

Big Brother or Expert Witness?



With 'Crash for Cash' scams continuing to make the news, Fleet21's Simon Turner road tests the RoadHawk HD forward facing in-car camera.

While quite common now in commercial vehicles, more and more fleets are starting to look seriously at in-car cameras for their car fleet too.

Crash for cash and staged accidents are becoming more common, while fraudulent personal injury and whiplash claims bump up the insurance costs for everyone. Conflicting statements and a lack of credible witnesses often make it hard for fleet operators to contest dubious claims.

RoadHawk have been producing in-car cameras for some time now and all that knowledge and experience has gone into their new flagship high definition model. Not only does the unit record both audio and video with superb clarity, it also has a GPS antennae to record the vehicles speed and location and a g-force sensor so harsh manoeuvres or vehicle impacts can be analysed later in forensic detail.

Fitting the unit was a simple job with the cable clips making it easy to keep the cables out of the way and following the edge of the windscreen. It has a very high quality black rubberised

feel and the unit size and shape make it very easy to mount to the windscreen so that the rearview mirror hides most of it. RoadHawk have plainly gone to a lot of trouble to ensure the unit doesn't block the driver's view.

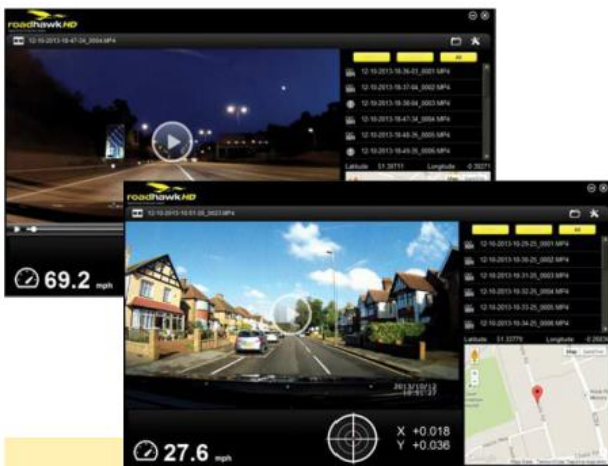
Once the camera is fitted, the next job is to setup the software and the SD card. Installing the software takes just seconds on either a PC or a Mac. Insert the SD card and from the settings menu in the software you are able to change the resolution, frame rate (I used full 1080p resolution at 30fps) as well as other settings like the duration of each clip, the audio volume and the sensitivity required to trigger an 'event'.

With the SD card inserted, I set off to test the camera unit. Over the next few days I tried it on rural and urban roads as well as motorways and in all weathers too including torrential rain and also at night.

Getting back to the office to view the footage I was immediately struck by the picture quality. The RoadHawk is the first in-car camera on the market to be fitted with full electronic image stabilisation so the video and sound quality were superb.

All the stored clips show the speed, g-forces and vehicle position using Google maps. While normal clips are stored in one folder and are overwritten as required, events are stored in a separate folder and not overwritten. It is also possible to record events that haven't been triggered automatically by pressing the big 'E' button on the camera.

All in all this was a very impressive unit that doesn't block your vision. Knowing it's there did make me more conscious of my driving, which is a good thing, and overall, I think I'd be very glad it was there in the event of a collision.



The quality of the footage from the RoadHawk HD is absolutely superb. Full high definition picture and perfect clarity even at night. The software window shows speed, G-force for acceleration and cornering, and the vehicle's location.


roadhawk
Digital Driver Protection System

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