

# ROCHE DIAGNOSTICS RECEIVES 2020 FLEET SAFETY AWARD

GETTING BUY-IN FROM MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE COMPANY, INCLUDING SAFETY, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT; HR; EMPLOYEE RELATIONS; AND LEGAL WAS CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THEIR SAFETY PROGRAM. **BY ANDY LUNDIN**

Sharon Etherington and Katie Franssen of Roche Diagnostics were named the winners of the Fleet Safety Award during the virtual 2020 Fleet Safety Experience on Nov. 18, 2020, which served as a virtual counterpart to the Fleet Safety Conference.

Etherington, senior manager, regional administrative services, credit card, fleet, and travel; and Franssen, principal safety, health, and environmental (SHE) leader, were recognized for driving down Roche's fleet crash rate for three consecutive years; using continuous driver monitoring to improve driver behavior; and enhancing driver safety programs by introducing advanced vehicle safety features.

"We strive in all areas of our businesses to ensure that the patient is at the core of everything we do," said Etherington. "This is true even for the fleet. We have to ensure that our drivers who support our patients through the labs, hospitals, and clinics, are able to travel safely, have reliable vehicles, are armed with driver safety skills, and use defensive driving techniques. Our ultimate goal is that our drivers make it home safely each night."

## A ROBUST SAFETY PROGRAM

Roche Diagnostics' fleet utilizes continuous driver monitoring via telematics to identify high or severe risk drivers as a way to educate, change, and enhance driver behavior. Concerns of "Big Brother" watching over drivers has not been an issue, with several drivers reaching out to thank the

fleet team for implementing this initiative.

However, getting buy-in from multiple departments, and drivers, was

critical toward its implementation. This included collaborating with safety, health, and environment (SHE); HR; employee relations; and legal was critical.

"We have found that one of the biggest things we can get out of this is talking to our drivers, talking to our leaders, seek to understand what their priorities are and what can we do to partner together in order to get our drivers home safely every day," said Franssen.

Roche Diagnostics' fleet crash rate has gone down consecutively since 2018: going from 13.4% in 2018, 12.4% in 2019, to 8.2% in 2020. The fleet also saw a 17% improvement in collisions per million miles, all with an increasing volume of vehicles in service each year.

Etherington and Franssen also utilized new hire safe driver operator training; on-line safety training; behind the wheel training; and "How's My Driving" community observation program; to improve driver behavior. Enhancing these safety measures with advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) to include: blind spot detectors, frontal crash avoidance systems, lane departure warnings, and backup cameras.

On top of this, Roche Diagnostics and its fleet have worked as an essential business for providing COVID-19 diagnostics tests during the pandemic.



Sharon Etherington (left) and Katie Franssen (right) of Roche Diagnostics were recognized for driving down Roche's fleet crash rate; implementing continuous driver monitoring; and enhancing driver safety programs.

"Our field technicians are working extremely hard, and a lot of overtime to provide the best care for their patients," said Etherington. "We believe one way to retain top talent, which is crucial for our patients, is to do everything we can to provide education, keep our drivers updated on regulation, industry standards, safety features, and really have them understand the distracted world we live in based on all the technology and movement around us."

## 2020 FLEET SAFETY EXPERIENCE

The Fleet Safety Award, first presented in 2012, is sponsored by the American Automotive Leasing Association (AALA). This is the first year that the awards ceremony has been hosted in a virtual format.

Presenting the award this year during the panel was Mike Joyce, executive director, AALA; Tom Callahan, president of Donlen, and safety & technology committee chair for AALA; and Mike Antich, editor of *Automotive Fleet*.

The award recognizes candidates who show leadership, innovation, and measurable results in enhancing the safety of their employees, those traveling with them, and everyone else who shares the road. 🚗