

# Protecting Paratransit Passengers and Drivers

The value of continuous on-board recording for Ride-On Transportation



By Alicia Delgado

The number of available transportation services for disabled persons is limited, and with that, the number of services offering high-quality care and treatment is in need of attention. Day-by-day there are an increasing number of complaints surrounding the mishandled treatment of riders and drivers alike: whether the passenger's wheelchair wasn't properly secured in place or the driver was hit with a false claim, it is clear that the accessibility and overall safety of paratransit options is minimal.

This is where Mark Shaffer steps in - executive director of Ride-On Transportation, a regional ride-sharing shuttle service in San Luis Obispo County. In 1985, Shaffer partnered with United Cerebral Palsy to learn the issues faced in self-advocacy groups and develop solutions for their problems. It didn't take him long to realize that a primary difficulty was the lack of transportation services for people with disabilities. He was quick to respond and through diligence and dedication, developed Ride-On in 1993 - an easily accessible shuttle service that operates during the week and weekends.

However, the problems did not end there. With easier access came more passengers and drivers and a greater risk for accidents or lawsuits. Passenger safety is imperative in transportation services including their treatment and how securely they're buckled in. However, protecting the drivers and investment holds just as much weight.

In a world of "he said she said," where does the truth come through? It lies in the video footage.

## The solution

Safety Vision is a mobile video surveillance provider that has been offering transportation security solutions for over 27 years. With high-definition cameras, hybrid recorders, awareness monitors, and an expansive number of state-of-the-art accessories; Safety Vision provides comprehensive surveillance systems. Two years ago, with his attention focused on security, Shaffer purchased a Safety Vision solution for enhancing the overall surveillance for his fleet.

With Observer 4000 recorders, roughly one-hundred AHD cameras, a Panic Button, and a fleet of about 50 paratransit shuttles later, Shaffer is confident the right protection was provided for his investment.

"The cameras act like insurance for our fleet," Shaffer said, explaining that passengers have accused drivers of not properly securing their wheelchair or treating them poorly during their time on the shuttle.

In either circumstance, the recorders and cameras unveiled the truth. The on-board cameras are always recording in high resolution and capture footage of the entire vehicle without blind spots. This footage is easily accessible and automatically linked to GPS coordinates, which eliminates room for questioning should an accusation arise: the who, what, when, and where is undeniably proven through video analytics.

The surveillance becomes an integral part of the shuttle and experience.

"If a passenger claims their wheelchair wasn't properly secured - it's in the footage," Shaffer added. "If a rider claims the driver treated them disrespectfully - it's in the footage."

On the other end of the spectrum, the Safety Vision video system has increased driver protection as well. When complaints against them arise, the video analytics have saved them from losing their jobs due to false allegations. This expands driver retention because they know they are going to be safeguarded against those fabrications.

In a world where quality paratransit options can be minimal, it is vital for those existing services to have an on-board surveillance system that protects the passengers from being mishandled, defends the drivers from false claims, and establishes irrefutable evidence that protects the fleet's Return On Investment. While this may seem like a broad range of issues that require multiple security systems, Safety Vision is dedicated to providing all-in-one solutions, and their partnership with Ride-On shows that accessible and safe shuttle services can become more common and easier attained. **BR**

Alicia Delgado is marketing content writer for Safety Vision. Please visit [www.safetyvision.com](http://www.safetyvision.com).