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## Watch out

The other day, a haulier friend was showing me some footage of a collision taken by his on-truck camera: a passenger car ran into the back of the lorry, and the footage showed the huge kick caused by the impact. Shocking stuff, and this was pretty tame as collisions go.

There are too many road accidents: 186,000 involved injury in 2015, according to DfT. Perhaps automation technology, in the form of driver assistance, has the potential to reduce the risk of collisions. On that front, it was interesting to hear that UK platooning trials are to begin soon (see p5).

Until accidents are eliminated, cameras are likely to continue to grow in the haulage industry. My buddy was eager to show off the footage partly because he had just invested a large sum in equipping the fleet (of artics) with camera systems; this footage was, in a sense, the payoff. After the police leave the scene, it will help defend the company during the claims settlement process. Based on his anecdotal evidence at least, it is working; the company's insurance premiums are coming down, because the cameras help the firm to demonstrate a lower financial risk profile (see also p47).

The sad thing is that fitting cameras is a tacit admission, not of guilt, but of the prevalence of accidents. No one would invest in a camera if they had never had an accident.

Camera footage can also be misleading. For example, there was another clip doing the rounds recently on the internet, of a collision between a lorry and a bicycle in London. In the video, the lorry is shown drifting over toward the kerb from the right-hand side until its front near corner collides with a cyclist (who is not hurt). It did not look like the truck driver saw, or could see, the cyclist. Was this evidence in favour of Transport for London's coming Direct Vision standards?

Not so fast. The next day I saw some earlier footage. It showed that, before the collision, the lorry was held by a red light at a junction. Next to it was a left-turn-only lane, where the cyclist had also stopped. When the light turned green, the biker carried straight on, despite the road markings. No wonder the lorry driver was surprised.

The moral is that traffic videos from vehicle-mounted cameras should be as long as possible - let's say at least a minute before the incident - to record the full story.

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