



## EUROPE REGION BLOG

## CV Show 2026 Recap: Why Driver Fatigue Has Become a Strategic Fleet Risk

At the 2026 Commercial Vehicle Show at NEC Birmingham, one topic stood out above the noise of vehicle launches, AI discussions and evolving fleet technologies: driver fatigue management.

On day one of the show, Optix hosted a panel discussion titled *"Overlooked, Underestimated, Everywhere: The Rise of Fatigue Risk,"* bringing together leaders from Optix, Lytx and Geotab to explore how fleets can better predict, manage and prevent fatigue.

Moderated by Darren Clapich, EU Vice President at Optix, the panel featured:

- Damian Penney, Chief Revenue Officer, Optix
- Oliver Temple, VP EMEA & APAC, Lytx
- Rick Nimbley, Senior Business Development Manager, Geotab

The discussion highlighted a major industry shift: fatigue is no longer viewed purely as a compliance issue. It is now recognised as a strategic operational and business risk.



### Fatigue Is More Than a Compliance Problem

For years, fleets have relied on compliance systems like tachographs, working time rules and rest-period monitoring to manage fatigue risk. But as discussed during the panel, compliance alone does not always reflect what is happening on the road.

Fatigue often develops gradually, with drivers appearing compliant on paper while still showing signs of risk behind the wheel. According to research referenced during the discussion, fatigue contributes to up to 20% of road collisions in the UK, a figure panellists suggested may still be underestimated.

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Research cited by RoSPA, fatigue is a contributory factor in up to 20% of road collisions in the UK - a figure that panellists noted is likely an underestimate, given how difficult fatigue is to formally attribute as a cause.

Optix CRO **Damian Penney** shared a personal experience from a coach journey in France where passengers ultimately removed a driver from the road after noticing visible signs of fatigue. Despite the warning signs, there was no technology in the vehicle to support intervention. The message was clear: fleets need to move beyond detecting fatigue and start understanding the conditions that create it.

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**From Fleet Safety Issue to Boardroom Responsibility**

One of the strongest themes throughout the panel was the growing accountability around fatigue management. If a serious incident occurs, businesses are increasingly expected to demonstrate that they had the right systems, data and processes in place to identify and reduce fatigue risk proactively.

For transport, logistics, mining, utilities and passenger transport fleets, the conversation is changing from: "Are we compliant?"

To: "Have we done everything reasonably possible to reduce risk?"

This shift is elevating driver fatigue management from a fleet issue to a board-level responsibility.

**Why Detection Alone Is Not Enough**

Modern fleets have access to more operational data than ever before through connected vehicle systems, video telematics, route analytics and workforce platforms. However, the challenge is no longer access to data, it is knowing how to use it effectively.

The panel stressed that fatigue cannot be understood through a single alert or isolated event. Risk is often shaped by a combination of operational and behavioural factors, including shift patterns, break timing, driver workload, behavioural trends, workforce changes and driver experience levels.

Early warning signs can appear long before a driver reaches the point of micro-sleep or lane drift. These may include frequent yawning, posture changes, increased distraction or attempts to stay stimulated by adjusting music, windows or controls.

The panel agreed that the goal should be to identify fatigue during the "amber" stage, before it escalates into a high-risk event.

**Predictive Fatigue Management in Practice**

The discussion moved beyond detection into predictive fatigue management, using connected operational data to identify fatigue risk before a journey becomes dangerous.

This means analysing not only what is happening in the cab in real time, but also what happened in the hours and days leading up to the trip.

Questions fleets should be asking include:

- Has the driver recently changed shifts?
- Have break schedules been reviewed against incident patterns?
- Has operational pressure increased?
- Are there behavioural changes emerging over time?

**Damian Penney** shared a real-world example where a business moved from monthly to weekly pay cycles. Following the change, fatigue events increased on Fridays because drivers were staying out later after payday. The pattern was only identified by connecting operational data with wider behavioural trends.

The example reinforced a critical point: fatigue is not only a technology challenge. It is an operational and human challenge.

**The Missing Link: Workflow**

One of the most practical insights from the session was that technology is no longer the biggest barrier to fatigue management.

The real challenge is workflow.

Many fleets already have access to valuable data and fatigue alerts, but struggle with what happens next:

- Who receives the alert?
- When should intervention happen?
- Who contacts the driver?
- How are incidents reviewed and escalated?
- How is coaching managed afterwards?

Without a clear workflow and ownership structure, even the best technology risks becoming another ignored notification.

The panel stressed that fatigue management requires a defined process, human accountability and operational follow-through, not just software.

**Technology Must Support the Human:**

Throughout the discussion, the panel repeatedly returned to one key point: technology should support drivers, not replace them.

AI-powered fatigue detection, connected vehicle data and predictive analytics are powerful tools, but they are only effective when combined with human intervention, driver engagement, transparent communication and clear operational processes.

This is where human-led monitoring remains critical. Through the Optix Control Tower, safety specialists review and validate fatigue alerts, helping fleets identify genuine risk and respond quickly when intervention is needed.

By combining AI-powered detection with human expertise, the Control Tower acts as an extension of a fleet's safety team, ensuring potential fatigue risks are assessed and addressed before they escalate into serious incidents.

The discussion reinforced that while technology can identify warning signs, people remain central to effective fatigue management. Human judgement and timely intervention are often what turn an alert into a meaningful safety outcome.

Building driver trust is essential. Fatigue monitoring can feel highly personal, particularly with in-cab technologies, which is why successful fleet programmes focus heavily on transparency and communication.

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**The most effective fleets are not simply deploying technology. They are building safety cultures around it.**



## GLOBAL BLOG

### Fatigue Management Is Also a Commercial Advantage:

While the safety benefits are clear, the panel also explored the growing commercial value of fatigue management.

Fatigue-related incidents can result in:

- Vehicle damage
- Insurance increases
- Downtime and operational disruption
- Reputational damage
- Loss of contracts or customer trust

At the same time, more organisations are using fatigue management as a competitive differentiator. In sectors like passenger transport, mining and heavy industry, customers increasingly expect proactive fatigue management as part of tender and supplier evaluations, making it both a safety requirement and a business growth strategy.

#### Key Takeaways for Fleet Operators

##### “ Rick Nimbley - Start Now

Don't wait until regulations, customers or incidents force action. Even without perfect technology, businesses can begin by reviewing the data, processes and systems they already have. Start now. Keep your drivers getting home at the end of the day.

##### “ Oliver Temple - Be Intentional and Transparent

Build fatigue management into existing safety processes rather than treating it as a separate initiative. Be clear about the purpose. Go and spend time with the drivers. Take those insights back to leadership - and you will move far.

##### “ Damian Penney - Don't Wait for Compliance to Force Your Hand

Get ahead of the game. Before making any new decisions, spend time looking at what you already have in your business - you probably hold more of the data you need than you realise.

#### The Road Ahead

The conversation at CV Show 2026 made one thing clear: driver fatigue is no longer a hidden operational issue. It is a measurable, predictable and manageable fleet risk, but only when technology, workflow and human intervention work together.

For fleets across Europe and globally, the opportunity now is to move from reacting to fatigue events to preventing them altogether.

**Because ultimately, the goal remains simple: Every Driver, Safely Home.**



### Want to learn more about predictive fatigue management?

Optix works with fleet operators globally to help identify, manage and reduce fatigue risk through connected technology, operational insight and human-led intervention.

[View Our solutions](#)