

Trackers could curb errant driving

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TECHNOLOGY is increasingly becoming the preferred means of changing driver behaviour as more people appear to be flouting the rules of the road resulting in deadly collisions.

In the wake of two deadly accidents on the Moloto Road, in which 14 people died, Putco has announced it intends installing fleet management technology on its buses – 500 of which operate on the Moloto Road.

Several vehicle tracking companies in South Africa offer fleet management solutions to track a driver's behaviour in real time.

Tracker spokesman Gareth Crocker said the technology can provide almost immediate notifications to a manager or fleet controller which highlights issues such as over-speeding and harsh braking. Commuters who use Putco have highlighted speed as a major contributor to incidents on the road. Some have claimed to have pleaded with drivers to slow down.

Crocker said speed limit parameters could be set for certain roads.

"If the driver then exceeds the limit the manager can be contacted who, in turn, can contact the driver directly through either his cellphone or a voice kit to correct the behaviour," he said.

Crocker said "driver scorecards" can also be established which measure the individual driver performances against certain measurable parameters.

He said the scorecard applies certain weightings to certain driving offences and measures can then be taken to correct the driver's behaviour.

Crocker said the technology allowed managers and fleet controllers to access "live" and "historic" information on which to base training and corrective decisions.

Putco spokesman Raphiri Matsaneng said the company's goal was to change driver behaviour as opposed to initiating punitive measures against drivers.

Automobile Association

spokesman Gary Ronald said he supported the idea but the technology was only as effective as the fleet manager controlling it.

"It can be a very useful tool especially if drivers are aware that they are being monitored. If there is no recourse (to errant driver behaviour) it will not be effective.

"The AA supports technology to manage fleets. Not only does it enable companies to manage their drivers better, they can also monitor consumption and that has implications on emissions," he said.

● Sapa reports human error was partly to blame for the collision between two Shosholoza Meyl passenger trains on Monday in the North West, the train company said yesterday.

However, Shosholoza Meyl said this was only according to a preliminary internal investigation. The final report would be tabled by the Railway Safety Regulator.

One person died and 107 were injured in the accident.