

Better Vision for the Truck of the Future

By: Keith T. Kerman

This week, Together for Safer Roads (TSR), in partnership with the US DOT Volpe Center and DCAS, [released](#) a [report](#) on our Truck of the Future initiative. The initiative involved placing camera and driver alert technology, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), on 30 trucks, including from NYC Parks and NYC DEP, and then evaluating how effective the technology was in improving pedestrian safety.

Too often, we receive data about driving practices after damaging crashes. This pilot introduced a method of tracking “near misses” of vulnerable road users to help us reduce driving risk and to prevent and not just respond to crash events. The report [found](#) that overall speeding and vulnerable road user alerts, “near misses,” significantly declined with the technology. Safety technology has also received a high level of driver acceptance.

This is now the seventh report issued in partnership with US DOT Volpe in furtherance of [Executive Order 53](#), which calls for DCAS to issue regular safe and clean fleet transition reports aimed at achieving safe and sustainable fleets of the future for public and commercial fleets.

Visual impairment in trucks is a critical public safety issue. There have been a series of recent tragic crashes involving trucks in the city. In February 2024, Mayor Adams signed [Executive Order 39](#). This order increases safety for the city fleet

Truck of the Future: A Public-Private Partnership Pilot

Alyssa Brodeur, Alexander K Epstein, and Sarah Yahoodik

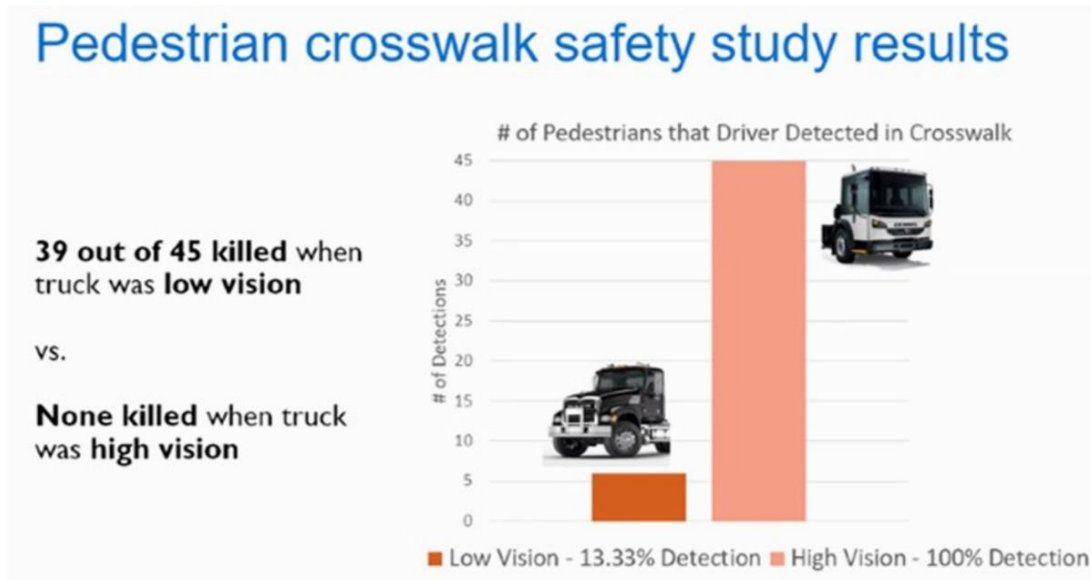


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and city contractors. The order focuses on reducing visual impairments for truck operators through high vision trucks or surround cameras for conventional trucks.



High vision trucks are the best option. In September 2023, Together for Safer Roads and DCAS penned an [op-ed](#) in support of high vision truck manufacture in North America. High vision trucks are designed with flat fronts, with the engine underneath the operator, so that nothing blocks the drivers view of the road and of pedestrians, bicyclists, and children.

"The findings from the Truck of the Future report underscore the critical need for high vision trucks in safeguarding vulnerable road users and advancing road safety standards. By providing enhanced visibility and reducing blind spots, these trucks represent a transformative force in transportation. In addition, through tools like [TSR's Direct Vision 5-Star Rating System Test Kit](#), fleet operators like NYC DCAS and others across the country can assess the safety of their fleets and make well-informed safety upgrades and purchasing decisions that lead to safer roads," said TSR Executive Director Peter Goldwasser.

Last week, DCAS, TSR, the city of London Corporation, and Fleet Vision International held a panel on fleet safety. The city of London implements a [high vision](#) standard for all trucks operating there. Nearly every truck operating in London today, public and commercial, is a high vision model. An example of a London municipal waste truck is shown here. Unfortunately, these high vision models are less commonly sold in North America. DCAS has [previously announced](#) that it will invest in high vision trucks when they are available in the marketplace.

US DOT Volpe has completed a [simulation](#) of pedestrians walking along a crosswalk and the impact of truck design on their safety. High vision trucks are far safer than conventionally driven trucks. Go to this link to watch a traffic simulation. I had the chance to be a passenger in an all-electric high vision garbage truck recently. The improvement in sightlines is dramatic and noticeable.

Until we can transition to high vision trucks, Executive Order 39 requires surround cameras for conventionally designed trucks. These cameras can provide the operator a full view around the vehicle. DCAS has already invested in more than 2,000 surround cameras for the city fleet, with more to come. DCAS recently discussed and displayed the benefits of surround cameras in this [ABC news](#) piece about school buses.

The Truck of the Future initiative further supports the effectiveness of surround cameras and their necessity as an investment.

Thanks to Peter Goldwasser, Executive Director at Together for Safer Roads; Alexander Epstein, Senior Engineer at US DOT Volpe; Paris Apollon at DEP Fleet; Brian Aucoin at Parks Fleet; Eric Richardson and Nate Koszer of DCAS; all the Parks and DEP truck drivers who participated; and everyone else who supported this project.





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Week In Review: April 6 - April 12



As our city paused to gaze at this past week's solar eclipse, I thought of the magnitude of the moment — and the incredible work you do every day to keep New Yorkers looking up towards a better future.

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[NYC Fleet Newsletter 451, March 22, 2024](#): DCAS Registers First Electric Ride and Car Share Contracts

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