

# UPS using AI surveillance cameras from Lytx to monitor drivers, further exposing sellout of 2023 contract struggle

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Since 2020, UPS has steadily installed Lytx DriveCam devices in its delivery trucks. These systems use artificial intelligence to analyze driver behavior, directly contradicting claims by Teamsters leadership that the 2023 contract banned driver-facing cameras.

According to the 2023 UPS-Teamsters contract “Vehicles may not be equipped with inward-facing cameras.” It further stipulates that if a forward-facing camera device includes an inward facing recording device “Any functionality included in driver-facing cameras (including their driver recording and monitoring functionality) will be disabled and rendered inoperable to prevent recording and monitoring of in-cab activities.”

At companies like Amazon management has used recorded footage to issue write-ups, justify firings, intimidate workers or shift blame to the shoulders of workers for incidents that are caused by overwork or management failures.

Yet, Lytx DriveCam devices are explicitly designed to monitor drivers. Lytx DriveCam devices feature two image sensors, one facing forward and one facing inward, that are paired with other vehicle sensors such as GPS and accelerometers. The standard device records video of the road and the driver, using AI and “Machine Vision” to detect distracted driving or safety issues and warn drivers. With the standard setup, employers can monitor workers and drivers can even review footage of themselves. Ostensibly, this is used to improve safety and ensure accurate accountability in the event of an accident. In reality, however, it is primarily a tool for invasive corporate monitoring of employees.

UPS has claimed compliance with the contract by asserting that the inward-facing camera does not “record” the driver. In a letter to Teamsters Local 776, UPS stated that audio and inward-facing video recording had been disabled. However, the same letter confirmed that as of September 2023, the inward-facing sensor still issues audible alerts to drivers for distracted driving.

However, the letter confirms reports from workers that “As of September 2023, the inside sensor will provide audible alerts to the driver only. Any associated alert and event data has been disabled and not available in the Lytx portal.” This means that

the alert is, ostensibly, not available to management for review and is only issued to the driver.

How is the Lytx DriveCam device able to issue audible alerts of distracted driving if it is disabled from recording the driver?

It can only do this by processing data collected by the inward-facing sensor, using AI to detect events and issue warnings. This is in direct violation of the first sentence of the clause in the contract, which clearly states that inward-facing cameras are prohibited.

Despite this clear ban on driver-facing cameras, which was a leading demand of UPS workers during the 2023 contract negotiations, additional language states that “Driver-facing sensors will only be used for the purpose of triggering in-cab audible alerts related to distracted driving” or for “coaching/counseling opportunities” during Integratd or the 30 day probationary period.

This allowance uses the linguistic trick of using the term “sensor” instead of camera, a difference in language only. All digital cameras are composed of a lens and a sensor. While not all sensors are cameras, in order for the device to analyze a driver’s movements to detect distracted driving it must collect images, making it a camera that should be prohibited under the contract.

Analyzing the internals of the camera, Teamster Wayne Adkins published a video and documents investigating the Lytx cameras as part of a filed grievance. He found that the inward-facing sensor is referred to as a “camera” or “video camera” repeatedly in the original patents and documents from Lytx and its previous corporate iterations.

Taking apart several Lytx devices, Adkins identified that the forward and inward-facing sensors are both Omvision CMOS sensors. CMOS (Complementary metal-oxide-semiconductor) sensors are the most common digital camera sensor type and are used in devices from webcams to smartphones and professional cameras.

This conforms to Lytx’s patents where the inward-facing sensor is referred to as a camera with video and audio capability. Lytx also refers to the “driver-facing camera” on its own website multiple times.

Patent application US20140324281A1 outlines that the Lytx devices use the inward-facing camera to collect images and process them to identify facial features and eye and body movements. This aligns with an offered feature from Lytx called “Risk ID Without Recording” which uses the same AI and Machine Vision tools but without permanent storage or transmission of the footage. Lytx claims that this feature allows events to be “detected, but not recorded.” However, the device must still collect data through the camera for an unclear amount of frames to detect and issue alerts.

The use of this technology led to a lawsuit in Illinois where truck drivers sued Lytx for harvesting biometric data against the state’s Biometric Information Privacy Act. Lytx reached a settlement for \$4.25 million with 3,600 truckers involved in the class action lawsuit but maintained that it had not broken any laws. Workers charged that Lytx devices would “scan the driver’s face geometry and harnesses those biometric data points by feeding them into sophisticated algorithms that identify the driver’s actions, in what amounts to *constant AI surveillance*.” [emphasis added]

Even with the video and audio recording storage and transmission elements disabled (at least claimed to be disabled), Lytx’s own patents and product descriptions demonstrate that the inward-facing camera is still operational and recording drivers in order to issue its AI generated alerts. On its own website Lytx explains that “The driver-facing camera captures and analyzes images that allow the machine vision technology to recognize an object such as a cigarette or a cell phone. The AI is trained to categorize the cell phone, cigarette, food, drink, or seat belt use as risky.” This violates the provision that there shall be no “monitoring of in-cab activities” by the driver-facing camera.

Lytx’s patent 8,930,072—which is listed by Lytx as part of the DriveCam system—also outlines several ways in which the recording capabilities of the device can be considered disabled. This is explicitly written with consideration for government regulations and protests from “organizations of drivers (e.g., unions).” Several options are provided, including using a shutter to block light and electronically disabling the sensor, but in the same paragraph Lytx considers “blocking human viewable images but allow algorithmic capture for images (e.g., machine visions data such as facial geometry” as a form of image blocking.

The issue is not whether the images collected are “human viewable” or even if they are stored or deleted after processing. Workers demanded the prohibition of inward-facing cameras. The idea that Lytx devices are some separate category of non-camera “sensor” is false under the facts of how Lytx itself categorizes its own technology. Using this false distinction between a “sensor” and a “camera,” UPS has side-stepped the contract language and opened the door for corporate spy devices in every vehicle. Additional tweaks to contract language could just as easily be used to allow more intrusive

monitoring in the next contract once the devices are fully deployed.

If this is allowed to occur Lytx has a host of incredibly intrusive methods, including using facial recognition and the transmission of facial data to third party servers, the use of driver images for training of AI models and the live streaming of in-cabin recordings to management. While not verified, some workers have claimed on social media to have seen management using computers to access footage from the cameras.

This risk is heightened by the fact that UPS Board Member Wayne Hewett is also on the board of Lytx.

The Teamsters bureaucracy bears ultimate responsibility for allowing these devices into UPS trucks. One UPS driver told the WSWs that he was informed repeatedly by Robert Tamez, a Business Agent and Southern Region Contract Negotiations Committee member for local 657, to expect cameras in truck cabins as far back as 2018. Tamez was expelled from the Teamsters last year after being caught coaching management on how to fire Teamsters members. He now works as a manager for UPS.

Teamster leadership was therefore aware of the plans for UPS to install cameras in cabins years before they were first implemented in 2020 and the 2023 contract negotiations, where inward-facing cameras emerged as a significant issue. The use of the word “sensor” to allow for monitoring is a major concession to management to allow for driver-facing cameras while allowing the union to claim it had banned them. While the contract prohibits certain functionalities and the sole use of cameras for discipline, it opens the door for AI enabled surveillance and the introduction of more aggressive monitoring practices.

The collusion by the Teamster bureaucracy with UPS in expanding the use of driver monitoring technology further exposes the false claims that the 2023 contract represented a “historic” win. The deal provided inadequate pay raises, sanctioned the continued use of huge numbers of part time workers and paved the way for the elimination of tens of thousands of jobs. It underscores the call by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees for UPS workers to wage an independent struggle to wrest power from the Teamster bureaucracy and place it in the hands of committees run by the rank-and-file.



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