

Raider Rooter is also exploring how it can use its telematics system to further streamline operations and protect its fleet by adding asset trackers to plumbing equipment, heavy machinery, and specialized trailers. By centralizing asset tracking, Raider Rooter can ensure that expensive tools are used efficiently and recovered quickly if misplaced or stolen.

Additionally, the company is examining having its technicians use Samsara's mobile app for digital vehicle inspections and logging hours of service. Moving these functions to a digital platform will save time on paperwork and allow for real-time communication between the field crews and the maintenance shop, further reducing vehicle downtime.

Companies who are not yet using telematics can learn a good deal from Raider Rooter's example. Its leaders took a holistic approach to telematics, developing a robust fleet management framework, transparent incentive and accountability policies, and a powerful narrative of employee driver protection. The company's telematics use now empowers its workforce, verifies professional integrity, and provides the evidence necessary to defend the company's legacy. Other fleet leaders can follow Raider Rooter's model to build resilient and high-performing fleets and to protect their most valuable assets: their drivers, their hard-earned reputation, and their bottom line.

### Key Takeaways

- **Cultivating a sense of shared concerns:** Sharing the "scary" numbers (such as large settlements or the cost of downtime) with drivers reveals the business realities that inform management decisions and creates a shared sense of urgency.
- **Telematics data as a safety net:** Managers must frame telematics as a tool for driver exoneration. The system's primary value is to "have the driver's back" when their professional license is on the line.
- **Tiered approach to accountability:** Effective organizations use a tiered approach where HR intervenes only when positive incentives and coaching fail. This reinforces the Fleet Manager's authority and preserves HR's role for high-stakes disciplinary action.