

Go Ahead London invest in SmartVision for TfL services.



Highlights

- SmartVision CMS now installed on 62 vehicles at Go Ahead London's Northumberland Park depot
- Installed on to new vehicles as part of continuing innovation from the capital's largest operator
- SmartVision improves safety by enhancing the driver's view

Customer requirements

"The inspiration came from my own vehicle," comments Richard Harrington, Engineering Director for Go Ahead London. **"A lot of cars have reversing cameras on them nowadays and buses have had them for nearly 15 years, it was the natural progression to use cameras to give drivers further improved vision of their surroundings. It's good to innovate ahead of the consumer vehicle market and I wanted to be able to deliver that improvement for our drivers."**

Richard has worked in the bus industry for 35 years, working his way up from an apprentice to his current post of Engineering Director in 2011 and his responsibilities extend beyond engineering for the largest Operating Company in the UK including compliance, safety standards and working with Unite the union. Through his role, Richard strives to deliver innovation in a pragmatic, and practical manner, implementing systems that make sense to the business, the environment and of course, Go Ahead's passengers.

He oversaw the migration to the first fully-electric depot in Waterloo in 2016, which has since contributed over 3 of the 7 million emission-free miles to the capital that Go Ahead London has now provided and he continues to lead innovation with the electrification of Northumberland Park, Camberwell and other depot upgrades.

His multi award-winning depots would also be the site for the next innovation Richard would bring to the capital, SmartVision Camera Monitoring System (CMS) the digital wing mirror replacement.

With that aim in mind, Richard engaged with bus manufacturers to see what could be offered.

Solution and technology

With the start of TfL's Vision Zero action plan fast approaching, which will aim to remove all deaths and serious injuries from London's transport network by 2041, 21st Century had been working with manufacturer Alexander Dennis (ADL) to bring SmartVision to vehicles since 2017. Both parties undertook a large amount of work to homologate the solution to the entire ADL range. SmartVision was the first R46 CMS available that is VCA-approved for use on the UK's roads.

The SmartVision solution dramatically improves the driver's view, using high-definition cameras instead of mirrors to help reduce incidents and accidents.

“ SmartVision has been positively received by our drivers and performs well and as such currently remains on my vehicle specification ”

Richard Harrington
Engineering Director
Go Ahead London



SmartVision is now installed on over 100 vehicles throughout Go Ahead London's fleet

Solution and technology continued

The cameras are mounted externally on the vehicle within low-profile, weatherproof housings and deliver images to high resolution in-cab mounted displays. The displays provide superior Class II and Class IV wide-angle views to the driver, compared to standard external mirrors.

Cameras adjust automatically to maintain image quality in all lighting conditions, removing glare from the sun during the day and from headlights at night. Software loaded on to the displays removes distortion from raindrops or dirt on the lens, giving drivers an improved view of their surroundings at all times and, if the driver wishes, they can adjust the brightness.

The solution is part of TfL's wide-ranging action plan and will soon be mandatory on all new tendered routes throughout the nation's capital and whilst over two-thirds of SmartVision systems installed have been within London, operators throughout the UK are looking to enhance the view given to their drivers and improve the safety of their services.

Delivery

SmartVision is now fitted on 62 of the vehicles based at Northumberland Park with more on the way as the diesel vehicles are replaced with electric ones. Go Ahead London now have over 100 buses fitted with SmartVision across 5 of its depots.

"As with any change as fundamental as this, it is essential to get the support of the unions when adopting new technology. They are a voice for the driver and it is important that they are listened to with any issues they raise noted and where relevant acted on; it will ultimately give you a better solution. In the case of SmartVision, the transition has been excellent." Richard comments. "We have over 6500 drivers operating in London and engagement is essential with the Union. 21st Century have been incredibly supportive delivering presentations and training on the solution."

The solution itself has also seen some success in preventing damage. Tree strikes, where large branches get trapped in mirror arms were previously liable to cause major damage to a vehicle, are now mainly relegated to small scrapes, if they even occur at all.

Connected systems for connected journeys

Delivery continued

Richard goes on to say, “We of course have to monitor any new technology or solution that we put into our fleet and continually review our decision to select those systems for new buses based on performance and reliability. SmartVision has been positively received by our drivers and performs well and as such currently remains on my vehicle specification.”

With route contracts within TfL lasting 5 years with a possible 2-year extension before a vehicle sees its mid-life refresh, vehicles in London can be up to 14 years old. The median age of Richard’s fleet is 5 years and so there is a desire to achieve retrofit approval from the Department of Transport and the DVSA. “I look forward to further developments to SmartVision.” Richard finishes, “I have already been impressed with version 2, which provides drivers with a digital overlay to give them context as to the position of the bus through the enhanced view in the monitors on both sides.”

“It was the natural progression to use cameras to give drivers further improved vision of their surroundings.”

Richard Harrington
Engineering Director
Go Ahead London



SmartVision:

- » Reduces collision risk between mirrors and road users, street furniture and trees.
- » Increases drivers visibility of Class II and Class IV views
- » Removes sun reflection and light glare
- » Improves visibility at night & in wet conditions.

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