

Be in the driving seat of your fleet security

The transport sector plays a key role in GDP contribution in the local and global environments and is one of the key contributors to South Africa's economy.

If you think about it, almost everything that reaches the consumer has had a road experience, which means that the commercial transport industry is a key driver to a functioning economy. Taking this into account; do businesses have the correct insight into who their drivers are?

Road freight in South Africa contributes to 86% of the overall freight industry, emphasising its value to the economy. While trying to beat supply and demand pressures in a very competitive economic environment, like for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), it is paramount for company fleets to be safe and efficient - which is why commercial driver vetting has become so important.

Michelle Baron-Williamson, CEO of Managed Integrity Evaluation (MIE), indicates that it is imperative for transport companies to undertake comprehensive background screening checks on all of their commercial drivers.



Michelle Baron-Williamson, CEO of Managed Integrity Evaluation (MIE)

“Vehicle upkeep is certainly a critical component of this, however, having a comprehensive overview of the company's drivers – including verifying their identification, commercial license, criminal records, as well as their behaviour based on past or current job performance, is key to proactively managing the business' risk and continued operations. This can be achieved by using advanced vetting solutions that are compliant and consent-based, which will subsequently give fleet managers the advantage of making more informed hiring decisions,” says Baron-Williamson. ”

Many companies rely only on the legislated guidelines to inform and form their policies. For example, according to the Department of Transport (DoT), to be allowed to drive on a public road in South Africa transporting goods, dangerous goods or passengers for an income, a commercial driver must have a professional driving permit (PrDP). Also, they must have never had their driving licence suspended or have been previously convicted of a criminal offence or paid an

admission-of-guilt fine.

“Our research highlights that the most requested checks within the Transport and Logistics industry currently are criminal record checks, qualification checks, identity verification, credit checks and drivers licence checks. This indicates that there is concern around the certainty of knowing who you are dealing with - if your driver is who they say they are and that their license is genuine and valid. The reality is that we live in times of great employment pressures, and we’ve also found that in a number of cases candidates tend to oversell themselves or even misrepresent their information that might qualify them for the job position they are applying for,” added Baron-Williamson.



Prioritising the fleet manager

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The commercial driver hiring game is changing and businesses need to embrace the scope for tighter regulations that are gaining presence in this area.

Regulatory bodies, such as the Administrative Adjudication of Traffic Offences (AARTO), are expected to enforce best practices for fleet companies and commercial drivers in this regard, where non-compliance will result not only in hefty fines but possible further business risks through the demerit system.

“If driver information becomes accessible through controlled channels, and merits gained or lost have an imprint on the fleet company responsible for the driver, it will call for fleet managers and the industry more broadly to become more vigilant in their hiring process and influence tighter regulation in the sector all together,” concludes Baron-Williamson.

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