

Truck inspections on the fly

Delta piloting technology that detects faulty vehicles by aiming a camera-like device at them as they roll by

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A new camera-like device housed inside a van can detect faulty trucks from the side of the road.

Delta recently tested the unit, a Thermal Imaging Inspection System, scanning 20,000 commercial vehicles over six weeks during 10 sessions in locations throughout the municipality.

The thermal imager detected hot spots in 200 of those vehicles as they drove by the van.

"One hundred and eighty of those trucks examined had safety faults. That's a 90 per cent accuracy rate, which is very good," said Delta police traffic supervisor Sgt. Rhen Hallett.

The pilot project was sponsored by the Corporation of Delta, which contracted Canadian-based Intelligent Imaging Systems Inc. to supply the technology and imaging technicians to work with police officers from the traffic unit.

"We set up at the Nordel weigh scales, Highway 91, River Road and Deltaport Way," Hallett said.

The Delta police department is the first agency in B.C. to test the technology. Hallett said there were several other agencies that viewed the test, including the RCMP and the province's commercial vehicle inspection unit.

Hallett said the passive nature of the technology -- the operator sits inside the van and simply points a camera-like unit at the trucks -- means a much higher volume of commercial vehicles can be checked in a shorter amount of time.



CREDIT: photo by Brett Beadle
A truck is captured on a thermal imaging screen using technology Delta is piloting.

Once a vehicle is targeted, police officers can pull the truck over and conduct a detailed inspection.

Although Delta has been the B.C. agency testing the unit, it doesn't necessarily mean the municipality will purchase it.

"This is the first time we've seen this technology working," Hallett said.

He said police want to compile more detailed statistics and analysis before making any recommendations.

"We have to decide what avenues we will be pursuing, whether it's with other agencies; we just don't know that yet," he said.

The camera unit employs infrared radiation as a visible image on a monitor. The monitor will display a more intense radiation image if it detects a commercial vehicle with a hot spot, such as bad brakes.

"It allows the camera operator to see what a human cannot," said Const. Sharlene Brooks.