

Telematics solution to bus safety

THE recent spate of horror bus crashes on South African roads has left many South Africans querying why so many people are dying on our roads and the role of bus operators in road safety.

A *Carte Blanche* investigation on bus safety has once again focused on a possible reduction of the speed limit applicable to buses, more stringent roadworthy tests as well as the dangers of drowsiness among bus drivers.

MIX Telematics, a global leader in the efficient and effective management of mobile assets, believes companies operating in the bus and coach market in South Africa need to invest more in fleet management solutions to solve safety issues.

Gert Pretorius, managing director of MIX Telematics (Enterprise), says that these solutions are already well entrenched across the UK, Europe and the rest of the world and with an installed base totalling many thousands of vehicles, MIX Telematics is the leading provider of fleet management solutions in the bus and coach sector.

David Brown, managing director Surface Transport, Transport for London, highlights the value of implementing such a solution.

"This is an initiative all bus operators should look at. It helps drivers do their job, improves cus-

tomers care and ultimately will save the company money," said Brown.

"Telematics has the potential to fundamentally change the way in which fleets are managed," said Pretorius. "But locally, the integration of telematics into fleet management has been far slower than in the rest of the world.

"Commercial telematics solutions have proven themselves as tools for fundamentally changing the way fleets are managed. They are not potential changers, they are proven changers."

Given the importance of not only passenger safety, but also on-time delivery and the high cost of fuel, knowing exactly where vehicles are and monitoring their drivers seems like a definite advantage.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of telematics to fleet operators is the improved security it provides.

Pretorius says fleet management solutions, designed specifically for this sector, can substantially reduce accident rates and enhance the overall passenger experience and safety.

Few operators appreciate the significant impact driver behaviour has on safety and operating expenses.

The in-cab display from MIX Telematics provides an ideal solution. Located on the dashboard it rates driver performance according to five key areas including harsh

acceleration, harsh braking, excessive idling, over revving and over speeding.

"The beauty of this feature is that it acts like a permanent in-cab trainer providing the driver with continuous feedback, which helps him to correct his driving immediately," said Pretorius.

This in turn is linked to the FM Communicator, MIX Telematics' flagship onboard computer, which records all driver behaviour and rates this in a report. Information



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about the improvement in a company's fleet can be viewed in real time from any internet-connected computer.

MIX Telematics is one of the first companies to be able to directly 'plug' into the CANbus of buses.

"Through telematics we can minimise expenses, while improving safety and customer comfort too," said Pretorius.

