

## Let's Talk Fleet Risk - Episode 12

### Leadership in road risk management - do you pick up the phone?

#### Laura Moran, TVL Group

**Simon:** Welcome to Let's Talk Fleet Risk - a podcast for those who manage drivers and their vehicles and want to reduce road risk in their organisation.

30 vans are stolen each day which is a 45% increase over the last 4 years plus over £60million in lost tools and other items. My guest today is Laura Moran, MD at TVL Group which is the UK specialist for commercial vehicle security products and a tier 1 OEM supplier to some of the biggest van manufacturers.

**Simon:** Welcome Laura. I'd like to cover 2 topics – why van security is part of driver risk management and what employers should be doing about it, and also, as the MD of a business yourself how important leadership is in driver risk management.

Now I mentioned the statistics regarding stolen vans and content theft which I imagine would represent a huge amount of cost and disruption to any business. Could you talk us through the most common types of incidents and the business disruption these incidents cause?

**Laura:** Sure – you mentioned statistics around vehicle theft and contents theft. I think the majority of what we are seeing and some of the survey statistics show that it's tool theft which is 67% content stolen from vehicles. There's some other research from the Federation Master of Builders across their membership, showing that 51% of their members have had vans broken into and tools stolen. It's a hot topic. Unfortunately, vehicle crime is linked to the economy. When there is high unemployment, you see a rise in vehicle crime. What we do have now is the cost-of-living issue which is also fuelling vehicle crime. It is on the increase. In terms of the disruption it causes it's a very costly inconvenience too, and what we see is where it's independent traders – builders, plumbers etc, the self-employed guys – they come to us when their vehicles have been attacked, their tools stolen – it's their livelihood so they can't work and they can't earn money. They need to repair the vehicle so it really is costly and in terms of the value of the contents stolen the figures we've had show the average cost of the contents stolen is just over £4000. It really does cause a lot of disruption to people's livelihoods

**Simon:** I guess there's an increased cost of insurance for those people but even one-man bands, contractors, many of those will work as contractors to larger companies, part of a larger company's supply chain so it still has a knock on to a bigger organisation as well.

**Laura:** Absolutely – it's a costly inconvenience across all van fleets. The major van fleets are using contractors on service levels etc so they will have penalties involved if they don't have a van that's operational. Financial penalties in addition to the actual theft of tools and vans.

**Simon:** I understand you've launched a campaign called 'Tell TVL'

**Laura:** It's an initiative we launched last week – it's something we've been working on for a number of months now. The police in terms of their crime reporting, they have very basic crime reporting codes. If you have your tools stolen it will go down as theft of contents from a motor vehicle. And that could be a pair of sunglasses, or it could be £5K worth of tools from a van. They don't have the granular detail. There's a lot of campaigning at the moment to increase the crime reporting codes for better intel. That's the challenge.

You've also got 43 regional police forces and there's differences in the way they all report so there really isn't a national picture on the problem of vehicle crime. We've worked with a number of police forces, great cooperation and engagement. They asked us if we could provide some of this intel. We see the customers who have had vehicle break ins and we engage with the major fleets who talk to us about their security requirements and share with us new forms of attack and that's critical in picking up new trends and methods of entering a vehicle. In addition, we also have an informal network of the big van fleet managers, and if one of their vehicles get attacked, they will share it with other van fleet managers. The initiative is around bringing together all of that and creating a national picture of what's happening with vehicle crime. It's an online community where you can go on and report what's happened in terms of vehicle or contents theft – you still have to report it to the police but we've worked with the police in terms of the data and it's backed by the National Business Crime Centre and has backing from the Home Office.

You can 'Tell TVL' more details about the incident – we don't collect personal data. We simply get data on the incident itself. We will then share it with the police in terms of their intelligence, so they get more granular data. If you become a registered user of 'Tell TVL' we will send you vehicle crime insights and we do heatmapping to show hotspots as well as alerts if there are new trends or particular hotspots.

That's our plan – it's an online community to fight back against vehicle crime. Our message from TVL is we don't want our customer's vehicles to be broken into so if we can provide intelligence on how to avoid that happening then that's a good thing and we're arming them with the information to try and safeguard their livelihood.

We will be sending crime prevention advice and the National Business Crime Centre; we will host their advice and push it down with the insights so that the van operators have everything they need in terms of trying to secure their livelihoods

That's Tell TVL – it's in its early stages. We will be doing some PR around it and we have some good traction. We are already seeing our first crime incident reports coming through and we're building our registered user database so I'm very optimistic about it. It will help prevent crime hopefully. That's the primary objective and it will always be free. The crime insights will be free and we will never market to any user.

**Simon:** It sounds like an excellent campaign - where can people go to find out more?

**Laura:** website address - [tellTVL.co.uk](http://tellTVL.co.uk) – the website's there. You can sign up as registered user if you want to receive the crime insights. It's very new so until we get meaningful data those crime insights won't be going out just yet, and you can report an incident on there as well.

**Simon:** Great – we'll put a link in the show notes for anyone who wants to find out more.

Where do you see vehicle security fitting into overall management of work-related road risk?

**Laura:** The thing with vehicle security is it isn't just about securing and protecting the vehicle and the contents. What we do know, working with many of the large parcel delivery companies, they will only secure the vehicle to a certain level. If they go beyond that they have realised they put the driver at risk. If they make it too difficult for thieves, they risk their drivers so that's the balance. You need to protect your assets and certain fleets are more at risk than others. Your baker and your florist are perhaps not as much a target for contents theft as a builder, utility company and you're carrying tools, that puts that vehicle more at risk. Equally the parcel delivery companies, people know there's a lot more vans on the road carrying valuable items, so they are also a target. It becomes about the driver as well depending on what is being carried in the vehicle.

**Simon:** So, it's not just incidents of theft overnight, it's also while the driver is with the vehicle or just temporarily away from the vehicle on someone's doorstep?

**Laura:** Unfortunately, we do hear of incidents when the vehicle is attacked when the driver is with the vehicle. It's getting the balance right between the level of protection and not placing the driver at risk.

**Simon:** What would be your main tips for business owners and safety managers on where to start with this.

**Laura:** Some of this in is how the driver responds – if attacks occur while they are with the vehicle, my advice would be let them take it, succumb to it. That comes down to their fleet risk policy. In terms of safeguarding that driver, let the thieves have access and safeguard themselves.

**Simon:** Moving on. Let's talk about how TVL manages road risk. Can you give us a brief overview of your fleet and what sort of journeys your drivers undertake?

**Laura:** We operate a fleet of about 40+ vans so our mobile engineers are travelling nationwide, doing van accessories and fitting vehicle security, they operate every day. In terms of how we manage road risk, when I joined, we already had a driver policy and we managed and reviewed speeding and driver behaviour, and we have now updated and refreshed that policy. You need to take it out and look at least every 12-18 months because so much changes. We've updated that driver policy. We have telematics on the vehicle which gives us speeding reports which are reviewed on a daily basis, and we get a weekly summary and a driver's league table. We also have drivers completing daily fleet checks and we get alerts when they haven't been done.

We also have some software that will prevent them from moving onto a job if they haven't done their daily fleet check. We're trying to automate compliance as much as we can. Aside from the automation, you can have the best policy in the world, you can have telematics, all the reporting in the world, but unless you can get employee engagement it's not effective as it could be and I think that's what I've focussed on. Making sure our drivers understand why we have all of this – not to make their life difficult or to add work – for their own health and safety. It fits with our culture. We look after our people, and we want to make sure they are safe on the road so its about bringing those policies to life, so they don't just become tick box exercises. The drivers realise they are being looked at the highest level. I keep an eye on them – we have HR and compliance, but I keep a close eye on driver behaviour and road risk.

**Simon:** You're getting daily, weekly reports – do they come directly to you or to a fleet manager? How important is that data to you and how do you oversee that with your team to identify trends?

**Laura:** I see the summary – a monthly summary – so someone is looking at it daily and I will look at the monthly summary in terms of the league table, who's speeding etc and at that point they have had discussions in the HR process and what I will then do is pick the phone up and talk to them. They know I recognise they are top of the speeders list and that's not where I want them to be – the reason we are doing it is to keep them safe. That does tend to drive behaviours. One phone call and the whole team generally know. For them to know I look at this stuff is important and getting to understand why I'm looking at it because I want them to be safe. It's driving the message home.

**Simon:** I think that's a really good example of getting involved because one of the things we try to get across to MDs and CEOs of other businesses who maybe are starting their journey of road risk management of how important it is to have that top down commitment to managing road risk and to discuss these things and look at reports at board level on a regular basis. What would be your message to other business owners on how important that type of insight is?

**Laura:** I would say critical. I do not want to have any of our employees involved in a road accident that we could have done something to prevent. That's a responsibility as a leader that you need to accept. You do have a responsibility – I am accountable for that so I want to make sure we have a really good road risk policy so we don't have incidents, especially ones that could have been prevented. In terms of the metrics that come out – the human costs is my primary concern, but actually, by having a really good road risk policy what we have seen in terms of the financial costs is that our incident rate is reducing and our fuel rate is reducing – we're getting better fuel efficiency – it's a really good message to send to our people and enforces the culture of our business which is we want to make sure you are safe – in everything you do – looking after their safety and welfare.

**Simon:** It sounds like you have really good buy in from your drivers – what do you think the most important actions you've taken to build that culture and get driver buy in?

**Laura:** Picking up the phone and talking to them. It's the most effective way. If you're policy is purely a document that you email out, that's not communication – it's abdication – you've got to get them together so we do drivers talks, each one of them gets a complete refresh on drivers policy when we hand over new vans, talking them through so they understand their responsibilities and then if I see appearing on any of the exception reports for speeding or driving behaviour I'll pick the phone up and they get the message quite clearly I don't want to see them on that report. It's about responsibility and accountability to ensure it's driven from the top.

**Simon:** What's the most important thing that you have done with TVL?

**Laura:** The overall road risk policy – you never know who's on the road next to you. I hadn't been with the business very long when I was driving to work on the M25 and I was doing about 70 and one of our vans overtook me at 90 mph and he got a surprise when I called him and told him I saw him, all of our vans are now speed limited – you never quite know who's on the road next to you and they forget telematics in the vehicle so knowing it's looked at and there's people looking at them reminds them to adjust their driving behaviour.

I am proud of the overall road risk policy but it's an ongoing thing and so it's something I check in with at least once a month to see if it's improving and what else can we do?

**Simon:** Are there any other issues around security with EVs or are they the same as an ICE vehicle?

**Laura:** As far as a thief is concerned they don't care whether it's EV or ICE – it's still going to be subject to attack. With EVs we must be more careful of where security products are fitted and how – to make sure we are not drilling or interfering with the electric / battery etc. That's the only thing.

**Simon:** Where should listeners go to learn more about TVL and perhaps refresh us on the Tell TVL campaign

**Laura:** TellTVL.co.uk – for crime insights, crime hotspots

TVL-Ltd.co.uk for details on TVL security

I would say in terms of vehicle security for van fleets it really is about how they operate the fleet and what they're carrying as to what security is best for them. It's not a one size fits all. I would recommend going onto the website and have a consultation to ensure you get the right products.

**Simon:** All the resources will be in the show notes for those interested in vehicle security.

You can also download the For Driving for Better Business Van Driver Toolkit which includes guidance for drivers on both vehicle security and anti-terrorism safety as well, so I'll add those links as well.

Laura it's been a fascinating discussion. Thanks very much for being my guest on this episode of Let's Talk Fleet Risk

**Laura;** Thanks Simon – it's been a pleasure.

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**Simon:** If you manage drivers and their vehicles, and you face similar issues to those discussed in this podcast, there are links in the show notes to some useful resources on the Driving for Better Business website. And these are all free to access. If you enjoyed the conversation, please don't forget to hit subscribe - so you know when the next episode is released. And please also give us a 5-star review, as this helps us to get up the podcast rankings, and makes it more visible to others who might also find it useful. You can follow us – that's Driving for Better Business on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. And most importantly, please help us to spread the word. All our resources are free for those who manage fleets and their employees who drive for work. Thank you for listening to Let's Talk Fleet Risk, and I look forward to welcoming you to the next episode.