

CAREERS IN TRUCKING



Driven By Excellence...
Measured By Quality

Professional Truck Driver Institute, Inc.



THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY

AMERICA MOVES BY TRUCK

Trucking is one of America's most important industries, moving the goods that you use every day: food, furniture, books, clothing, automobiles, and medicine. Because America moves by truck, the trucking industry is huge, employing over 9.6 million people in all areas of employment – as drivers, mechanics, dispatchers, computer programmers, personnel, fleet management, accountants, etc. Together, these workers generate over \$372 billion a year, or over 81% of the nation's freight bill, to haul 6.7 billion tons of freight, or 60% of the total domestic tonnage (our numbers are based on 1997 revenues). That figure includes both merchandise traveling from producers to retail outlets as well as raw materials moving from farms, mines and mills to primary processing plants. By comparison, the railroad industry employs only 213,000 people and generates only \$35 billion a year in revenue.

Every product used by American consumers travels by truck at least part of its life. The trucking industry utilizes over 4.5 million trailers and over 1.7 million tractors (excluding government and farm vehicles) which travel more than 118 billion miles annually. Trucks come in all sizes, from local step van delivery vehicles, which weigh 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, to the large tractor-trailers, which weigh up to 80,000 pounds GVW. Trucks supply freight to every city, town, and village – any place there is a road. In fact, trucks pay \$28 billion in federal and state

highway user taxes and over 38% of all Federal highway taxes to pay for those roads.

TRUCKING COMPANIES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

There are over 458,000 trucking companies in varying sizes from the largest, with thousands of vehicles, to companies with only one truck. In fact, 70% of the companies operate 6 trucks or fewer and 88% of all trucking companies can be classified as small businesses. A few trucking companies are large, publicly-traded corporations that usually operate throughout North America. Some trucking companies are medium-sized, closely held businesses, but most are small partnerships or sole proprietorships that own only one or two tractors and trailers. The smaller companies might operate only within a certain region or state. Trucking companies refer to themselves as "carriers" because they "carry" freight. For-hire carriers offer their services to shippers and receivers, while private carriers, like some food stores, retail hardware stores, and mattress companies, haul only their own products.

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AMERICA NEEDS MORE DRIVERS



A serious shortage currently exists in some segments of the trucking industry that could disrupt a significant portion of our fine-tuned distribution system. It's not a freight or equipment shortage; surprisingly, it's a shortage of men and women qualified to drive trucks.

To solve this problem, trucking companies are offering better compensation and benefits to attract and retain good drivers. In fact, the trucking industry expects to need 80,000 new drivers each year for the next decade. The prospects for a rewarding career as a professional truck driver have never been better!

According to a study conducted by the Gallup Organization for the American Trucking Associations (ATA) Foundation, the biggest truck driving opportunities will be for women and minorities in the future. The portion of the workforce segment which has traditionally provided most of the nation's truck drivers, males aged 20 to 24, will grow far more slowly than new truck driver job openings from 1994 to 2005, the study revealed. The population groups that continue to show the greatest labor force growth are women and minorities.

TYPES OF TRUCK DRIVERS

Long-distance or over-the-road drivers operate heavy trucks and drive interstate (between states) or intrastate (within one state). Some long-haul drivers travel a few hundred miles and return the same day; others are away from home

overnight or for several days or weeks at a time.

Specialized trucking involves operating trucks that handle unusual, oversized, or sensitive loads. Drivers cover local, regional, and long-distance routes, and need extra training to operate this equipment. Specialized trucking includes dry bulk carriers, tank trucks, dump transporters, and oversized and overweight (permitted) loads. Drivers who transport hazardous materials (HazMat) also need more extensive training, usually provided by the companies for which they drive. These drivers must know the content of the loads they haul, how to handle the load safely, and what to do in an emergency. Drivers who transport hazardous materials are required to take additional testing on HazMat regulations and safety precautions when applying for their Commercial Driver's License.

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS

An independent contractor owns his or her own equipment, anything from a straight truck to a tractor-trailer, and leases this equipment, together with driving services, to a trucking company to haul freight on a contractual basis for compensation, often on a percentage of revenue basis. Husband and wife teams are very common.

Independent contractors make a good living, but, as in any small business, there is tough competition and there are some overhead expenses, such as fuel, insur-



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ance, and equipment purchases. Operating expenses, such as tolls and some maintenance, are also the responsibility of an independent contractor. Many independent contractors begin their careers as salaried drivers with a motor carrier before starting their own business.

COMPENSATION

Pay rates and potential earnings vary considerably. In long-haul operations, drivers are usually paid a specified rate per mile, but may also be paid by the hour, or receive a percentage of the revenue the motor carrier receives for the load hauled. Long-haul drivers are expected to drive more than 100,000 miles per year. The starting salary is \$22-\$26,000. The average earnings of all drivers are \$36,000 per year.

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS/DUTIES OF A LONG DISTANCE HAULER

1. Read and Interpret Control Systems
2. Perform Vehicle Inspections
3. Exercise Basic Control
4. Execute Shifting
5. Back and Dock Tractor-Trailer
6. Couple Trailer
7. Uncouple Trailer
8. Perform Visual Search
9. Manage and Adjust Vehicle Speed
10. Manage and Adjust Vehicle Space Relations
11. Check and Maintain Vehicle Systems/Components
12. Diagnose and Report Malfunctions
13. Identify Potential Driving Hazards and Perform Emergency Maneuvers
14. Identify and Adjust to Difficult and Extreme Driving Conditions
15. Handle and Document Cargo
16. Deal with Accident Scenes and Reporting Procedures
17. Deal with Environmental Issues
18. Plan Trips/Make Appropriate Decisions
19. Use Effective Communication and Public Relations Skills
20. Manage Personal Resources/Deal with Life on the Road
21. Record and Maintain Hours of Service Requirement



QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for a truck driving job with a company operating in interstate commerce, a driver must meet the minimum requirements prescribed in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. In addition to federal regulations, most companies have other rules and guidelines which must be followed.

Age: While many states allow those 18 and older to drive trucks within state borders, federal regulations require drivers operating across state lines to be at least 21 years of age.

License: Every truck driver must have a valid Commercial Driver's License (CDL) issued by one (and only one) state. Specific endorsements (e.g., hazardous materials or tank) may be required depending upon the company's needs and the type of equipment you will be operating. *NOTE: Holding a CDL does not indicate that the holder is a trained or experienced driver, only that he/she has passed minimal skills and knowledge tests concerning the type of vehicle he/she proposes to drive. Contact state department of motor vehicles for further information.*

Physical Condition: The U.S. Department of Transportation requires a driver to have a complete physical examination every two years. You must not have suffered the loss of a hand, arm, foot, or leg, nor have any physical defect or disease likely to interfere with safe driving. You cannot have a medical history or clin-

ical diagnosis of diabetes that requires insulin for control.

Vision: A driver must have a minimum of 20/40 vision in each eye, with or without corrective lenses, and have a 70 degree field of vision in each eye. Drivers may not be color blind.

Hearing: A driver must be capable of perceiving a forced whisper in the better ear at not less than five feet, with or without the use of a hearing aid.

Education: All drivers must be able to read and speak English well enough to understand traffic signs, prepare required reports, and speak with law enforcement authorities and the public. Some companies may have additional educational requirements.

Safety: The U.S. Department of Transportation sets safety rules for interstate truck drivers (vehicle inspection, hours of service, etc.), and drivers must learn and comply with these rules. Drivers must be able to safely operate the type of motor vehicle he/she drives. Most states have adopted similar rules for intrastate drivers. *NOTE: This requirement is not met by simply holding a CDL.*

Substance Abuse: Strict regulations forbid the use of alcohol or drugs prior to or while operating a commercial vehicle. Successful passage of alcohol and drug tests is often a condition of employment. Thereafter, drivers are subject to drug and alcohol testing by their employers and by



DRIVER QUALIFICATIONS

law enforcement officials in the following circumstances: post-accident, reasonable suspicion, and random testing. A driver must have no current clinical diagnosis of alcoholism, and must not use any illegal drugs.

Criminal Driving Record: A driver must not have been convicted of a felony involving the use of a motor vehicle; a crime involving drugs; driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol; or hit-and-run driving which resulted in injury or

death. Drivers with a criminal conviction of any kind may not operate a commercial vehicle into Canada.

Driver's Road Test: A driver must successfully complete a driver's road test and be issued a certificate of driver's road test.

For further detail on qualifications of drivers, see Part 391 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.



TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING

Truck transportation differs dramatically from almost every other form of business in the modern national economy. Its most essential employee – the driver – must work alone. In no other industry is a lone individual entrusted for such long periods, sometimes a week or more at a time, with so much valuable property belonging to others. This virtually total reliance on the 2.9 million individual drivers makes the trucking business unique among modern industries, where most work is performed under direct supervision or in intense collaboration. In the rest of the transportation industry, group effort is the norm: airliners, trains, barge tows and oceangoing ships are manned by crews rather than individuals,

and most trips originate and terminate at stations manned by additional carrier personnel.

However, thanks to modern telecommunications, today's truck driver no longer suffers the almost total isolation his peers experienced a generation ago. He can talk with his dispatcher, his customers, his fellow truckers, or highway law-enforcement officers as he drives.

But while the driver can turn to these sources for help and advice, he or she cannot delegate to them his primary responsibility for the truck and the safe and timely delivery of its cargo. Only *his/her* hands are on the wheel. Only *his/her* feet touch

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the pedals. Only *his/her* eyes peer through the windshield at the road ahead and scan the side mirrors for the approach of potential hazards from the rear. Once the trailer doors are secured and the latch sealed, the driver bears sole responsibility not only for driving the truck safely, but also for bringing the truck and cargo to the receiver's dock on time, undamaged, and in compliance with all laws.

In the most literal sense, it's all in the driver's hands, and that driver must deliver the highest measure in industry diligence and professionalism at all times. In addition, each driver is an important link in overall highway safety.

TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING

About five percent of the nation's professional truck drivers were trained in the military, which operates tractor-trailer combinations that operate very much like those used by commercial highway carriers. If you are going to be in the military or DoD civilian outplacement process and are interested in pursuing a career in the truckload industry, we suggest you collect the following information while you are still in active military or civilian DoD status (some only apply to those currently driving for the military):

- ❑ A copy of an American Council on Education/Army Registry Transcript System transcript. This form equates Army Training with college credits.
- ❑ A copy of DA Form 348, *Equipment Operators Qualification Record*
- ❑ A copy of DD Form 214, *Report of Sep-*

aration from Active Duty.

- ❑ A copy of your 201 file (a candidate's history of military assignments and duties). Also, a notarized copy of your last efficiency and performance reports.
- ❑ Commercial Driver's License (CDL) if available. If you do not have a CDL, ask any carrier that you contact about the procedures to obtain one.
- ❑ Letter from last commanding officer or civilian supervisor certifying job performance.
- ❑ A copy of your civilian driving record.
- ❑ A copy of the Department of Transportation physical form, completed within the last 12 months.

TRUCK DRIVER TRAINEES

Many trucking companies are willing to take a new driver fresh out of driving school, or it operates its own school and will train someone with no experience. You can find driver training schools in most parts of the country, often in community colleges, vocational-technical schools, and through private proprietary schools.

TYPES OF TRUCK DRIVING SCHOOLS

The United States boasts some 350 truck driving schools which offer training courses with more than four weeks of training. There are three types of schools: public, private and motor carrier.

There is also a type of truck driving school called a "finishing school," operated by the major highway carriers them-



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selves. These accept only those who already know how to drive a tractor-trailer. Once enrolled, drivers are given additional training to polish their skills, plus company-specific instruction in the non-driving aspects of trucking: how to manage the carrier's paperwork, how to work with its dispatchers, and how to interact with customers. In addition to advanced driving techniques, these schools teach the "company way" of doing things.

THE PTDI

The Professional Truck Driver Institute is a national, nonprofit organization sponsored by the nation's trucking industry to advance truck driving proficiency, safety and professional standards among drivers which, in turn, will foster benefits for all stakeholders, including motor carriers, insurers, training schools, government bodies at all levels, funding organizations and the American public.

WHY ATTEND A PTDI CERTIFIED COURSE

The industry's annual demand for new drivers hovers around the 80,000 mark. And, it is the well-trained driver with the proper professional attitude and skills who is chosen first by employers.

Graduates from PTDI certified courses can apply for their first jobs with confidence that they will stand the best chance of being hired.

You can rest assured that the PTDI course you attend meets the standards set

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by the industry in curriculum, instruction, lab work, behind the wheel time and reputation with funding sources and the industry itself.

Your credentials as a graduate of a PTDI-certified course attest that you have mastered the knowledge, procedures and basic skill habits that will keep you safe on the road and assure that your job is secure.

As a PTDI graduate, you can take pride in the fact that you have the businesslike, professional attitude that commands respect from your peers and from shippers, receivers, law enforcement officials, and your employer.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Professional Truck Driver Institute
2200 Mill Road
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/838-8842
703/836-6610 (fax)
ptdi@truckload.org (e-mail)
<http://www.ptdi.org> (website)

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SCHOOL

Choosing a school takes careful research and comparison shopping. To find a program that's right for you, visit as many schools as you can and consider the guidelines in the checklist that follows.

Once you have decided on the program that's right for you, pay close attention to the following details before signing



the contract: read and understand the contract, and know exactly what your obligations are; verify the tuition and other costs and terms governing refund or forfeiture of the down payment should you fail to complete the program; and, if necessary, make arrangements (and be sure you clearly understand the terms) for financing the remainder of the tuition.

If the school is far from your home, check the availability of room and board at the school. Be sure to investigate adequacy and costs of those facilities. If you have dependents, be sure you have made arrangements to support them while you complete training. Research the availability of truck driving jobs where you live and determine whether you need to relocate in order to find a job.

TO REPORT A PROBLEM

If you enroll in a truck-driving course and a problem occurs that you cannot resolve with the school, send a letter describing your problem to your local or state consumer protection office. Send a copy of your letter to:

Correspondence Branch
Federal Trade Commission
Washington, DC 20580

Although the FTC cannot represent you directly in a dispute with a company, it can act if there is evidence of a pattern of deceptive or unfair sales practices. If you borrowed Federal funds to pay for truck-driver training, you can also call the Department of Education to report your

problem. The toll-free number is: (800) MIS-USED. If a course is PTDI-certified, contact the Professional Truck Driver Institute (see information above).

This Checklist is a yardstick for motor carriers, truck driver employers, truck safety advocates, prospective students and others in measuring the quality of a tractor-trailer driver training program.

Formal training is the most reliable way to learn the many special skills required for safe truck driving. The more skills that are learned in supervised training, the fewer that need to be learned on the job. Such training is available from private truck driver training schools, public education institutions and in-house motor carrier training programs. Because of the important role in truck safety, the trucking industry has implemented minimum standards by which to measure training programs. The standards are administered through the Professional Truck Driver Institute (PTDI). Training institutions voluntarily certify their courses to meet PTDI standards. Not all schools have chosen to certify their courses.

You can use the following Checklist to evaluate a course against PTDI standards, if a course is not certified by PTDI. PTDI-certified courses meet all of these standards plus a number of others. (See www.ptdi.org for the full checklist.) The Checklist is only a brief treatment of the standards by which truck driver training quality is measured. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive treatment of evaluation standards.



CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS IN TRACTOR-TRAILER DRIVER TRAINING

COURSE ADMINISTRATION

- Is the course accurately and clearly defined and explained in printed materials on topics such as costs, training provided, outcomes, classroom hours and actual individual driving time? i.e., is advertising truthful?
- Are there clearly stated goals that match the needs of students and the trucking industry?
- Are there clear, written eligibility requirements for students that are followed?
- Must an applicant meet minimum DOT, state, federal and/or local laws and regulations related to drug screens, age, physical condition, licensing, driving ability, and driving record as stated in the school's admissions policy?
- Are there written policies regarding safety, liability and rules?
- Do admissions follow written procedures?
- Are enrollment agreements required?

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

- Do instructors possess a combination of education and experience that clearly qualifies them for their assignments?
- Do instructors have at least three years of experience as licensed, successful tractor-trailer drivers with a good driving record?

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- Do instructors meet state requirements and school policy?
- Do instructors meet Part 391 of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations?
- Do instructors have a high school diploma or its equivalent?
- Do instructors have teacher/instructional skills?
- Do instructors have a current state license or permit, if required? (Check with local board of education or business licensing agency. See government section of phone directory.)
- Are instructors thoroughly trained in the curriculum?
- Are instructors carefully supervised and evaluated?

TRAINING VEHICLES

- Are vehicles in good mechanical condition?
- Do they meet safety requirements, contain occupant restraint systems of all occupants and contain working emergency equipment?
- Are training vehicles comparable in size and power to those used by motor carriers in the area?

INSTRUCTION & CURRICULUM

Curriculum Content:

- Does the course outline clearly identify units of instruction including their sequence, broad purpose and general content?
- Does instruction cover the subject

CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS IN TRACTOR-TRAILER DRIVER TRAINING



areas identified by PTDI curriculum and skill standards? (See “Primary Functions/Duties of a Tractor-Trailer Driver” or complete standards on www.ptdi.org.)

- Does classroom instruction include the use of aids such as films, displays, text books, models, charts, etc.?
- Are instructional materials appropriate for the ability of the trainee and are they up-to-date?
- Are materials provided to each trainee?

Instructional Time:

- Does each student receive at least 104 (60-minute) hours in classroom and lab time? (Lab is instruction that occurs outside the classroom that does not involve actual operation of the vehicle and its components; this includes time on the range under the supervision of an instructor. Observation time does not count as instructional time.) Independent study may be substituted for up to 1/3 of classroom hours. Independent study is not the same as homework.
- Does each student receive at least 44 (60-minute) hours of actual behind-the-wheel time? (This is time with hands actually on the wheel, with at least 12 hours on the range and 12 on the road and the other 20 hours on either.)
- Is the total length of the instructional day, including independent study, not longer than 10 hours on average?

Classroom Conditions:

- Is the learning environment safe, sanitary and comfortable?

Student/Instructor/Truck Ratio:

- Does classroom and lab instruction average one instructor for not more than each group of 30 students?
- Is there never more than one instructor to three trucks on the range?
- During driving, is there one instructor per truck and never more than four trainees in the truck?

Lesson Plans

- Do instructors use lesson plans to guide each session?
- Are students provided with behind-the-wheel lesson driving procedures along with a list of safety rules for street driving?

Range Conditions

- Is the range safe and protected from the hazards from other road users?
Is the range free of obstructions, and does the surface enable the driver to maneuver without loss of control?

Street Instruction

- Is driving practiced under various roadway and traffic conditions?
- Is the trailer loaded with a minimum of 15,000 pounds during at least 25% of street instruction time?
- Are night driving principles taught and practiced?



CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY PROGRAMS IN TRACTOR-TRAILER DRIVER TRAINING

Tests

- Do written classroom/lab tests show mastery of a sample of knowledge objectives for each unit of instruction?
- Do range tests assess student proficiency in (a) fundamental vehicle control skills and (b) routine driving procedures?
- Do road tests use routes that permit a broad range of observations and are routes planned in advance?

Graduation

- Does a student have to successfully complete the course equivalent to PTDI content and hours, including tests and road tests before graduation?
- Does a student secure a CDL before graduation?

OUTCOMES & RECORDS

- Are student critiques of the school used in follow-up?
- Are transcripts provided upon request?
- Does each student keep a "driver duty status record" to document time behind the wheel?
- Do both the student and instructor "sign-off" on the record?

EXTERNSHIP OPTION

- An externship option allows a training course to defer up to 14 hours of the 44 behind-the-wheel hours to a trucking firm. For each three hours with a trucking company, one hour

BTW time is earned for credit. If a school uses this option, a number of conditions must be met:

- Is there weekly student evaluation?
- Are there objectives that specify and direct training?
- Are skilled and experienced driver-trainers teaching and monitoring training?
- Are quality training materials used?
Does the curriculum describe the elements of training that the trainee will experience?
- Is there a performance assessment of critical skills?
- Is there a system of feedback and record keeping for the trainee, both for the trainee and the school?
- Are program policies on issues such as attendance, pay, insurance, and liability clearly articulated?
- Is there a formal agreement between the carrier and the training institution?

To find the answer to these questions, you may question school personnel, current students or graduates, and motor carriers who hire graduates from the school.

NORTH AMERICAN SCHOOLS WITH PTDI-CERTIFIED ENTRY-LEVEL TRUCK DRIVER TRAINING COURSES



The following schools offer entry-level truck driver training courses that are certified to meet the standards of the Professional Truck Driver Institute (PTDI). The list is believed to be accurate as of the date compiled. However, it is the responsibility of users and prospective students to determine whether a specific course is certified before enrolling in a driver training program. Many schools have a number of truck driving courses. The status of any school's course, as well as address and phone changes, may be determined by calling the Professional Truck Driver Institute at 703-838-8842, sending e-mail to ptdi@truckload.org, or checking the website at www.ptdi.org.

PTDI-certified courses are currently offered at 65 schools in 26 states and Canada. Generally, these courses are certified in early April, August and December. Check after the third week of these months for updates.

Please see current list of schools with PTDI-certified courses.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON CAREERS IN TRUCKING



2000-01 CAREER GUIDE TO INDUSTRIES

U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Information Services: Div. of Information Svcs., 2 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Rm. 2860, Washington, DC 20212; (202) 606-5886; <http://stats.bls.gov/emphome.htm>; (Bulletin 2523 - Trucking & Warehouse Industries)

2000-01 OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; (Bulletin 2520 - Truck Drivers); <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos246.htm>

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION, OFFICE OF CONSUMER & BUSINESS EDUCATION

Washington, DC 20580; (202) 326-3650; www.ftc.gov/moreinfo.htm

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, OFFICE OF MOTOR CARRIERS

www.fhwa.dot.gov

FHWA Driver Division: (202) 366-4001

PROFESSIONAL TRUCK DRIVER INSTITUTE

2200 Mill Rd., Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 838-8842; fax (703) 836-6610; www.ptdi.org; e-mail: ptdi@truckload.org

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Please see current list of contributors at Job Opportunities
and Industry Links.