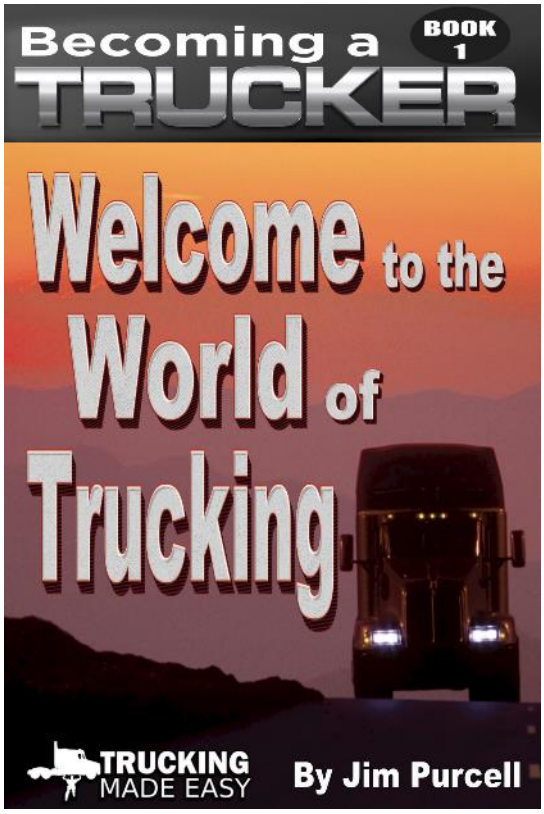

Becoming a Trucker: Book 1 Welcome to the World of Trucking

By Jim Purcell

Creator of TruckerCountry.com and TruckingMadeEasy.com

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Jim Purcell, the author and publisher of “Trucking Made Easy,” has made his best effort to produce a high quality, informative, and helpful manual.

However, he makes no representation or warranties of any kind regarding the completeness or accuracy of the contents of this manual.

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Welcome to the World of Trucking

Chapter 1: Introduction to Trucking

What you'll get out of this guide

- Key information about the trucking job and life to help you decide if a career in trucking is for you.
- Learn how to select a truck driver training program and to help you choose the best trucking company to work for.
- Information you can use as you start and progress in your trucking career.
- Reference material to help as you encounter obstacles, problems, etc.

The School of Hard Knocks (or How *Not* to Get Started!)

I could've used a guide like this when I got started in trucking! Instead, I got my start in the "School of Hard Knocks," which is where you learn things through your own mistakes. And man, I made plenty! It's almost painful to think how badly I got started in this trucking life. If I'd known just a few of the ins and outs of the trucking industry, I would have been successful *much* sooner.

But I know that many truckers getting started today still must go through this "school." That's why I set out to create a guide that explained many of the keys to getting started in, *and* succeeding at, trucking. There's a lot of practical information that's missing in trucking schools and training programs across the country.

We all want to get ahead in life, and to do so quickly if possible, right? There are many things I know now that I wish I had known when I got started. I wasted so much time, money, energy, and aggravation struggling to learn things on my own, that I *should* have been taught in trucking school. I want to help you avoid making the same mistakes that I, and so many other truckers did.

That's why I'm sharing my knowledge with you. I have had many people help me along the way and have seen that helping others is extremely

satisfying. Now, maybe I can return the favor, while helping all of us have a safer, and more efficient, drive through life.

There is a still a shortage of qualified drivers in the country today, which makes it easier than ever to become a truck driver. This appears to be a good thing, but not if that means lowering the standards, *especially* in the truck driving schools. This is dangerous to the truck driver, and everyone else he or she encounters.

As you'll learn, being a truck driver carries a lot of responsibility. It's not enough to simply get your CDL and drive on down the road. You owe it to yourself to get the best training available. This guide will show you exactly how to do that.

There *is* a Better Way!

When you get out on the road, and you haven't been properly trained in *all* aspects of truck driving and the trucking life, it can be a very difficult experience. I know, because that's how I got started in trucking. I'm sure there are many truckers out there who've had a similar experience when they first started driving a truck.

There are often delays drivers need to endure and challenges to overcome as they attempt to complete their mission.

I can only imagine how many new drivers started trucking, but ended up quitting because they had such a hard time. They could've used someone or something to help them with whatever problems they were having; a mentor, a training program, or a guide to follow along the way.

Trucking Made Easy was created to help make trucking *easy* (well, *easier*, anyway!), which is exactly what it *can* be. Trucking *can* be quite profitable, exciting, and challenging. You *can* have fun doing this job and living the trucking life! But in these guides, I won't sugarcoat what you're up against as a new driver.

Trucking is a challenge-filled career, and I'll be covering the typical mistakes made by new truckers in the following chapters.

You'll be shown how to avoid certain situations by either going around them, or by being prepared to face them head-on, when there's little choice.

There can be numerous challenges, difficulties, and hindrances to your success, which I'll be trying to help you with. You'll learn the easiest way to accomplish many of the different day-to-day tasks of the trucking life.

Some of my suggestions may not *sound* easy... for example, getting up early and driving into Los Angeles at 3 a.m. is the *last* thing you'll want to do. But when you didn't get stuck in traffic for 2 hours, and you're at the front of the line to get unloaded, you'll know one thing for sure - you've done it the ~~**EASY**~~ *much easier* way.

This is, of course, all hypothetical. It all depends on the hours you have available, scheduling, *and* your company dispatching procedures. Plus, drivers have less flexibility now with ELDs (electronic logging devices). But it's one example of doing things more efficiently.

I want to help you make informed decisions at every step along the way. From learning about a career in trucking, to achieving success as a truck driver, TME will guide you through it all.

If you decide on a career in trucking, this guide will help you save time and money, as well as minimizing pain and aggravation as you learn.

Even if you decide *not* to become a trucker, you'll know a great deal more about the world of trucking - and that you've made the right decision for *you*. At the very least, you'll have a better understanding of why truckers do what they do while you're all out there on the road.

My Experience

You know the routine: Wake up, get ready, go to work, come home, maybe relax a couple of hours, sleep, and repeat. Count the minutes until quitting time, count the days until the weekend. This was my life before I started trucking. *Maybe* you can relate!

I'm Jim Purcell and I've driven approximately 3 million miles over more than 20 years. I started writing these guides back in 2002. They've continued to evolve through the years, and have just been updated and improved!

I also created TruckerCountry.com in 2004 to help truckers with free CDL practice tests and many other trucking resources.

Before trucking, I had plenty of other jobs. I was with the NYPD in the '80s and a real estate agent in the '90s. I also had dozens of other jobs but they became old and boring after just a few months.

Whenever I worked the same times every day, had the same days off, and I got to the point where I could easily do my job without any challenge, I would be *done*. It was time to start looking for another job!

Then, in mid-1992, I had a bad month. Long story short, after a down period at my real estate job, the following happened: I lost my house and

investments, declared bankruptcy, and was getting low on cash. Oh, and I got divorced. Like I said, it was a *bad month*!

Then one day, I noticed a full-page ad in the newspaper from a major household moving company that offered to train inexperienced drivers and help them become truck drivers.

Hmmm. Become a trucker? Up until then, I had never even considered trucking for a living. I had no family or friends who drove, and I didn't know anyone who was a truck driver. I didn't know a thing about driving a truck or how to get licensed. I didn't even know that you needed a special license!

But this *certain* moving company offered to put someone with no trucking experience through their training program, and to help them in acquiring a CDL, whatever that was! Well, turns out, it's short for Commercial Driver's License, which truck drivers need to legally drive big trucks.

It was perfect timing because I was sorely in need of a change: a change of jobs, of the same old routine, of location, and of lifestyle. Trucking seemed like it would provide constant challenge and change (loads, cities, roads, people, etc.), with the potential of great income, plus the freedom to do my job the way I felt it needed to be done.

Of course, I had no idea just what I was getting myself into!

Within a few weeks, I was on my way to the company's main terminal, which had a complete training facility. We spent 2 *whole weeks* learning to drive a truck, and most of that was not even behind the wheel!

Then, a few days after passing the CDL tests, I was driving in downtown Detroit, running over stop signs and curbs, and basically being a menace to society. Well, maybe it wasn't *that* bad, but it wasn't pretty. **Detroit, you can't prove a thing!**

Let me back up and clarify a little here: Two weeks is *not* enough time. It's not simply learning a set of driving skills on a bigger vehicle. Driving an 18-wheeler makes you rethink everything you thought you knew about driving - and if it doesn't, **it should!** Learning the best way to drive, for the safety and success of yourself and all of those around you, takes *much* longer than two weeks!

Rather than get into all the details of my trucking school travails, as entertaining as that might be, in the following chapters I'll show you how to do it all the right way, from researching and selecting a school, to getting through school and training successfully, to getting started driving down the road on your very first load.

But if you *really* want a story, there's a quick tale in Trucking Mastery, (Chapter 11, under Emergencies and Breakdowns… Yeah, it even happens to truckers!) about *how I ran out of fuel going* ***up*** *a mountain south of Yellowstone in Wyoming* and what happened after that. Not a great day, but it *was* a learning experience!

Slowly, but surely, I learned from my mistakes, and my trucking knowledge and skills improved. Many factors caused me to leave the household moving sector, and I moved on to other types of trucking. In over 20 years of trucking, mostly over the road, I've hauled the following: dry and reefer vans, flatbeds, tankers, doubles and triples, household goods, and even some farm and forestry materials hauling.

I've even hauled "sludge", which is sewage, from wastewater treatment plants to farms. Now *that* was a S**T job! And yes, I *really* needed a job at the time.

I condensed all my different jobs and experiences, some great, some miserable, into these books.

Now, when I wake up, I'm at work. I *still* love that, even after being on the road for all these years. I can go into a truck stop and get breakfast, or I could just eat something in the truck, so I could get on down the road that much faster. This freedom means a lot to me!

There is always something new, whether it's a view, a challenge, or even another kind of trucking, that keeps me interested and still in the trucking industry, all these years later.

Obviously, I have the responsibility to get the load to the proper place in a specific amount of time, but no one's looking over my shoulder. I decide

when to get up, when to drive, when to take breaks, and when to eat meals. I just need to make sure that I deliver the load safely and on time, and be ready for the next load.

Like I hoped, it's always challenging, and constantly changing. It was tough in the beginning. It's imperative to train and prepare as well as possible, that you find the right school, and take advantage of these guides. Those are things that will maximize your chance at a successful trucking career.

However, no matter how good the training is (even with this guide!), or how much you prepare, nothing will compare to being behind the wheel. You're always learning as you go. New experiences are an almost daily occurrence - you see something new practically every day.

So, ask yourself a few questions:

- Are you feeling trapped in your current job?
- Are you wondering how you're going to make any money, let alone enough to set aside for the future or for school, with little to no training?
- How you can save up to pay for a better education?
- Are you unwilling to settle for the options your current life and location offer you for the long term?
- Have you always wanted to get out of your town and see what else this country offers?

- Are you afraid a more exciting option is passing you by while you're trying to make it through your day-to-day job?

Next, I'll discuss how you can answer these questions with reasons why you should consider trucking as a career - the kind of career that can change your life... for the long haul!

Chapter 2: Why Should You Consider Trucking as a Career?

As you'll see, trucking is *full* of options and opportunities! There are several different types of trucking: dry van, reefer, flatbed, liquid bulk, and dry bulk are just a few. We'll cover these in greater detail in the Types of Trucking Operations chapter.

There are "distance" options (see How Far Do You Want to Drive?) which include:

- Locally (near your home)
- Intrastate (within your state, but a bit further away)
- Regional (limited to the Southwest or Northeast states, for example)
- Fully interstate (over-the-road in all lower 48 states). Some companies will even have you drive into Mexico, and/or across Canada and into Alaska.

The travel can take you away from home for just a few hours, or for several weeks. You can choose to be a company driver, an owner-operator leased on with a company, or eventually, a fully independent owner-operator with your own operating authority.

Naturally, earning potential is one of the most important elements of any career. More on this can be found a bit later in Your Financial Destiny Is in Your Own Hands and How Will You Get Paid and How Much Can You *Really* Earn?. In trucking, the possibilities for earnings change with each combination of the different types of driving positions available. Sometimes you're able to choose those options and how you combine them, sometimes you're not, but they can range from driving locally for minimum wage to making six figures a year as an experienced owner-operator.

Over-the-road drivers, whether intrastate or interstate, are typically paid **By-the-Mile**.

Therefore, the more miles you drive, the more money you'll earn. There are some exceptions, but **"CPM" (cents per mile) is how most drivers are paid.**

When you compare truck driving with other occupations that don't require formal education, trucking offers great potential for a high income. On average, during their first year of driving, truck drivers earn $30,000 - 35,000 a year. The typical trucker then goes on to make (by the 5th year) anywhere between $40,000 -$50,000 (or more!) per year. There are some companies that guarantee you'll be making an average of $50,000 yearly after just nine months on the road (owner-operators can *potentially* earn more).

How many professions offer that kind of pay scale after training just a few weeks? Not only that, many companies will *pay* you while you're training to be a professional driver!

There are Unlimited Opportunities in Trucking!

There are many kinds of truckers, and almost as many types of trucking in which they can succeed! This section will describe most of the major types of trucking.

If you have a good, stable driving record, plus a clean CDL, you can pretty much write your own ticket in trucking.

Trucking offers opportunities for almost every type of person and driver. Which one is for you depends on your work preferences, goals, your health... even your personality. You'll have to consider your priorities, and all your options, when evaluating which type of trucking will lead you down the highway to success.

Each type of trucking has its pros and cons, many of which will challenge your personal strengths and weaknesses in different ways.

There are some jobs where you may have to do strenuous physical labor in addition to your driving.

With other jobs, you'll just drive, and never even touch a load (or secure it to your trailer, if driving a flatbed).

As a trucker, you'll have the option of:

- Driving solo or in a team driving operation. Do you enjoy working closely - very closely - with others? Or is privacy and freedom more important to you than higher pay checks?
- Some routes are "dedicated," having the same origin and destination each trip. Some drivers prefer the familiarity of this type of driving. You always know where you're going, places to stop along the way, how much money you make every check, when you'll be home, etc.
- Then there's the total opposite situation: Jobs where you could go, or be, anywhere on any given day, not knowing where you're

going next. In fact, this describes the life of most over-the-road drivers!

- You can drive "over-the-road." This usually means you're on the road for at least 2-3 weeks at a time and can include a few of the above options... a team operation on a regional, dedicated route that gets home every week, for example. Or you could be a solo driver never knowing where you'll head next, out for a couple months at a time. As you can see, even within the "OTR" world, there are many options.
- You can work more regionally, or locally, so that you can be at home more often, and more predictably. I've been in situations where I needed to be home more often, so I chose to work locally for a while. But remember one thing: Local driving jobs are in high demand. This means if opportunities are limited, preference for those local jobs will be given to those drivers with the most experience and best driving record.

One of the advantages of trucking is that, in many cases, you can change from OTR to regional or even local driving. But unless your company has both OTR and local routes for its drivers, you'll have to change companies to make that work.

I'm not recommending it, but this is practically expected in trucking, which now has about a 100% turnover rate per year on average. Sorry, trucking companies, but this is just the truth. This means that the average driver in the U.S. changes jobs once per year! Unfortunately, companies will think

twice about hiring you if you start a pattern of "job hopping," so be aware of how that can impact your options.

In trucking, there are many ways to get many loads to many different places. *This creates opportunities for truck drivers to find the right type of driving job for them*.

The following sections describe various categories and types of truck driving opportunities.

Drivers have many different options to make trucking work for them.

Later, I'll discuss in greater detail the many different types of truck driving operations. As you're probably beginning to see, you'll have many options to choose from in this industry.

Some drivers start their careers in a certain kind of trucking that they'll stick with for their entire careers. However, most drivers won't know if they like a certain type of trucking until they've done it. If, after doing one type of trucking for some time, you determine that it's not for you, you'll be able to transition to another type of trucking.

You'll need to make decisions in each of the following areas to determine what type of trucker you want to be:

- Chapter 3: **How Far Do You Want to Drive?**
- Chapter 4: **Should You Be a Company Driver or an Owner-Operator?**
- Chapter 5: **What Type of Trucking Operation Interests You?**

Trucking Is Everywhere!

You might have heard that, "If you got it, a trucker hauled it." Or, "Without trucks, America stops." These are not exaggerations, by any means. Yes, many goods, at least in part, get transported by cargo ships, airplanes, and

trains. But trucks are the only form of transportation that can deliver those goods from the docks and warehouses to a business's front doorsteps, or back loading dock.

Trucks are everywhere in our nation and move just about every product you can imagine! There are over 3.5 million truck drivers in America today, according to the latest statistics from the ATA.

The Huge Demand for New Truck Drivers

There may never have been a better time to start a career in trucking. The present driver shortage, created largely by retiring Baby Boomers, as well as the usual additions needed just for replacements and turnovers, has

many trucking companies now offering more to attract new drivers - more money, better benefits, and newer equipment.

Furthermore, the working conditions of truck drivers improve every year. As a matter of fact, it won't be long before they no longer have to actually drive at *all*. (But check out this Trucker Country article before you give up the whole trucking idea, because it will be a *while* before that happens!)

Trucks have come a long way since the *old days* of trucking. Comfortable, air ride, power seats are commonplace, making driving much more enjoyable, and easier on your body for the long-term. Not only that, but many company trucks today include satellite (and TVs), refrigerators, microwaves, and APUs to run it all as well as provide heating and cooling, *without* even running the truck! The average truck's interior is much bigger, and arranged more efficiently, with a more ergonomic design for the drivers. Some companies offer higher pay if you choose one of their more fuel-efficient truck models, which are typically smaller, but no less modern or accommodating than the traditional larger trucks.

To see a *really* nice truck, fast forward to the Household Moving and Transportation section.

The "Big Picture" of Trucking

Trucking is simply the act of moving freight over land from point A to point B, for money. The job consists of picking up and loading a certain product, safely and legally getting the product to its destination, and doing so in a

way that represents your company well.

You're essentially a customer service agent for your company everywhere you go.

Truckers are an essential element of our nation's economy. You'll be behind the scenes in every step of our consumer-based lifestyle, as you make each of these scenarios, and more, happen every day.

For example, drivers are involved in the following various ways:

- Hauling produce all the way from the farms and fields of California to the supermarkets in Boston.
- Trees on logging trucks to the lumber mills, then to construction sites or to paper mills; rolls or pallets of paper to newspapers and office supply stores.
- Oil from the fields to the refineries, then gasoline from the refineries to the gas stations.

As a trucker, what you do matters to people all over the country, every day!

Consumers go to their local grocery store and rarely give a second thought to the lettuce in the produce section. But a truck driver who regularly picks up 40,000 pounds of assorted produce starts to realize that they're a key element of an amazing process. They're picking up and delivering food

which will eventually feed thousands of people, often in an entirely different part of the country!

Your financial destiny is in your own hands

In trucking, as you gain more experience and knowledge, you'll have the ability to make more money. Many companies pay more for each additional year of over-the-road experience you have. Having a clean driving record and safety awards (meaning no tickets or accidents for a length of time) will help the best drivers earn more money. One of the many advantages trucking has over other careers is that the emphasis is typically on *what* you know, rather than *who*. You control your driving record and the impression you make on people.

Once you progress in your career, you may have the ability to move into other, more specialized, types of trucking (assuming you began your career in general dry freight), such as reefer or flatbed operations. These types of trucking often pay more, as well as having other advantages.

You can also consider becoming an owner-operator (read on, future driver, I'll talk more about this later). I strongly recommend getting your initial experience and understanding of trucking first as a company driver. This will give you the opportunity to determine whether driving a truck is a viable career option for you with a minimum of up-front costs. It will also give you a solid foundation from which to grasp all that's involved in being a trucker before making the financial investment in your own rig.

Anyone who is 18 and over and can pass the test to get their CDL, and pass a DOT physical, can become a trucker. You must be at least 21 to drive interstate. Men, women, retirees, married couples, and occasionally even families, depending on what your insurance carrier allows, are seen driving over-the-road these days.

Many drivers are also able to bring along their pet, and I've seen a variety of pets on the road – dogs of course, but also cats, parrots, rats, and ferrets!

The "view from your office" changes minute-by-minute, and finding out where you're going next never gets old. Depending on your circumstances, you can go from unemployed to driving down the road in anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. You can possibly have your training paid for by the company you will work for, or you may prefer to pay for a private truck driving school. This will be discussed in later chapters.

Freedom and Responsibility: You Are Your Own Boss

One of the most attractive elements of becoming a truck driver is the freedom to get your job done, with little to no direct supervision. You will be expected to check in with your dispatcher regularly (if you've got a "hot load," that may mean hourly!), but you are the one who will determine what steps you need to take, and when to take them, to make your delivery in a timely manner. Failure to do so will also be your full responsibility, but that's just part of the challenge!

You can gain more control over your future by becoming an efficient truck driver. What does that mean? How can you make that happen?

In trucking, getting results, not from working harder, but from working smarter, is the key. With experience, your skills will improve, as will your knowledge and capacity for making judgment calls in various situations. Combining all these factors will enable you to become an efficient truck driver.

Overall, the more efficient you become at trucking, the more money you can earn and the faster you can accomplish your goals. Whether those goals are financial, personal, family, or spiritual, if you're dedicated and willing to learn, the sky's the limit!

Travel, Adventure, and Daily Challenges

As a truck driver, you may have the opportunity to travel from the busiest city streets and industrial areas to the quietest farms and fields, from mountain passes in beautiful Colorado to oceanfront docks and exclusive seaside resorts on either ocean coast. You name the place, trucking can take you there!

It's exciting to go someplace new, especially when it's in an area of the country or a state you've never been to before. You may have seen certain places on the TV or in a picture, but there's nothing like seeing it for yourself.

There's a sense of adventure when you're navigating through a big city, climbing a mountain pass, or taking a questionable road when you get off the interstate. Before you take on any kind of challenge, you sometimes

wonder if you'll be up to the task. But somehow, you're able to do it, and when you do, it's a great feeling of accomplishment. In trucking, there are many challenges like this, practically every day (especially when you're just getting started!).

You'll often see sites and scenery while you're driving, but if you're carrying a load, you probably won't be able to stop for long to get out of the truck and appreciate it all. If you're *laid over* (what being in-between load assignments is called), or you plan as well as you can for the unpredictable schedule of a trucker, and add in a little luck, you'll be in a place where there are new and interesting things to see or do. This is where having GPS designed for truckers and WiFi can make a big difference in your quality of life while you're on the road.

Driving Down the Road is Just One Aspect of Your Trucking Life!

We used to advise drivers to keep a camera or video camera with them to take advantage of the opportunity to take some great pictures, but these days, everyone who has a smartphone has a camera and video camera right in their hand! This is one of the most significant advances made since I started trucking - phone, camera, video camera, and laptop, all held in my hand. Take a second to think of all the great ways your smartphone can make life on the road even better!

You may want to consider getting a dashcam, since you can't use your phone when you're driving. Being able to share those trips, or at least the exciting parts, with your friends and family is a fun way to keep them in touch with you as a professional driver.

You could even start your own YouTube channel, as many other truckers have! Gregbig is one such channel and The Jade and John Show is another. Check it out to see what truckers do from day to day!

Like we've mentioned, today's trucks are almost like mini-apartments on wheels. Amenities and comforts you'd only expect to see in an RV, hotel room, or in your own home, such as refrigerators and microwave ovens, small coffee makers, entertainment systems with wall-mounted TVs, installed satellite television and radio programming. Truckers can outfit their trucks with a variety of options in entertainment, from movies and their favorite music to the latest gaming systems.

Naturally, truckers have adapted the newest technology to their trucks. Laptops, smartphones, and tablets are commonplace, if not a necessity, both for entertainment and professional use. These advances make a big difference in staying connected to your loved ones and to your company and customers.

Commercial Vehicle GPS systems can simplify finding both your delivery point as well as your favorite truck stops and diners. WiFi is almost everywhere, and you can also buy a data plan for your device, either to use on its own, or to back-up the WiFi networks you regularly use. There's room in your cab to maintain all kinds of hobbies. They say it takes all kinds, and trucking is a prime example of that!

You can read (books are great, but e-readers will pack a lot more reading per inch of storage space!), or get into photography with some online courses. Maybe you'll figure out those settings on your camera! You could journal or blog, write down your thoughts, things you've seen, highlights - or lowlights - of your daily adventures, etc.

Who knows, you could write the next best-selling trucking novel, a trucking guide (like this one!), or even a trucking sitcom or road trip flick!

Artists can spend many a layover learning and perfecting new techniques from online videos and courses. Some types of painting could fit perfectly into the OTR life.

My daughter used to bring along modeling clay and sit next to me creating tiny, detailed sculptures as we drove down the road. Drawing, coloring - complicated coloring books for adults are all the rage in stress reduction these days!

Crocheting, knitting, (Have you seen Demolition Man? "Rocky" knitting before kicking someone's butt is a *must see*!) and hand quilting would also be easily done in a big truck. One could even bring along a basic sewing machine (or more advanced one if you have a good power inverter). Other ideas are building model cars or airplanes, or bringing along a small set of weights, a jump rope, or running shoes (much more on this is *Trucking Lifestyles*).

Speaking of exercise, Tabata training (a type of "HIIT") works particularly well for truckers in terms of time, equipment needed, *and* space

requirements! Trust me, you'll be glad you made the extra effort to stay in shape, later in your career!

There is practically no limit to the things you can learn how to do - such as any one of the hobbies we just mentioned - on websites like YouTube.com, Wikihow.com, and About.com. Longer layovers don't need to feel like wasted time or be boring!

Be creative; it's worth it to figure out how to make your favorite pastimes available to you on the road.

No matter how much you love your job, taking time away can provide a chance to see things differently when you return. Spending a weekend watching movies in a truck stop lounge works well for many, but I often need a true mental retreat from thinking, talking, or hearing about driving.

You could bobtail to a movie, farmer's market, shopping mall, local book store, indoor pool, gym, golf course, or batting cage! However, there's not always time to find these things, or find parking even with time. But we *do* have a job to do. Sad, but true. Do a little online research ahead of time just in case. It's good to have options available when you just *must* get away from the truck.

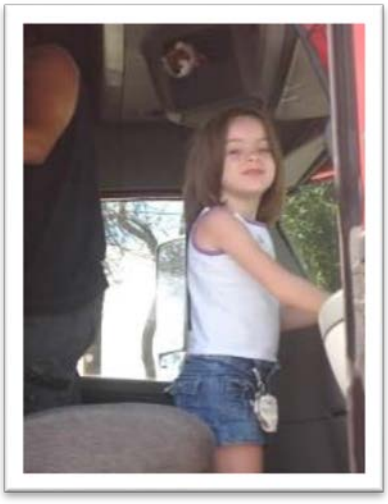
When you combine the low initial cost to become a trucker, the high return on your investment in terms of salary, the freedom to explore your own

interests, and the romantic idea of being paid to take road trips, trucking is a very attractive career choice!

Like we've seen, there are many reasons to consider a career in trucking. Each one listed here may not appeal to you personally, but there is something for just about every type of person in the trucking industry. Are you ready to start a new adventure?

Taking Your Family on the Road

There are many trucking companies that allow drivers to take their spouses and children with them on the road, whether for the summer, or full-time, incorporating homeschooling into their lives.



For more information about this, see "Take Your Family with You on the Road" in *Trucking Lifestyles*.

Women Truckers

See more about Kitty in this Schneider Promotional Video.

As with many other male-dominated professions, more and more women are choosing to become truck drivers. And just as female police officers, firefighters, construction workers and pilots have found, choosing a career traditionally considered a "man's job" is not without its difficulties. However, with a little determination and hard work, these issues can be resolved, and shouldn't stop you from following your dreams into a big truck!

Accomplishing even the most difficult tasks in truck driving rarely requires brute strength. Approaching tasks such as loading, unloading, and tarping with an attitude of working "smarter, not harder" will help you find the most efficient way to get the job done. You will most likely find that projecting confidence and professionalism will slowly earn you the respect of the men and, occasionally, other women who you'll be working with.

In fact, women may have an advantage in finding driving jobs. Many trucking companies are interested in hiring females, due to their reputation as cautious, safe, and more considerate drivers. Yes gentlemen, statistics don't lie! This enables companies to save money on both insurance premiums and truck repair.

For more safety advice for woman truckers, check out *Trucking Mastery*.

Chapter 3: How Far Do You Want to Drive?

This chapter could also be titled “How Long Do You Want to Be Away from Home?” These subjects are closely related, but they’re not synonymous. For example, you could drive coast to coast, but if you’re running in a team operation, you could be back home in 4-5 days. Seriously. As a solo driver, that would take 8-10 days. In a team, the truck is *always* moving. Well, almost. You *do* still need to fuel, eat, as well as a few other things!

That’s why I included “driving solo vs. team” in this chapter. It’s a necessary part of the discussion, and one of the choices you might eventually have to make.

1. OTR (Over-the-Road)
2. Regional and Short Haul
3. Local Driving
4. Union Jobs
5. Driving “solo” versus “team”

OTR Driving

OTR (over-the-road) drivers operate heavy trucks and tractor-trailers for long distances, and for long periods of time. These drivers work for motor carriers which usually deliver freight in all or part of the 48 continental states plus Canada. Most of these companies are considered “irregular route” carriers. This means they don’t have a set “regular” routes. Drivers usually don’t know where they’re going from load to load. Welcome to trucking!

OTR drivers can expect to be on the road on average from one to four weeks between home visits, or possibly longer if getting home isn’t a priority for you... or your company has a shortage of available loads at the time, *or* your company just doesn’t care!

As we’ve said, some of the advantages of OTR trucking include living life on the road, seeing the country, good pay, and having more control over your schedule and routines, etc.

See the Country! Be Your Own Boss! Make Great Money!

Sounds like a highway billboard, doesn’t it?

The hardest thing about over-the-road trucking is that you often need to sacrifice much of your home life for the job. It can be tough on your family if you must be gone for weeks at a time. But often, there are options, even for the OTR driver, like finding a carrier which will get you home more

regularly, or by taking your family with you on the road (with some carriers, this is an option, as it can be if you're an owner/operator).

Dedicated Routes

Another common type of trucking, whether it's OTR or regional, involves dedicated over-the-road routes. Hauling is done for one customer on a contractual basis, picking up and delivering to the same location each trip. Dedicated routes are typical for contract carriers who haul cargo for the same shipper, or for private carriers hauling their own product (see "transportation definitions" section).

Look on Craigslist and you can see how many dedicated jobs are in your area. Enter your city, then jobs, and select transport.

You *may* know right where you'll be, week after week, and you *may* know what your paycheck will bring. But even with a dedicated driving job, you *may* still be gone for weeks at a time. Depending on your location, dedicated jobs will be highly sought after and preference will be given to the most experienced drivers.

Types and Conditions of Assigned Trucks

The trucks you'll be in as an OTR driver can vary widely from company to company. If you're sticking with the bigger operations, chances are you'll have a newer truck with all the bells and whistles. However, many smaller companies don't always have the latest and greatest trucks available.

There were a couple of trucks I had to take back after only one trip in them and swap them out. I don't know if the last driver didn't report some of the maintenance issues or if their maintenance department wasn't quite up to par, but don't be afraid to let your company know your truck needs work. There are lives on the line, so equipment must be kept in top condition. Your daily inspections are key to getting to know your truck, and what's normal, so you will notice right away if things aren't working just right.

More than once I needed to clean a truck myself. I mean to even make it livable! A new mattress was always part of the deal (see Truckers and Back

Problems in *Trucking Lifestyles*), but there seems to be more than one definition of "clean" out there, and who wants a sloppy truck? Do yourself a favor and show up with some disinfecting, multi-surface wipes, some glass cleaner, a roll of shop or paper towels, a small broom and dustpan, some trash bags, and a bottle of something (like Febreze, home of true odor elimination!). You'll feel better, sleep better, and be more efficient in a truck you know is clean and well-cared for.

You can typically make the most money in long-haul, over-the-road driving.

Ways to Handle, and Enjoy, Being on the Road

My wife and I spent most of the first year of our marriage living in a truck (quite the honeymoon suite!). We chose not to have a permanent home, so we were able to save up quite a bit of money. Not having rent, utilities, and general household expenses make saving easy! It also freed us from the pressure of trying to "get home" and let us really enjoy the layovers we had, wherever we were.

We had lobster in Maine; spent the day on the beach outside of Charleston, SC; found our favorite barbecue restaurant (until further notice, it's in Kansas City!); and found some excellent movie theaters, all over the country. It can be a great way to build up your savings until you know what you want to spend it on!

Speaking of BBQ, I *must* recommend the BBQ Man. Teeny little operation at the Petro in Little Rock, AR. Get on your CB radio and give him a holler. He may even deliver to your truck!

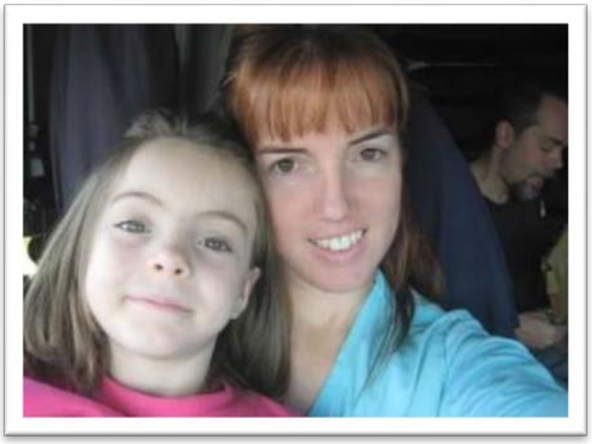
When you're first starting out in trucking, getting a job as an OTR driver is going to be the easiest work to find. Local and regional positions aren't as common, and those companies usually have their pick of drivers – truckers who have more experience and cleaner MVRs (motor vehicle records) than the average driver. Local and regional work isn't available everywhere – you may need to relocate if that's what you're looking for, or to qualify to work for a specific company.

OTR jobs have a high rate of turnover. Companies are always looking to replace drivers who are retiring, who have decided the OTR life is not for them, or who have left the long-haul life after finding a local or regional job.

There are some people with personalities and work styles who are just more suited to driving OTR.

Personally, I'm much more efficient as an OTR driver, versus doing local work. Once I'm on the road, I'm in "work mode." For example, I can stay behind the wheel as long I want, start driving earlier to beat the rush hour traffic, make a delivery at optimal times (quieter loading or unloading times), whatever it takes, until I get back home.

When working locally, it can be a challenge just get to work on time!



Some drivers, current and former, would have you believe that there is no way you can be both a successful OTR driver *and* have a family. At least not a successful family! Well, I'm here to tell you that's not *necessarily* the case. You and your family do need to recognize your limitations - are there families who fall apart with one parent on the road? Of course, but that's true of any profession that requires long hours or frequent travel. Heck, that's true of many families with one or both parents working office hours.

Regardless of your profession, the success of your marriage is much less about being an OTR driver, and much more about how strong your relationship is with your family.

My wife and I made it work for 12 years, until I got off the road. Was it easy? No, but we managed to pull it off. We made it work by my bringing her, and then our children, on the road with me from time to time.

We homeschooled our children, and this gave us much more freedom. Not only did this allow us time together on the road, but at home as well. If we'd been on a more standard school schedule, I would've only seen them maybe 4 hours a week. Not to say that it's not doable for a strong family, but it wasn't what we wanted at the time.

These days, you can Skype, you can Periscope, Facetime (for Mac/iPhone mainly). There are a several messaging apps that let you check in when you take a break from driving. Keep a running blog for yourselves (here you go, it's free!), one dashcam facing you, and one facing the road, maybe create a YouTube Channel, documenting the days you're apart (from both your

perspective and your family's) so you can share in the joys and challenges of each day.

Difficulties and Limitations of Life on the Road

Like I said, you need to know your limitations. If you don't, being on the road will reveal them to you in short order.

Twelve years and a new baby were two of ours. I didn't want to keep driving and miss out on our last bundle of joy as she grew and changed.

When our oldest two were little, we were excited about flip phones and 3-megapixel phone cameras that let us share bits and pieces of the day. As much as technology has improved, there's no way around it - **you miss out on things when you're not home with your family**. That separation will be difficult. We'll talk more about how to minimize those challenges in Trucking Lifestyles.

At first, it may seem like your world is a buffet table! And it can be! But if you want to stay healthy, you're going to need to adapt your diet to fit your needs on the road. That's not easy when you're parked at a restaurant almost every night. Keeping a cooler or small refrigerator in your truck can give you faster, easier, cheaper and healthier options.

Finding time and ways to exercise that will fit your options and schedules isn't easy, but it is necessary! Staying fit and flexible will make your life easier on and off the road.

Being on your own on the road can be challenging. It's a different experience than say, being alone in your home or out in your hometown. As a trucker, you can go from feeling alone, surrounded by others in a truck stop, to truly being the only human for what seems like hundreds of miles in any direction. It's a unique feeling, one that may be intimidating or exhilarating, depending on your personality.

Regional and Short Haul Operations

There are many different scenarios and combinations of types of hauling, taking distance into consideration. Not all companies even define them the same way. Carriers that haul regionally generally stay within a limited geographic area.

Some stay in the same state, some branch out to bordering states. Many carriers go to several states, such as the common eight or 10 western states, to the southern states, or to the East Coast. The drivers for these carriers operate similarly to that of an OTR driver, except they don't travel to all 48 continental states.

Short-haul motor carriers haul LTL (less-than-a-load) freight, often terminal to terminal (hub to hub). They're usually away from home only one or two nights at a time. Many of these are unionized motor carriers (which can be local or regional, and less often, OTR).

Drivers Solutions briefly explains LTL in an informative video.

LTL can be regional or local. LTL drivers can be gone for several days or be home every night. It can be tough to get LTL jobs as a brand-new driver as they often require at least a few years of OTR experience.

Working regionally can be a good mix of being on the road and getting home more regularly, but it depends on the company and how they do things, which may or may not translate to more home-time than OTR driving.

I worked for one company that had a mix of regional and OTR. One of their larger contracts was for a nursery operation, hauling seedling plants to greenhouses and nurseries, primarily throughout the southeast states. That was seasonal, and in the off-season, I was hauling more random, general freight type of things to entirely different regions of the country. Beer to Southern California, a Walmart distribution load to North Dakota, that kind of thing. With that company, I was home almost every week, and usually on the same day, mid-week.

When we were doing the more seasonal nursery work, I got home *regularly*. However, I was typically home only one night, before going out again the next day. Or I'd get home late on a Tuesday night, after really pushing the limits of my logbook to make it, get home exhausted, and crash out.

We'd all wake up late on Wednesday, try to enjoy the better part of the afternoon, do something as a family, try *not* to think about how I had to leave early the very next morning, get to sleep early, get back on the road the next morning and do it all again.

It was good to see my family every week, and have a few hours to enjoy our time together, but it was exhausting to have a constant stream of hellos and goodbyes, barely recovering from one trip before having to prepare for the next one. It was easier on all of us, at least on me as the Dad, to be gone longer (typical 2-3 weeks on OTR jobs), and then be home longer as a result (at least several days). It allowed my wife and kids, *and* me, to settle back into our routines, if only for a short time.

The pay for regional driving jobs is quite comparable to OTR, and in my case, I made the most money I'd ever made as a company driver doing the seasonal, regional, nursery deliveries. It was a combination of the contract my company had, the extra pay per drop (delivery) I made, and high miles I was driving.

Each trip and truckload with that company, I made multiple deliveries to different nurseries all over the southeastern United States, and that delivery pay added up! Some companies will pay you additionally per drop, or for the unloading, which is more common with regional jobs.

Nursery work was hard work when it came time to unload, but I enjoyed the freedom I had to make the deliveries after hours. I had a lift gate on my trailer, so I could unload carts myself even without a dock. Being able to deliver on my own schedule allowed me to maximize my driving time during low-traffic hours.

With any driving job, it's worth your time to take note of the big cities and local rush hours on your route, and, if possible, work your schedule around that. Then you're resting when others are sitting in traffic, and driving when everyone else is either at home or at work. Smarter, not harder!

It really depends on you, your family (if you have one), and lifestyle, whether being home for longer, or for more often, would work best for you. Regional doesn't necessarily mean getting home more often. Different

companies have different routes and schedules, and it can depend more on what you're hauling, and when the locations you're delivering to are open to receive the load. But the closer you stay to home, the better your chances of getting back!

Of course, bringing everyone with me in the truck was always an exciting change, giving us more time together, and keeping my wife and I from going crazy from the same old routine. It was just as exciting to get them back home, so I could have some peace and relative quiet in my truck again!

Linehaul drivers are those that drive LTL loads terminal to terminal (like Estes in the picture, or GI Trucking). They sometimes get paid by the mile plus hourly for their time loading and unloading on the docks. There are also companies that consider linehaul synonymous with OTR, so make sure you get a clarification on that before you begin with one of these types of companies!

Local driving jobs

Local drivers can operate any type of commercial vehicle, but the majority will be smaller, straight trucks (vehicles under 26,000 pounds only, requiring a class "B" CDL). The bigger metropolitan areas will have more local drivers driving tractor-trailers.

Some Characteristics of Local Driving:

- There are usually multiple stops and there is more contact with customers. You are frequently a customer service representative, as well as a delivery driver.
- There's more loading and unloading, and for some positions, you're the one stocking the shelves. You must typically work long hours, but this is great if you want the overtime!
- Not all local jobs require you to load and unload, but keep in mind those that do will require it no matter what the weather is like - snow, ice, rain, hot summer days, sometimes dirt or - even more fun - mud driveways are always adventurous to carry boxes or haul dollies full of product across! Some drivers will welcome the built-in workout, but it might take some getting used to if you're not ready for it.
- You'll usually have a route, or drive within a restricted delivery area. Route drivers are often required to work in a sales capacity.
- You typically get paid by the hour, but can get paid by a percentage of the load, or by the load. This generally equates to making significantly less money than you would with either Regional or OTR options. The trade-off is being home daily vs the better pay from more miles driven.

- If the driver works within a 100-mile radius, he will be excluded from hours-of-service regulations, which means having no log books to fill out.
- You're usually home every day (or night), theoretically spending more time with family. But when you get home after 10-12 hours of local driving (delivering, heavy lifting, possibly maneuvering through store aisles), quality time with the family may be the last thing on your mind.
- More like a "normal" job than over-the-road trucking, but this has its pros and cons. You can be home every night, but too tired to do much. You're not in an office or a warehouse, but there will be more direct interaction with your supervisors and possibly your coworkers than an OTR driver would have.
- Tractors (if not a straight truck) are usually older model, no-frills, day cabs (no sleeper berth because you go home every night).
- "Slip seating" can be a common practice, where you'll share the truck with other drivers who work a different shift. This is fine *if* you and the other drivers have the same definition of clean and comfortable! You'll need to remember to pack your bag at the end of your shift, and not leave your stuff or trash behind for anyone else to deal with.

In some areas, finding a good local trucking job can be tough. There's a lot of competition, and the most experienced, qualified drivers clearly have the advantage. For example, with construction type trucking jobs (rock haulers, end dump or belly dump, pneumatic trailers, etc.), unless you know someone, or already have experience in the specific type of trucking, it can be difficult to get employed by these local companies. The same can be said for other local types of trucking: tanker drivers hauling fuel, food delivery service drivers, and others.

Many construction-based jobs are seasonal, depending upon the area of the country they're in. Drivers need to make most of their money during peak season, typically working long hours to make up for the lack of work during the off-season. Adequate planning to stretch those earnings and get through the slower season is key. It may be *so* slow that these drivers would have to find other work, at least temporarily, to supplement their seasonal income.

Note for drivers under 21 years old: Drivers who drive OTR, linehaul, or regionally, are usually required to drive interstate (across state lines). Interstate drivers must be a minimum of 21 years old. Therefore, drivers under 21 have no choice but to drive locally or *intrastate* (staying within their home state). These drivers can drive either class "A" or class "B" vehicles.

If you're under 21, it may be difficult to get licensed as a class "A" driver (see the section "Is Attending a Truck Driving School Mandatory?" in Book 2). Spending money and going through a truck driver training program to get trained and licensed is one option, although it doesn't often make sense financially. It can be difficult for new drivers to find local work that pays enough money to justify the cost of a truck driving school. As a potential driver, you will almost certainly need the help of your employer in getting trained, and to use a company-owned tractor-trailer for the road test.

For more information, see Trucker Country's page about state and federal CDL requirements.

Union Trucking Jobs

Most union truck drivers are members of the Teamsters. These are usually good jobs to get as they are often higher-paying, with good benefits, and a more realistic chance of getting home every night or day. These types of jobs are often LTL, and they're most often regional or local, but can be OTR as well.

Like local driving jobs in general, these jobs are also in high demand. Experienced drivers have a big advantage here, and they will get first dibs for available jobs. Drivers often stay with these jobs until they retire, so, depending on where you live, it can be a long wait until a union job becomes available. Of course, good timing and a little luck can be your friend.

To get a leg in the door, you may have to get employed as a "casual" employee, just working as needed. The starting work is often on a loading dock, loading and unloading trailers, although in some areas, driving positions may be available immediately. Find your local teamsters union hall or headquarters for more information on signing up, fees, requirements, and job availabilities.

Advantages of union jobs:

- Good pay and benefits.
- Often have routes a driver can get used to (a pro only if you prefer this feature).
- Good potential home time.
- Steady and consistent work.

- Union representation.

Disadvantages of union jobs:

- No-frills equipment, due to not being OTR and not needing sleepers, etc.
- Having the same routes daily can be boring.
- There is little freedom and control, as drivers are usually given a set route, appointment times, and schedules which cannot be changed easily.

An example of a unionized trucking companies is YRC Freight, which is Yellow's new name after their buyout and merger with Roadway. They mainly haul LTL loads terminal to terminal.

Driving 'Solo' or 'Team'

As a truck driver, I've driven both solo and team. There are pros and cons to each type for sure, but one type is not necessarily better than the other. The following is an overview of each type of driving.

Driving Solo

A solo driver is the only driver assigned to one tractor, as opposed to a team operation in which two drivers are assigned to one tractor. A solo driver is solely responsible for his tractor, his trailer, and the load itself. In

addition, it is his responsibility to complete the load assignment, from pickup to delivery.

The typical solo driver will do his driving for the day, taking meal and other breaks as required, and then go to sleep in the sleeper berth. When and where the solo driver drives, stops, sleeps, etc., is up to him. The decisions he makes, he makes alone. If he stays on schedule, the solo driver will usually have more free time than the team driver will.

The dispatcher will assign loads to either a solo driver or team operation based upon how soon the customer requires delivery. Since solo drivers can technically only drive half the distance that a team operation can, they'll get assigned to loads which don't have such an urgent delivery appointment.

Some drawbacks of solo driving can include: not getting home as often as team drivers, depending upon the operation; less money per mile, although this is often made up for by more miles driven; and periods of isolation and being alone, though some drivers will find this preferable.

Driving Team

Team drivers usually make more money per mile than solo drivers. This is because, on average, a team driver drives less miles than a solo driver, and because the nature of the job can be, at times, very challenging.

Team driving can be very stressful, because it is often used in operations where there are definite deadlines, such as when hauling produce. Team drivers may pick up a perishable (products that can quickly spoil) load on the West Coast, and must deliver it to the East Coast 48 hours later, keeping it in good condition and at precisely the right temperature. Perishables are just that, and need to be in the supermarket as soon as possible.

The truck is constantly moving except for fueling, meals, loading and unloading, and other necessary stops. Good team drivers will take advantage of their stops and try to do as much as possible at the same time. They'll fuel the tractor, eat at the same time, do what they need to do, and get back on the road, and if possible, timing it all to make the change of drivers.

While one person is driving, the other is usually in the sleeper resting or sleeping. Sleeping in a moving, bouncing truck can be hard to adjust to for many drivers, especially new ones. But if you're going to survive team driving, you must make this adjustment.

You need to trust your partner if you're ever going to relax and get to sleep. If you're not confident in their driving abilities, you'll have trouble sleeping. Trust me on this one!

It'll help to be able to get along reasonably well with your partner, because you'll be together all day and night in close quarters. We all like to do things our own way: when and where we stop, how long and how often we take our breaks, whether we smoke or not... so it'll help to be flexible. Anything can become an issue, especially when we're under stress.

Home time is a factor which can make or break team partnerships.

One driver likes to take several days off when he gets home; the other driver wants to go right back out on the road. There's a conflict of interest here. These partners may not last very long together unless they compromise.

Obviously, they must get along with each other and be able to co-exist for long periods of time. They may know each other, and it's helpful if they

have similar goals. Because of the personality factor mentioned above, team driving can be ideal for husband and wife teams. Plus, together they can make great money.

Team driving can be tough and is not for everyone. A lot depends on having a good partner, and that the two of you enjoy working together. Then you'll be able to sleep well while they're driving, get down the road with greater efficiency, make great money, and get home faster and more often.

First and second seat drivers

The first seat driver, also called the lead driver, is usually the more experienced driver of the two. They will typically receive higher pay per mile than the second seat driver. However, their job description is basically the same and they each drive about the same number of miles.

Advantages of team driving

- You'll have someone to talk to, and with whom to share your experiences (successes, difficulties, stories, etc.).
- Potentially better pay.
- Since drivers in team operations can get to their deliveries twice as fast as a solo driver, they tend to get home more often as well, if desired.
- More load options when dealing with dispatch
- Longer average miles per load

Disadvantages of team driving

- The lack of privacy is one obvious disadvantage. When you're in the sleeper, you have some privacy - you can't see each other, but you can usually hear each other. Some sound-canceling or high-quality headphones would be a good investment for your time in the sleeper! When you're in the front of the cab in the passenger seat, you have your partner there. Same when you're driving: your partner will be there at times as well.

- There's also the issue of freedom, or lack thereof. Freedom is one of the best things about trucking for many drivers. It may have been why they became a trucker. But with team driving, you can't just stop whenever and wherever you want and take a nap, for example. You must always be on the move, not wasting any time. As a solo driver, you can drive 600 miles over 11 hours, and be done for the day, with at least a few hours to do with as you please (within reason, of course). This just isn't possible in a team operation.

Husband and Wife Teams

Choosing to drive in a team with your husband or wife can be a rewarding adventure to take on together. There are a variety of reasons why couples have taken this path:

- Save money for a down payment on a home.
- Pay down their student loans.
- Build up a nice nest egg.
- Travel the country, while getting paid to do so. Check out the Jade and John Show for a good look at one such couple and their travels on the road!

However, choosing to drive team is also choosing to live in extremely close quarters, pretty much non-stop, every day. Team drivers are expected to have the truck rolling for 20 out of every 24 hours in a day - that doesn't leave a lot of time for togetherness outside of the truck, or ever being truly alone. It really doesn't leave time for much beyond grabbing quick meals, a shopping trip here or there, a bathroom break, a shower when there's not a

long wait... in fact, shopping trips and even showers may need to be postponed until your days off.

Team driving is intense: you're spending long hours, in a small space, with another person, often on a high-value load, with a non-negotiable delivery appointment looming in your future, almost every single day. Just as it's best to know yourself and be realistic about what you're capable of tolerating before you start your trucking career, you and your spouse really need to know yourselves and acknowledge the limitations of your relationship before making the commitment to drive a truck together. Sharing your financial goals, and knowing what you both hope to achieve, and how long you'll want to drive together to achieve those goals, can be key in making this decision.

The level of togetherness in team driving is the sort of thing you need to experience to realize how very "together" you are with your team driver. It's basically the opposite of how incredibly alone you are (however negatively or positively you feel about that) as a solo driver. Some couples (or friends, or family members) will have no problem handling this lifestyle, and many are just not cut out for it. Most of us can deal with any situation when we know exactly how long we'll need to do it. For many couples, it's the adventure of a lifetime, taken together!

Chapter 4: Should You be a Company Driver or an Owner-Operator?

One of the first decisions you'll need to make after getting your CDL is choosing which type of trucker you are going to be: Do you want to be a company driver or an owner-operator? After reading this chapter, you may immediately consider this a no-brainer.

But first, let me give you a fair and honest assessment of each type to help you make the right decision.

Comparing Company Drivers and Owner-Operators

Unless you have previous experience in the trucking industry that has convinced you that being an owner-operator is the best route for you, the safest recommendation I can make is to start out as a company driver.

Getting an overview of the entirety of the trucking industry, and how things work within it for all drivers is key for making a well-informed decision. But even before you get started in trucking, this chapter should give you some idea of what both choices involve, and maybe help you figure out your long-term goals as a trucker.

Let's start by talking about the good, the bad, and the costly parts of deciding which kind of driver you want to be. One of the main considerations in this discussion is:

How are the Responsibilities Different?

As a **company driver**, your primary responsibility is to get the freight from point A to point B without damaging anything - not the freight, not the truck, and not yourself, nor anyone else. That's it. That's what you're expected to do.

Now, that includes some proactive things, too. Things like fueling the truck, monitoring the truck and engine performance (Are the fluids topped off? Are your lights and connections all functioning properly?), maintaining the logbooks, eating, taking appropriate and safe breaks, driving in a safe manner, and arriving as scheduled. You can't take two weeks to get 1,134 miles and then explain that you were being extra careful!

But if you understand the job you need to do, and can get it done in the time you were given to do it, you're going to do just fine as a company driver, making stable and steady money.

If you're an **independent owner-operator**, however... you're responsible for *everything. Every. Single. Thing.*

Pick a thing about a truck or a trip, anything at all...

Fuel? You're paying for it.

Tires? Hope you don't get a flat, because if you do, you're buying a new one.

Do you have the pallets you need? No? Go down the road and buy some. Hope someone else who already has pallets doesn't show up and take your place in line, if not your load, while you're off buying those pallets. (Note to self: always know ahead of time if pallets are necessary!)

What about your load locks... you locked them up, didn't you? Because if you didn't, you're buying new ones, because the guy that parked next to you last night is just as desperate as you are, but apparently somewhat less ethical.

Radiator crack? Repairs are 100% coming out of your funds, and so is all the replacement coolant - that's to say nothing of the tow truck you'll need to get you to the next exit/truck stop to get the repair and buy that coolant.

Did you just develop pneumonia? Hope you can still drive, because no one is giving you time off - that load needs to be delivered if you want to get paid - it needs to be delivered *on time* if you want to get paid full price.

Is this all a little dramatic? A comedy routine? Maybe. But it's also accurate.

Let's compare this to what you need to become a company driver:

- ✓ Class A CDL
- ✓ Relatively clean MVR. The cleaner, the better!
- ✓ Ability to function in society while following laws and generally getting along with people. Positive attitude optional, but definitely recommended!

***No problem*!** If you have those three things, there is probably a company out there that is waiting for your call. They will typically even cover your travel expenses to their orientation and training site, if necessary. Recruiters are standing by!

But that's to be a company driver. If you're still with me, we'll now look at what it's like to be an independent owner-operator. We'll also examine specifics about "leasing on" with a company.

Best Case Scenario for Becoming Successful as an Independent Owner-Operator

- ✓ You're an intrinsically motivated, ambitious, hard-working, self-starting, pro-active, go-getter. There is no beer so cold, race so close, baby so cute, spouse so funny and/or good-looking, cabin so available, buck so big, or fishing license so in your pocket *enough* to distract you from your professional goals. Trust me, this is going to be important later!
- ✓ You love to drive. You LOVE IT!!
- ✓ You take pride in being able to do a lot of basic truck maintenance - topping off fluids, replacing lights, fuses, performing inspections, checking tires, epoxying your busted line/hose/radiator tank... etc., etc. (Epoxy not *necessarily* recommended, and I won't be held responsible for questionable and/or desperate maintenance decisions! Thank you!)
- ✓ You envision yourself being a trucker for the duration - or remainder - of your working life.

Furthermore, the following factors will help…

- ✓ Having little to no debt.
- ✓ Having adequate health insurance.
- ✓ Making sure your life insurance is squared away.
- ✓ Getting your disability insurance set up... you are much more likely to need some extra help to keep from going bankrupt because of illness or injury than you are to die and leave your family to figure out the next step with the help of life insurance.
- ✓ Being either single, or your spouse and children cope well independently of your comings and goings.
- ✓ Being generally healthy, with no chronic health issues that could prevent you from making the deliveries your little company is going to be dependent on you making to succeed.

- ✓ You have, ideally, a year of monthly living expenses saved up, but at the very least, 3 months of living expenses - from your mortgage to your favorite daily treat - covered.
- ✓ And in addition to that, you qualify to buy or finance a decent truck, ideally with low miles, a thorough maintenance record, and better than average fuel mileage, plus all the other equipment you're going to need to complete your runs.

For a *real* chance at success in an industry like trucking, these would be the minimum requirements for a shot at success. Just a shot, not a guarantee. *You're selling a service*, as an owner-operator, and when you're working independently, you're going up against large companies who can offer everything you do, but for less. They have fleet discounts on parts and maintenance, on insurance, on fuel. They have more than one person dedicated to finding loads, marketing, dispatching, securing all the proper documentation, factoring, all of it.

Being competitive in a commodities-based market, with a small, private company is *not* an easy thing.

What's a commodity?

A useful or valuable thing, such as water or time - or a big truck available for hauling other commodities, such as clothes, toys, food, coffee, animals, etc., this is what you're selling as an independent owner-operator. A commodity is something you can buy and sell, and what matters most with things you can buy and sell? Supply and demand. Volume.

Even with the current driver shortage, you will have to compete with the hundreds of large companies who have a hundred or more trucks per company, that they can afford to keep rolling, with large, lucrative contracts - for fuel, for tires, for maintenance, for parts, for ***loads*** - that keep everyone involved happily focused on working together, and *not* on letting the little guy get any pieces of the pie.

The fact is, the company with the lowest bid wins. The large companies can do everything for less. Less than *you*. Profits and margins and volume and contracts. These are the things that eat up the old-school dreams of being

an over-the-road entrepreneur. As trucking has become more regulated - and therefore, *largely safer* - the ability to make money on your own, the way maybe your grandpa or uncle or neighbor did when they were young, has slowly gone away.

Does it sound like I'm trying to talk you out of being an owner-operator? Well... maybe I am. But more importantly, if you're going to make that choice, you need to know exactly what you're getting into. I hope you'll think it through and make the best decision for your circumstances!

Pay for Owner-Operators

Did you read that last section? And you're still checking this out? Good for you!

Owner-operators are independent contractors who are in business for themselves. They usually get paid by the mile, or by a percentage of the load. They can be fully independent and have their own authority, or they can lease on their truck/trucks with a motor carrier. Owner-operators receive a gross pay for the loads they haul, and pay expenses (which often include fuel, maintenance, licenses and permits, truck payments, etc.) out of the gross pay they earn.

Owner-operators get paid differently than company drivers because they own their truck and/or trailer. They have more responsibility, and have more at risk. They have the potential to make more money than company drivers, but only if they run their business efficiently. If you do decide to

give being an owner-operator a go, then definitely avail yourself of all the resources at OOIDA

If you believe the statistics, the average owner-operator makes about $141,000. You'll see this similar type of breakdown elsewhere, even on trucking industry websites. At first glance, this seems fantastic! **Who wouldn't want to be an owner-operator?**

Without going into details**,** owner-operators do *not* ***"make"*** $141,000 per year. Nor is this their "salary." It is the average *gross* pay, meaning pay *before* expenses. That is, *normal* operating expenses for working semi-trucks, such as fuel, maintenance, repairs, and truck payments. These things add up fast!

Look at this chart from OOIDA, the "owner-operator independent driver's association. This can be a complicated subject. Generally, how much an owner earns depends upon whether he's an independent contractor with his own authority, or one who leases his truck and/or trailer on with a motor carrier.

First, the Fixed Costs:

Cost of Operations (based on 100,000 miles a year)

FIXED COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS	MONTHLY COSTS	CENTS PER MILE
Truck Payment	$16,000	$ 1,333.33	0.160
Trailer Payment	$0	$ ---	0.000
Collision/Comp Insur.	$5,700	$ 475.00	0.057
Bobtail Insur.	$704	$ 58.67	0.007
Cargo Insur.	$0	$ ---	0.000
Health Insur.	$2,643	$ 220.25	0.026
Licenses	$1,574	$ 131.17	0.016
Permits	$454	$ 37.83	0.005
Accounting Services	$541	$ 45.08	0.005
Return on Investment	$0	$ ---	0.000
Total Fixed Costs:	**$27,616**	**$ 2,301.33**	**0.276**

Then, the Variable Costs plus the bottom line:

VARIABLE COSTS			
Tractor Fuel	$20,700	$ 1,725.00	0.207
Reefer Fuel	$0	$ ---	0.000
Tractor/Trailer Tires	$2,300	$ 191.67	0.023
Maintenance	$4,676	$ 389.67	0.047
Repair	$5,615	$ 467.92	0.056
Truck Wash	$701	$ 58.42	0.007
Telephone	$1,534	$ 127.83	0.015
Lodging	$788	$ 65.67	0.008
Meals	$5,177	$ 431.42	0.052
Loading/Unloading Charges	$0	$ ---	0.000
Tolls	$1,276	$ 106.33	0.013
Legal Fees	$0	$ ---	0.000
Fines	$0	$ ---	0.000
Cargo Claims	$0	$ ---	0.000
Scale Fees	$0	$ ---	0.000
Workman's Compensation	$0	$ ---	0.000
Taxes (Road, Use, Fuel, Fed)	$1,755	$ 146.25	0.018
Miscellaneous Expenses	$500	$ 41.67	0.005
Total Variable Costs:	**$45,022**	**$ 3,751.83**	**0.450**
Total Vehicle Costs:	**$72,638**	**$ 6,053.17**	**0.726**
Driver's Income:	**$31,131**	**$ 2,594.21**	**0.311**
Total Cost of Operation:	**$103,769**	**$ 8,647.38**	**1.038 per mile**

Keep in mind, the chart uses 100,000 miles/year as an example. If you drive harder, you can be closer to 150,000. This increase would bump up the $72,000 in vehicle expenses to $108,000. So, take your $141,000 average gross pay and subtract the vehicle expenses. You're down to the $40,000s. That's a more "realistic" expectation for the average owner operator.

Hey, isn't this close to what a company driver "averages?"

Pay Information for Independent Contractors Who Run Under Their Own Trucking Authority

Gross Pay

Independent contractors get paid a higher amount, whether by the mile, load, or percentage. Because they are "independent," they get the whole load pay, and don't merely get a share from a trucking company, they *are* a

trucking company. However, they also must pay *all* their own operating expenses.

Finding Loads

Independent contractors must find their own loads. How they go about this is totally up to them. No company or dispatcher telling them when and where to go. No asking for home time. There are now various ways to find loads. These include: brokers, online load finding services, and working exclusively with certain customers (brokers, shippers, and/or receivers). This all depends on the preferences of the driver or small fleet owner.

Licenses, Permits, Plates, Insurance

These all must be taken care of, and paid for, by the owner. Check out Permit and Licensing Guidelines by OOIDA, plus links to many other benefits and services.

Operating Expenses

Owners pay for their own fuel, oil, maintenance, tires, parts and repairs, etc. See previous chart.

Getting Financed and Making Truck Payments

Owner-operators must make truck payments, unless they own a semi-truck outright. For a lot of good information about financing a truck, here's a good article from Smarter Finance USA. In the article, the claim is made...

> *"For long haul truckers, if you can make a 25% down payment and need to finance less than $40,000, your credit score doesn't matter."*

Bottom line, if you have good credit and some money to put down, you have a good chance of getting financed.

If you're *seriously* considering going this route, **here's the most important thing...** Get *the best* and *most reliable* truck you can get, even if this means bigger payments each month. Don't let a dealership or finance company stick you with a lemon of a truck! Even having to pay several

hundred dollars more per month is better than dealing with constant breakdowns, missed loads, and the stress that accompanies all that. Ask me how I know!

Leasing Your Truck to a Trucking Company

Leasing On your truck **as an owner-operator** is not the same as being an independent owner-operator. As we've talked about, finding a way to make money off the crumbs from the larger trucking companies' tables is not easy. However, there is the option of leasing on with more established companies of whatever size, giving you some back-up financially, experientially, and probably mentally, while giving you access to the loads that you won't be able to afford to take - or even hear about - on your own.

Leasing your truck on with a company **sounds** like a perfect balance of company involvement combined with personal freedom. But... isn't there always a catch?

Yes, sadly there is. The main motivation for (some of) these companies to let drivers who own their trucks lease on with them, is *not* to share in their enormous profits. **Shocking**, I know.

The truth is, they're looking for ways to spread out their own risk. What you're getting is less their cheaper insurance and discounts on oil changes, and more the cost of doing business.

Do you get some services available to you at more affordable rates? Yes, you do. But *you* are still paying for those things.

Very little of what you're required to pay for, and what you're responsible for, has changed from the independent owner-operator model. If your truck's engine blows, they'll advance you the money and help you get it replaced for less than you might have found on your own, but *you're still the one paying* for everything, at the end of the day. It's not a very good feeling to owe money to the company you work for. Trust me on this!

Of course, different companies have different leasing contracts - you may find one that works particularly well for you. It is imperative that you read and understand the contract you're signing.

For example: You're an owner-operator who enjoys the freedom of being able to bring your family with you on the road from time to time. Unfortunately, you're having trouble getting good loads.

It's possible that you could lease on to a company that would still allow you to bring your family, while giving you plenty of loads to choose from. Again, it's important that you know what you're signing, and what you're singing up for!

I've done both. I've been an independent owner-operator, running my own (very small) company, and I've leased on with other companies. Once with a major nationwide trucking company, and once with a small, family-owned company that had a couple of good contracts. Nonetheless, the most money I ever made trucking, was as a company driver. Steady pay, almost zero personal risk. Those were the days!

Now, I'm the first to admit that I could've done things differently and had them turn out better. But I did the best I could with what I had to work with - and it didn't work out.

If you're convinced your happiness and destiny are tied into being an owner-operator of any kind, please, for your own sake, take the time to do the research and find out exactly what's involved, and the steps you need to take to set yourself up with the highest percentages of success *before* you decide to buy a truck or sign a contract to lease on with a company.

Again - if you're just starting out in trucking, I can't emphasize enough how important it is to drive for a company for at least a few months before

trying it out on your own. Most truckers love to talk. Buy someone a cup of coffee and ask them about their career, how they got started, why they do what they do. Cheapest education you'll ever get!

Pay Information for Owner/Operators Who "Lease Their Truck On" With a Motor Carrier:

Usually, the owner makes their truck payment and covers the daily operating expenses. The motor carrier pays for the rest. That can vary, of course. There's a give and take between how much the motor carrier takes care of and pays for, and how much they pay the owner (by the mile, load, percentage).

Leasing on your truck with a motor carrier is not the same as a lease-purchase program offered by many companies.

Lease-Purchase Programs

Not all lease-purchase programs (LP programs) are created equal. These can seem like a great way to become an owner-operator. Many offer promises of no-down payments or credit checks. But there are many caveats. Buyer beware. Some things that *sound* too good to be true really *are*!

Many bigger trucking companies now offer lease-purchase opportunities. Prime, Inc. is probably the most well-known of these companies. There's also Roehl, Pam, JB Hunt, ATS, Sammons, Quality Carriers, John Christner, MCT, Schneider, Freymiller, Celadon, Watkins, US Xpress, Koch... well, come to think of it, I think *most* all of them offer LP now!

How do lease-purchase programs work? These programs offer drivers with little or no credit and little money for a down payment to purchase their own truck. Well, eventually. Because, until the lease is totally paid off, (and there's often a buyout price at the end of the lease) the driver does not own the truck.

Drivers lease the truck from the company they're going to drive for, not from a truck dealership, finance company, or bank. They work for the company just like a company driver. These drivers *cannot* haul loads for another company. They're locked in. (See Trucking Lease Scam Perfect for DAC Lies by Allen Smith of askthetrucker.com for a bit more detail on the subject.)

However, Lease Purchase opportunities can also have many disadvantages.

- Drivers in an LP program lose advantages such as having the **freedom to do what you want to do** (this also applies to drivers who lease on their truck with a company.)
- Also, LP drivers will often have **limited options when selecting a load**. This is a key factor to consider.
- **Choosing how hard you want to run.** 2,000 miles per week? 3,000? As an independent driver, it's up to you. But not so much for a lease-purchase driver. Of course, this lack of freedom can be a good thing to newer, less disciplined, less experienced drivers, or drivers simply not so "self-motivated."

According to this article from LandLinemag.com (prepared by OOIDA's Business Assistance Department, click here for whole article) - **if you sign a lease-purchase contract, you will have no ownership rights until the truck is paid off.** That article is from a while ago, but nothing I've heard has made me think things are any different today. Check it out.

There have been many stories by drivers who've only received *negative paychecks*, after the lease payment was taken out first! Any operating expenses (fuel, oil, etc.,) get deducted first as well, often weekly.

TheTruckersReport.com has a whole section of threads devoted to discussing lease-purchases. I highly recommend reading this if you're considering this option. TruckingTruth.com also has many threads on their forum about lease-purchase programs. Take advantage of these resources and read stories from seasoned truckers who have real experience with lease-purchase programs.

Chapter 5: Types of Trucking Operations

The type of trucking is often defined by the type of trailer that's used. For the most part, the same tractor can pull many different types of trailers. There are exceptions, which will be noted. Some trailers will be able to haul several different types of loads. For example, trailers equipped with a reefer unit can transport both refrigerated goods as well as countless types of dry-freight loads.

Truck drivers can usually pick and choose their own niche within the industry. A good percentage of truckers stay within their chosen sector of trucking, and only become familiar with that part of trucking and the industry. This is one of the great advantages to trucking: If you find a niche that you like and are good at it, you can stick with it! And if you get to a point where you need a change, it's usually possible to change to another style of trucking without leaving trucking altogether, thereby wasting the time and money you've put into training. I know, I've done it a few times myself.

Based on those experiences, and in some cases, the experiences of others, the following is an overview of different types of trucking.

Dry or General Freight

Dry van, dry freight, general freight, or commodity hauling are a few of the terms for the most common type of trucking. A dry van is simply a box moving on wheels. Dry van loads are the most common type of load hauled. It can be any kind of freight that doesn't need specialized handling or care (like refrigeration or "reefer" loads). Anything. Appliances, potatoes, potato chips, electronics, furniture, palleted loads, and loads directly on floor (potatoes, carrots, soil, etc., boxed or unboxed). Driving can be coast-to-coast or local, to or from practically anywhere in North America.

This video shows the process of bulk loading potatoes onto a semi-trailer.

Usually, food products like potatoes or watermelons will require either reefer trailers (see next section) or dry vans with produce vents.

Drivers who haul dry freight often have a tight delivery schedule and are usually loaded to maximum capacity. This is because shipment costs are factored based on weight and mileage.

The main difference between dry van trailers and reefer trailers? Whatever gets hauled in a dry van does not have to be kept in any exact range of temperatures.

Owner-operators: Heavy loaded vehicles get less fuel efficiency, which can cost hundreds of dollars more in fuel for just one load.

One disadvantage is that a dry box is limited to hauling dry freight. But the good news is that there's plenty of dry freight, and the driver doesn't have to worry about the freight being a certain temperature, or trying to sleep with the reefer unit running all night! Even many types of loads that normally get loaded onto flatbeds can also be hauled in a dry van.

Another advantage is that a good deal of dry freight is "**drop and hook**" at the destination. This means that on arrival, a driver is told where to leave the trailer. After driving to the spot, the driver uncouples the trailer from the tractor and leaves it there. He "dropped" it. The "hook" is the next loaded or unloaded trailer that the tractor couples to. Drop and hook is the easiest, and quickest, kind of completion of a load at the receiver.

On many loads, drivers often must be present and count the freight as it's loaded. Then, at the receiver, the driver might have to unload the trailer himself, or make use of lumpers (the industry name for people you can pay to be your unloading labor). Most carriers will reimburse the driver for lumper expenses, but that typically means you need to have the cash on hand to pay them. Sometimes you can negotiate their fee, sometimes not. Many drivers like to do their own loading and unloading, because it might be their only chance to exercise. It can also be an extra source of income for you.

Refrigerated Transport

Refrigeration units on trailers (often the whole trailers themselves) are known as “reefers.” The reefer unit maintains a set temperature in the trailer, either by heating or cooling the trailer. Monitoring the temperature of the load and performance of the reefer unit throughout the trip is an additional responsibility of the driver. You should check the temperature every time you stop, and whenever you inspect your vehicle. You can also monitor the temperature through your side mirror while you’re driving.

The most common refrigerated product hauled is perishable or frozen food products: meat, produce, dairy, or frozen food.

A reefer can also be set to either keep products frozen or to protect products from freezing. Other products include medical and hospital supplies, nursery products such as seedlings and plants, and other products, too numerous to name here.

The floors on reefer trailers are different from those in dry vans. They’re usually made of aluminum flooring, which will not get damaged like wood floors would with heavy moisture. They’re also ribbed to allow the cool air to circulate throughout the trailer and around the load. Also, ribbed flooring protects the cargo and pallets from water damage.

As with dry freight, most loading is done by the shipper, and most unloading is done by the receiver. They may use their own unloaders, commonly called “lumpers.” You may have to arrange separate payment for the lumpers through your company. Most loads are palletized, and can come off quickly. That is, if you’re not waiting in line behind several other truckloads. Possibly the most difficult part of reefer hauling is waiting on cold storage docks, while the trailer is being loaded. As with dry freight, counting the pieces is often necessary, and often done by *you*.

It’s often freezing (literally!) inside the cold storage warehouses, so you’ll have to be prepared and dress appropriately!

At the very least, keep a coat and hat with you in the truck. That’s a good idea no matter what you’re hauling, if you’re driving nationwide. You never know what kind of weather you’re in for!

Refrigerated food products usually must get delivered ASAP, so it can get to supermarkets and then to people’s homes, before it spoils. For this reason, food products are typically a rush job, frequently reserved for team driver operations. Reefer drivers are always “on the go,” which can be stressful.

On the receiving end, delivery is often at large food warehouses, distribution centers or food markets in larger cities. Some larger trucking companies have operations where you'll drop the loaded trailer at a terminal, and pick up an empty trailer (drop and hook), and go pick up another load, often somewhere else. At the terminal, there are local or regional drivers who'll take the load the rest of the way to its destination. Other times, you'll deliver the load to the receiver yourself.

Reefer units can be set on continuous (frozen products, etc.), or stop and start operation (for products that need to stay within a certain temperature range). It depends on what kind of product is being hauled.

Be warned, reefer units can be loud, especially when you're in the sleeper trying to get to sleep, and are not used to it. The unit itself is literally only a few feet away from the back of the cab (the back of your tractor). Drivers of non-reefer unit trucks will often see you about to park near them at the truck stop and shake their heads at you, at the least. They may move away from you if there's available spaces. And hey, that's their choice!

As a courtesy, if there's plenty of parking available, try to park away from other trucks. But sometimes there's just nothing you can do. Personally, I got so used to the reefer noise that I didn't even realize it was on, but there was an adjustment period, that's for sure.

Reefer units can and do break down from time to time. If you're in the middle of a haul of produce (or any kind of perishable load) going across the country, this can be a financial disaster for you or your company, if you can't get it repaired right away.

It's important that drivers let the company know immediately if the reefer is struggling to perform so they can tell you where to go for a repair - you may be near a terminal, or they may have a contract with a nationwide repair service company. If you're an owner-operator, it's good to have a list of contacts and repair shops all along your most traveled routes. There are frequently reefer, tire, and trailer repair shops immediately adjacent to major truck stops, and these may be your only option.

As mentioned before, pulling a reefer trailer enables you to haul both refrigerated loads as well as (many) dry freight loads, increasing your versatility and giving you a wider variety of loads that you can haul.

Options are always good for both you, and your dispatcher, if you have one, when the goal is to keep on truckin'. (Note that because of the added weight of the reefer unit, and the extra 40-50 gallon loaded fuel tank, the maximum amount of product you can load onto a reefer trailer will usually be several thousand pounds less).

Produce

Produce loads are often mixed, with several kinds of produce loaded on the same trailer. There may be different kinds of vegetables or fruits, and may have to be picked up at several different locations. This is common in the area just south of San Jose, CA.

This area is the most popular spot in the country for growing and shipping produce, except during the winter, when the whole produce shipping industry switches operations to Yuma, AZ. In fact, most produce loads go all the way across the country, from west to east. A great percentage of these loads are hauled by teams, due to the time-sensitive nature of the products.

Just picking up loads at several locations can take up to a couple of days, including waiting time at each location. There is, however, usually extra pay for each additional stop after the first one, which can make up for the

waiting time involved. Also, any waiting time at the shipper (or shippers) is usually made up for by the long length of haul to the destination.

Produce loads are almost always loaded to maximum capacity. That's over 40,000 lbs. of produce and 80,000 lbs. for the whole tractor trailer. This can be an advantage when driving in winter or windy conditions and needing traction, but a disadvantage when climbing hills and mountains. Check out the loading process in this video.

Eighty thousand pounds does not go uphill very quickly, no matter how big your engine is!

Meat

There are companies which specialize in hauling all types of meat products. Slaughterhouses, rendering plants, and meat packing plants are just some of the places reefer drivers can expect to frequent. Meat loads often get delivered to the same locations as produce loads.

Meat can be shipped in boxes (fresh or frozen), or swinging from hooks in the trailer. Hauling swinging beef can have a surge effect, almost like driving a tanker. This can be especially dangerous on slippery surfaces.

Flatbed Operations

Refrigerated and dry freight have much in common, but hauling flatbed is an entirely different beast. It requires separate training, and is far from "normal" trucking.

You'll hear drivers proclaim at truck stops, "I would never haul flatbed. You'll never get **me** to tarp a load. Too much work!"

Most flatbed drivers say they would never do any other type of hauling. I guess it just depends on your personality, work preferences, and what you're familiar with!

There are several different types of flatbed trailers, all designed for a specific purpose. The most common types are straight flatbeds, drop deck (or drop frame) trailers, lowboy trailers (especially for heavy or oversized machinery), and goose neck trailers.

A flatbed hauler will not usually have to wait around on a dock to get loaded, or be required to physically unload his trailer. This can be a time-saving advantage, but there can be a lot of work involved in flatbed hauling that other types of hauling don't require. Loads must be secured to the trailer to prevent the load from shifting or falling off the trailer. An assortment of chains, binders, and straps are used.

There are not usually lumpers available for securing and tarping loads. This is the driver's responsibility. A poorly secured flatbed load can be a nightmare to deal with going down the road. It can cause anything from an unbalanced load, to catastrophic failure resulting in accidents and injuries. So, it may be for the best that the driver must take personal responsibility for securing and/or tarping each load.

As I mentioned, many loads are required to be covered with a tarp; this is to protect it from the weather. Tarps are usually made of canvas, but sometimes plastic or rubberized plastic. They range in weight and size, but can be up to 100 pounds or more, as is the case with lumber tarps. Usually, two tarps are required to cover a load. The driver is required to cover the load with the tarp, then secure it, usually with bungee straps and/or securement straps.

Flatbed drivers will have to be outdoors more often and for longer periods of time than other drivers. Tarping, securement, checking the load, readjusting securement during the trip, etc., all require you to be outside (unless loading or unloading in an enclosed facility).

Drivers must be prepared for every type of weather condition. Rain gear, boots, coveralls, and warm clothing are essential because when you're a flatbed driver, you'll have to tarp and secure loads (imagine, these are sometimes 50' tarps which have to be spread out on the ground and folded, whether they're mud covered, ice-coated, or just soaked with rain) in heavy winds, rain, sub-zero temperatures, and snow and ice-covered conditions.

Taking all of this into consideration, I'd recommend being in good physical shape if you want to be a flatbed driver. There's a lot of getting on and off the trailer while tarping and securing the load. You're going to want boots that help you do that in a sure-footed way, particularly during the winter months, when half of your load will be snow and ice! Flatbed is physically demanding, and if you're not up to the many tasks, dangerous. Regular

stretching and exercise is highly recommended, and will help prevent injuries.

Tractors pulling flatbed trailers are often “flattop.” This means they are designed lower than most other tractors pulling 13’6” van trailers. The lower roof on the tractors allows them to go places and under obstacles (low clearance ahead!) that higher profile tractor trailers cannot.

You may haul any type of commodity as a flatbed driver. You name it: satellite dishes, commercial refrigeration units, hay, tombstones, marble/granite/stone, paper rolls you roll off the trailer, steel, roofing, and machinery. And these are just a few examples from loads I’ve hauled. There are practically endless other types of loads, but you get the idea!

Drivers delivering flatbed loads often have little waiting time to unload, and the loads come off much faster than with other types of hauling. It’s a different world, because you’re rarely parked near a loading dock, waiting in a long line. You’re more likely in a field or a quarry, supervising as specialized equipment loads or unloads your trailer.

You, or someone else, may be driving your load onto or off your trailer. Arrangements will often need to be made to unload at a certain date and time, particularly when the use of a crane or other heavy equipment is required to unload.

Driving a flatbed often takes extra care, because there aren’t any sides to the trailer keeping the load from shifting or falling off the trailer. There are

only the straps and/or chains securing the load, and *you* are 100% responsible for the success of the that securement. Any turns or even lane changes must often be made much more slowly than with other types of trailers. As you drive, you'll need to stop regularly to double check the load and tarp or straps, and keep an eye on things in your mirrors, to be sure that things are staying balanced. If you're not watching your load, you can bet that the DOT **will** be - and you'll pay the price for your inattention.

After reading all of this, you may be thinking, "OK, where do I **not** sign up for flatbed?!"

Well, there are three clear advantages to flatbed:

1. You're unlikely to get bored. It's not loading dock to loading dock, you may very well be picking up or dropping off your load at a mine, a new housing development, or a construction site for a new skyscraper in the center of a city.
2. You'll get in the habit of pulling over to check your load, which can be both a work-out, and a money saving habit - keeping your load secure keeps the DOT off your trailer! These regular stops will also serve to keep you focused on the task at hand, by helping you to stay mindful of how your load is handling the trip, while keeping you out of the easy habit of zoning out as you go down the road.
3. Flatbed drivers are typically paid more, due to the high level of physical work that you will be required to do in all kinds of weather, the higher level of scrutiny you'll be subjected to, and because of the unique loading and unloading locations, to say nothing of the actual freight being hauled.

Overall, the great variety within flatbed hauling, the added physical activity, plus the many challenges it offers, makes it a desirable option for many drivers.

Curious about what a flatbed truck driver's job is really like? This video is not a "how-to" type of video, but a good introduction to the overall experience of hauling flatbed. Despite some questionable comments beneath the video, I still feel like it's worth your time.

How to tarp a load is a good set of videos from Central Oregon Truck Company.

Heavy Haul, Oversize, Wide Loads, Etc.

Many flatbedders do both regular flatbed loads, and oversize/wide, or heavy haul loads. Basically, the operations and the conditions for oversize

loads are the same as for regular flatbed loads, except that specialized knowledge and training is required to manage the risks with larger loads. As with other specialized types of trucking, the pay per mile will be better.

Some possible disadvantages oversize and heavy are:

- The need for escorts (usually cars or pickups with orange flashing lights, and with warning signs on them - leading, and sometimes trailing, the oversized load)
- Route limitations (for example, some loads cannot go under any overpasses on a certain route, and must take each exit).
- Many of these loads are not permitted to be hauled at night. These factors almost certainly mean less possible miles hauled per day, so any advantage from extra pay per mile can be greatly offset.

Mobile-home haulers are often included in this specialized category.

Household Moving and Transportation

The household moving sector is also considered “blanket wrap,” because of the furniture blankets which are used to protect the customer’s furniture from damage. On the CB, household movers are often called “bedbuggers.” Nice! Other specialty types of hauling in this category are corporate movers (often household movers in the winter months), and the electronics and/or exhibit movers’ division.

Household Moving is Unique in Many Ways:

Potential for High Income. Pay is not usually based upon miles driven, but on percentage of the linehaul (the amount charged for hauling the load).

Big Truck in the Neighborhood! Much driving is spent in residential areas, where big trucks are not normally allowed and usually wouldn't even consider driving. Parallel parking the vehicle is often necessary on these residential streets.

Less Miles to Drive. Much of the driver's time is spent loading and unloading in the trailer (as well as folding furniture blankets, and taking care of equipment), with less actual driving. Driving miles are usually much less than 100,000 a year.

This is another type of trucking where being in good physical shape is especially helpful. Even if the driver always hires labor to load and unload, he will be walking around, supervising the entire process, and getting in and out of the trailer to check on the load. Also, certain conditions may demand the driver to occasionally do his own loading and/or unloading.

Lightweight Trailers. Trailers are usually much lighter hauling furniture. As with hauling empty trailers, this makes pulling inclines easier, but does not give as much traction in winter driving conditions or stability in high winds.

48-Foot Trailers. These are the most common type of household trailer. This allows the trailer to get into residential areas a 53' trailer cannot. There are also special compartments on the sides of the trailers especially for household operations. This makes loading easier by just parking in front of the residence and loading up. This also allows you to arrange several household loads (you may pick up several loads, from several different homes, before delivering them all to a centralized storage facility, or unloading them at a family's new home) in different parts of the trailer, and unload them in whatever order you require.

Special Equipment. You must learn to use equipment which includes a full set of furniture blankets, straps, protectors and padding, cardboard, foam, car ramps, and much more.

Nice Rides. The biggest, often fanciest tractors are frequently seen hauling household moving loads. Some of these tractors are entirely self-contained, even having kitchen and bathroom facilities inside. This is mainly because of the amount of time spent away from home. Basically, the tractor *is* home for many household movers, at least during the busy season. But don't expect to get a flashy tractor when you get started. You'll have to earn it first.

Speaking of nice rides, here's more of that big orange large car from the image just above. Brian from Allied Van Lines is nice enough to show off his tractor (it has a 132" sleeper), including the inside!

Paperwork galore. Much of this is in the form of inventory sheets, documenting every item being moved, with a description of the most

minute of details including - especially - any damage. Damage and/or missing item claims are a big potential expense for movers.

Couples Can Work Together. This is a good type of trucking for husband and wife teams, each handling their own responsibilities. One may do the bulk of the paperwork and customer relations, while the other organizes, moves, and loads the trailer, while supervising the labor.

Here's a video on how to pack and load a moving truck. This'll give you a good idea what you'll be doing *besides* driving as a household mover!

If you don't mind the paperwork and the physical work involved, household moving can be a good place to start trucking. Most moving companies have their own in-house driver training school. New drivers must be trained on how to pack, load, and complete the necessary paperwork. This is, of course, in addition to learning the basics of how to drive a truck!

Tankers (Tank Vehicles)

From the official CDL manual: A tank endorsement is required for certain vehicles that transport liquids or gases. The liquid or gas does not have to be a hazardous material. A tank endorsement is required if your vehicle needs a Class A or B CDL and you want to haul a liquid or liquid gas in a permanently mounted cargo tank rated at greater than 450 liters (119

gallons) or a portable tank rated at greater than 1,000 gallons. A tank endorsement is also required for Class C vehicles when the vehicle is used to transport hazardous materials in liquid or gas form in the above described rated tanks.

To haul tankers, drivers must get their tank vehicles endorsement on their CDL. If hazardous materials (like fuel) are carried in the tanker, a hazardous materials endorsement is also required.

The main categories of tanker trailers (that need tanker endorsement) are:

- Fuel and Petroleum
- Chemicals
- Food Grade Products

Tankers are usually loaded from a hole or opening on the top of the trailer. Unloading is done at the bottom of the tanker, either through hoses via gravity or air pressure. Tankers will be made of steel, stainless steel, or aluminum.

Driving tankers is notably different than other types of hauling. Mainly, there's a high center of gravity, making rollovers a real danger.

Different types of liquid bulk tankers are structured differently inside

- **Smooth (straight) bore tankers** have no bulkheads or baffles, and the liquid sloshes and surges without anything to stop or slow it. These are usually used to transport food products, like milk, juice,

and molasses. They're designed for easy cleaning of the inside of the tank. In addition, smooth bore tankers are the quickest to unload as there is nothing obstructing the flow like with baffles.

- **Baffled tankers** have partitions that are designed to slow and stabilize the sloshing of the liquid, but allow for liquid to flow from section to section.
- **Compartmentalized tankers** have bulkheads that create separate compartments, designed to keep different foods or chemicals entirely separate, as though they were each in their own tanker. One common example is delivering fuel to gas stations. There can be diesel fuel in one compartment, and different grades of unleaded fuel in the other compartments.

Unique aspects of hauling tankers

- **Unusual procedures and products.** There is usually no need to back up to a standard dock or physically load or unload trailer. There's also no freight unloading to worry about. There's no waiting time on docks, etc., because when the driver gets to the delivery point, he usually unloads the product himself. Products can range from non-hazardous food products and water (especially for construction tankers), liquid waste and farm products, to hazardous products like fuel, oil, and acid, among others. Diesel and jet fuel are also two commonly hauled products.
- **Tank truck and trailer combinations.** These are often found in fuel tanker operations (as well as food grade tankers, especially milk trucks). These are different from your usual semi-trailer attached to

a tractor. A tank truck is a straight truck with (usually) a 6,000-gallon tank attached. They can haul products separate, or connected to a 2nd pull trailer.

For a good look at this type of vehicle, as well as how a fuel delivery to a gas station transpires, see this video.

- **Requires special training to learn the job.** Some of the duties include measuring the product in the trailer (overflowing the trailer is a primary concern), operating a pump (to either take on product or to deliver), handling and connecting various hoses and connection devices and adapters, and draining and cleaning the tank, to name a few. You may need special training to handle hazardous materials, and/or to learn what steps you need to take if there's a spill, or other mishap. There may be rules about driving on the flight line of an airport or into a train yard that you'll need to know if you're hauling jet fuel or diesel. In this way, pulling a tanker is like pulling flatbed, because the loads you haul can take you to some unexpected (or unusual) places!
- **Potential to get home every day!** Tankers are often driven by local drivers. Gasoline haulers, for example, pick up the product at the local refinery (which is a learning process in itself) and deliver to local service stations.
- **Warning: Tanker hauling jobs can be challenging!** First, trailers are often top-heavy, which can lead to a rollover. Another consideration is liquid surge. Stopping the trailer, especially on wet or slick surfaces, can be dangerous as the liquid rushes forward and can push the truck forward after it has initially stopped. Not good at busy intersections! This effect is at its strongest in the smooth bore tankers, which have no baffles or bulkheads.

Pulling a tanker presents its own set of challenges to deal with, but once you're familiar with the surge effect, and learn how to unload the tanker, it becomes a relatively easy process. Just remember that **there's a learning curve**!

Dry Bulk Operations

Dry bulk commodity drivers commonly haul grains, fertilizer, aggregates, feed ingredients, and service the agricultural industry. There are special trailers (pneumatic trailers, hoppers, or hopper bottom grain trailers, walking floors, end dump trailers, belt trailers, and live floors) designed to haul large (bulk) quantities of dry products.

Dry bulk drivers are often more regional in length of haul, but can also haul over-the-road. These companies often do intermodal, or rail transfers and dry bulk storage at multiple rail sidings.

The best part about dry bulk hauling? The unloading is often quick, similar to liquid tankers. There aren't usually long waits for available docks, or for forklift drivers to get to you unloaded.

Check out the video "What is Dry Bulk?" by Oakley Trucking

Aggregate Dry Bulk Haulers

Aggregate haulers fall under the dry bulk category. Products transported include sand, gravel, rock, asphalt, coal, scrap steel, and non-hazardous waste. What's common to all of them? All the products are dry. This can be done in dump trailers or pneumatic trailers. Drivers employed with these companies spend their days getting loaded up at the quarry, then heading to construction sites, concrete plants, and road building sites, just to name a few typical destinations.

Aggregate haulers often operate pneumatic trailers (containing or operated by air or gas under pressure). These are more common in construction related trucking. For example, pneumatic trailers haul fly ash out of power plants and deliver it to road construction sites. Loads hauled in pneumatic trailers fall under the tanker category of hauling. Here's an informative discussion of Pneumatic Bulk Tankers from *Truckers Report*.

Check out this video by Trainer James of Dillon Transport. You'll see step-by-step how pneumatic trailers work and you'll even feel like you're right there on site after a while!

Different types of loads that Pneumatic tankers can haul

- **Building products**: cement, sand, ash, and lime.
- **Food Products**: Flour, sugar, grains (wheat, oats, etc.), starch
- **Chemical Products**: Plastic pellets, industrial alcohol, dry and liquid chemicals

***Note**: If you want to haul for a company that uses pneumatic tankers, you may, or you may **not** need a tanker endorsement. Some companies will haul **just** dry products (no tanker endorsement needed), some will haul liquid or gas products (tanker endorsement needed), and some companies will haul **both** types of products (tanker endorsement needed). They may not regularly haul liquid products, but will require the tanker endorsement **just in case**. Bottom line, get the tanker endorsement on your CDL regardless. You never know, you want to keep your options open, **and** it's an **easy** endorsement to get.*

The belly and end-dump trucks are typically paid by both the mile and the ton - how far they drive it and how much there is when they get there - which in some cities can average out to $2/mile.

Some of the benefits of driving for an aggregate company are being based locally, the potential to make decent pay, and being home most nights.

The challenges are the long hours, dealing with local traffic, and the work can be seasonal or based on demand that isn't always there - cutbacks in construction can negatively affect the aggregate industry.

Class B dump trucks are also a big part of this part of the trucking industry. The key difference between the single vehicle, Class B dump trucks and Class A dump trucks is the trailer. The addition of a trailer is what makes Class A dump trucks a "combination vehicle" and creates the need for a Class A license when driving them, versus a "single vehicle" without a trailer (see Book 2, Chapter 1, What's a CDL).

Most frequently used in local hauling, Class B dump trucks, when fully loaded, are nearly as heavy as the Class A end dump and belly dump trucks. If you'll be driving a single vehicle dump truck while pulling a trailer,

however, you will need a Class A CDL. Hauling any trailer weighing over 10,000 pounds requires a Class A license.

Construction Materials

This is the most common type of local hauling. It involves making deliveries to and/or from construction job sites. The work can get monotonous, as there is a lot of repetitive, back and forth driving. If you were previously working as an OTR driver, the repetitive nature of construction hauling may seem especially tedious.

Pay is usually at an hourly rate (sometimes by the load, or sometimes by a combination of hourly and by the load). It can be better than average, although work is frequently seasonal in many areas.

Common types of trailers used in construction operations are belly dump, end dump, transfer dumps, pneumatic tankers, flatbeds, and curtained flatbeds. Products include fly ash, rock, dirt, water, brick, lumber, drywall, and other construction-related products.

The construction sector is a good starting point for newer drivers, especially those between 18 to 21, who aren't yet able to get an over-the-road, interstate job.

Multiple Trailers

Doubles and triples trailers are often hauled by the unionized LTL carriers. LTL = Less Than a Load, usually amounting to less than 40,000 pounds of any product. See more about LTL here. You will need the doubles and triples endorsement on your CDL to do this type of driving.

Hauling multiple trailers has its own set of rules when it comes to maneuvering in traffic or difficult weather conditions. Special coupling knowledge is required to connect the trailers. But like most procedures related to trucking, it becomes routine once you get the hang of it. A separate dolly with its own fifth wheel is used for coupling the multiple trailers.

One advantage to driving doubles is that most hauling is done terminal to terminal, at which point you just “drop and hook.” This is just unhooking the tractor from the trailers and leaving the trailers where instructed. In some locations, doubles and triples drivers will drop and hook in an empty parking lot (possibly belonging to a customer) at the completion of their leg of the trip, depending on what types of agreements the company has with a given customer (or even with a city), where they may lease an empty lot as a drop yard.

The driver for the next leg of the trip will come there later to drop empty trailers and pick up the loaded trailers to complete that delivery. You would

simply drop your first set, then be told which two (or three) trailers to hook up, get your paperwork, and head off on the next leg of your trip.

Other advantages of driving doubles include: being able to turn more easily around corners, and rarely having to back up (except for very short distances). But if you *do* have to back up a good distance...good luck!

Fed-Ex regularly hauls doubles. Check them out in action **in this video**.

A disadvantage of driving doubles is having to plan everything more carefully. You always want to avoid getting into a situation where you'll have to back up. It's extremely difficult to back up doubles over long distances, and nearly impossible for triples.

Naturally, with more moving parts among the dollies and added trailers, your inspections will take a bit longer and possibly require more attention to detail. This is only a disadvantage in terms of the time you'll need to spend doing it, but it will quickly become part of your normal routine.

There is no question that pulling doubles and triples increases the risk of accidents happening, such as jackknifing and rolling trailers. Handling multiple trailers is an acquired skill that would be easier to master once you've become comfortable driving the more stable and standard tractor-trailer with a single 53-foot trailer.

These carriers do have the appeal of being unionized, with steady, more predictable work, and consisting almost entirely of drop-and-hook loads. Having some solid OTR experience will help when applying to these companies, both to boost your resume and keep you safe as you learn how to manage multiple trailers.

Here's a good video showing how to hook up a set of doubles. It's a bit blurry, but a very thorough explanation.

Longer Combination Vehicles

There are three types of Longer Combination Vehicles (LCVs for short), which are defined as the combination of a truck tractor and two or more

trailers or semi-trailers which operate on the Interstate System at a gross vehicle weight (GVW) greater than 80,000 pounds:

Rocky Mountain Doubles: A combination of a full-length semi-trailer (45 to 53 feet) and a shorter "pup" trailer (26 to 29 feet). Their use is restricted, but are legal in more than 20 states (and part of Canada).

Triples: These consist of three "pup" trailers, each measuring 26 to 29 feet long. Legal in 17 states, but use is restricted to major highways and toll roads, under normal weather conditions.

Turnpike Doubles: A combination of two 45 to 53-foot trailers. These are only legal in 18 states, and are only found on limited access Interstates, toll roads, and turnpikes. Here's a video shot of turnpike doubles.

Western Doubles, STAA Doubles, or Double Pups: Not technically considered LCVs, they consist of two "pup" trailers, usually 28 feet, six

inches in length. Considered an A-Train, which is two trailers connected via dolly mounted fifth wheel.

Truck-trailers: A truck-trailer combination consists of a truck which holds cargo in its body which is connected to its chassis (commonly called a straight truck), which also tows a trailer.

B-Train: Consists of two trailers connected by a fifth wheel.

Hauling combination vehicles can be done over-the-road, short haul, or locally, and is especially common in construction operations.

Livestock

You must be very familiar with livestock (sheep, cattle, etc.) to consider this type of trucking. Those drivers who have experience with animals, and working on farms or ranches are best prepared for livestock hauling. It often involves unloading the trailer at certain intervals, and at certain authorized locations, to water and feed the animals. Your main objective: to get these animals to the receiver as quickly as possible, *and* unharmed and alive!

The loads are often extremely heavy and require off-interstate driving. Making your way to loading and unloading sites will frequently involve dirt roads. It can feel like going off road to a big truck! The movement of the animals can make it difficult to safely drive down the road, not unlike the surging effect of swinging meats and liquid-filled tankers.

But, like other types of hauling, most of these drivers wouldn't ever consider doing any other type of hauling. It's very much a part of their personalities, like diesel-driving cowboys and, increasingly, cowgirls!

Here's a quick **video** to give you an idea what cattle hauling is like!

Hazardous Materials

These drivers must receive extensive training in the knowledge, safe handling, and shipping of hazardous materials as well as what to do in an emergency. Drivers who haul hazardous materials must have a hazardous materials endorsement on their CDL. Drivers can haul hazmat in dry vans, reefer vans, doubles and triples, on flatbeds and heavy haul, as well as in tanks.

Getting a hazardous materials endorsement on your CDL is now a more difficult and lengthy process than before. We all know the events of September 11th, 2001, had many far-reaching effects. One of them was how it changed the procedures required to secure your hazmat endorsement.

“Any driver seeking to obtain, renew and transfer a hazardous materials endorsement on a state-issued commercial driver’s license must go through a TSA threat assessment. You should apply if you have a state-issued CDL and you are required to transport materials that require placarding under the Department of Transportation hazardous materials regulations.”

For more information, go to the TSA website.

Some examples of what is absolutely required when hauling hazardous materials are:

- Vehicles must come to complete stop 15 to 50 feet before railroad tracks.
- Vehicles are prohibited from entering tunnels.

- Vehicles should try to avoid, and are usually routed around, the most populated areas/big cities.
- Drivers must check tires every two hours or 100 miles, whichever comes first.

Intermodal Freight Transport (Containers)

Container hauling, or drayage, are most common in port areas. These containers arrive on ships from overseas. They're unloaded off the ships and stacked up in lots in the ports.

Intermodal means that they can be transported by different "modes" of transportation. These containers can be transported by trains or by trucks. It just depends on where they're headed.

Containers get hauled by trucks when their destination is away from the railroad. They get loaded on top of specialized container trailers called container carriages (or just "chassis"), designed for containers, or flatbed trailers, and are secured with chains and/or straps. Securing the containers to flatbeds is often done by the drivers themselves. Containers can be simple boxes or refrigerated.

Here's a great video on "What happens when a truck picks up a container?" The whole process is clearly shown. It's worth checking out, even if you don't end up hauling containers.

Wood and Forestry Products

These drivers haul logs from heavily wooded areas of the country, wood chips, sawdust, and lumber from lumber mills.

Loads are delivered to paper mills, directly to lumber yards, home improvement stores, and construction/building sites, etc. The logging sector can be tough to get into unless you start at the bottom, work in the mills, and/or know someone who could help you get started.

Want to see how quickly chip trucks can get unloaded? See this video as the truck and trailer are tilted to over 60 degrees to empty a load of sawdust at the mill.

Car Haulers (Auto Transport)

Automobile transport drivers haul vehicles on specialized trailers, often from the manufacturer to individual dealerships (also auctions, salvage yards, and many other locations).

Most commonly this is known as “Open Trailer Vehicle Transport” as vehicles are transported out in the open, not protected from the elements.

Pay for this work can be very good. The driver usually loads and unloads the vehicles by himself - a bit more enjoyable and challenging than “fingerprinting” a dry van full of boxes! On the CB radio, they’re called “parking lots,” and it’s easy to see why.

Here’s a good video showing how to load a car carrier**.**

Oil Field Operations

There are many places in the country where there’s opportunities for drivers who want to work the oil fields. The one that’s been perhaps the busiest is the area in and around Williston, ND. They are experiencing a bona fide “oil boom.” But there are other areas as well, mentioned below.

Williston, North Dakota: A Modern Age Oil Boom

Underground, a deposit of crude oil the “size of West Virginia” lays waiting to get pumped up, according to the video Williston: The North Dakota Oil Boom. For years now, drivers have been ditching their old driving jobs, and moving (or trying to) up to the area in hope of cashing in on the “boom” and saving up a lot of cash in a short time. But remember the saying “if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” Please don’t rush up there

without doing a *lot* of homework so you don't end up broke and homeless in North Dakota!

You *can* make good money in the Williston area. Jobs are still abundant. Even jobs at Walmart are paying much more than almost anywhere else in the country.

Check out this video from Trican Well Service on "A Day in the Life of an Operator."

The biggest problem for anyone working in the area is the lack of decent housing.

RV parks: Parks, with limited space, can be found, but often charging $900 per month, or more. Of course, you need an RV or you may be able to park your rig there if you brought your own. But call ahead as not all RV parks will allow semis. Many companies, however, will allow you to use your assigned rig to sleep in on company premises. Once again, make sure about this ahead of time!

Man camps. Temporary housing developments have sprung up all over the area to help alleviate the situation. You could have to pay $700 per week room for the most basic of rooms. But that's if your company doesn't provide their own to you free of charge.

This can be good, or this can be bad. Check out the bad reviews here to get an idea of how things could go with the wrong company. But also remember, some people "could" be telling horror stories to get back at a company who might've let them go for legitimate reasons. Here's another

company with reviews. Just *do your homework and ask a lot of questions* so that you'll know what you're getting into.

Hotels: Could be hard to find at certain times, and expensive, according to reports. Woodsprings Suites usually has some availability and currently (09/17) has rooms starting at $50/night. I'd imagine lots of drivers would share rooms to split costs, though it might technically be against hotel rules. Check for yourself on Google for Williston area hotels and on Craigslist for Williston area housing. Get a commitment from a company you want to work for, then find and try to secure a place online to live *before* going up there.

Other key factors to consider about Williston

Extreme cold, high prices of essentials, and long time away from home and family are just a few of the things you must think about when deciding to try oil field jobs.

Another consideration is the amount of hard work you'll be doing, and doing it under difficult circumstances. Long hours. Being on call 24/7 on your scheduled days. Sleeping in your truck, which may or may not have a bunk, *if* you've chosen a company that allows it.

Tough work, but for some drivers, worth it, at least temporarily. If a driver is smart, he can save several thousand dollars per month, at a minimum. In 6-12 months, you could have enough money saved up to buy a decent truck and work wherever you want. Or enough to put up a good down payment on a nicer truck.

These are just a few ideas. In a way, it sounds like other grueling jobs you hear about that offer opportunity to make a bunch of money in a short period of time. Like Alaska crab fishing jobs in the Bering Sea, seen in the TV show Deadliest Catch. But, oil field work seems a lot more realistic. Companies really *do* need drivers up there. Drivers willing to put up with difficult circumstances, at least for a little while, to get valuable trucking experience, *and* make good money!

Other areas where oil field operations are needing drivers

Consider Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Louisiana, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania in your search for driving jobs in oil fields. Narrow the search to your area of choice to get better results.

Expedited and Hot Shot Trucking

What is Expedited Trucking?

Simply put, expedited trucking means "pick up *now*" and "deliver *right away*." Time is of the essence.

"If you prefer the excitement of last minute decisions on where and when you'll be this afternoon, tonight and tomorrow, then expedited trucking is for you." Landstar Expedited Services.

Typically, drivers are out a week or two at a time, drive from customer business-to-business or customer dock-to-dock.

Many drivers can work for several expedited companies at the same time due to the great amount of down time between loads. Not all companies allow this however.

Cargo or Sprinter Vans often need to be purchased or owned by the driver. Depending on the company, vans brought on must be in good condition, not over a certain age, and have correct dimensions. Alltypesexpediting.com has some FAQs to help you understand more about expedited trucking and what it takes to succeed as an expedited driver.

Types of Vehicles That Haul Expedited Loads

Drivers for expedited companies can drive any of the following vehicles:

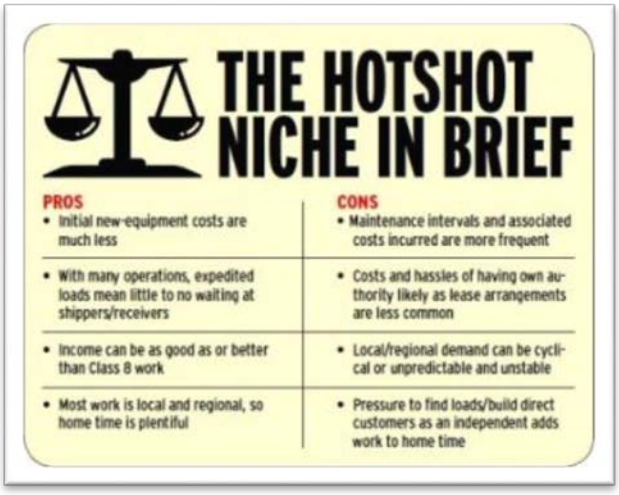
Tractor Trailers

Straight Trucks

Cargo Vans

Sprinter Vans

Hot Shot Trucking Explained



THE HOTSHOT NICHE IN BRIEF

PROS	CONS
• Initial new-equipment costs are much less	• Maintenance intervals and associated costs incurred are more frequent
• With many operations, expedited loads mean little to no waiting at shippers/receivers	• Costs and hassles of having own authority likely as lease arrangements are less common
• Income can be as good as or better than Class 8 work	• Local/regional demand can be cyclical or unpredictable and unstable
• Most work is local and regional, so home time is plentiful	• Pressure to find loads/build direct customers as an independent adds work to home time

Many drivers are drawn to this unique type of trucking. Instead of dual-drive-axle tractor trailers found in other types of trucking, this usually involves pickup trucks or single-drive-axle tractors and often pulling smaller trailers.

> *"In trucking, the term hotshot commonly refers to either the truck or the freight – often both. In the former sense, it's normally a Class 3-5 truck used in combination with a variety of trailers to run for-hire freight, whether for a single customer or less-than-truckload, though there are exceptions (check out this "hotshot on steroids," for instance). The truck often will be one of the big three U.S. auto manufacturers' three-quarter- to one-and-a-half-ton cab-and-chassis rigs or pickups outfitted for weight-distributing gooseneck- or fifth-wheel-type connections to a trailer."* Overdriveonline.com

Vehicles Used in “Hot Shot” Trucking

Hot Shot drivers (more info next) can also haul expedited type loads with their pickups or single-drive-axle tractors.

One benefit of driving vans is you don’t have HOS (Hours of Service) regulations to worry about, if the loaded weight is less than 10,000 lbs. and there’s no hazmat on board that requires placarding.

No scales to worry about!

This can be *good* because you can make a lot of money, if your company has the loads available and you run like crazy. The *bad* news is that the companies could run you like crazy! Be careful out there and don’t accept loads if you need sleep or a break!

For much more information and good discussions, check out *Truckers Report* Expediter and Hot Shot Trucking Forum.

Expedite Now also has a lot of information about expedited trucking including news, sales, education, and employment.

Other Types of Specialty Trucking

There are also a variety of specialized trucking operations that you’ll see traveling down the highway.

Exhibition Type Hauling

Some trucking companies have an Exhibition Division, and some companies are dedicated entirely to exhibition hauling (such as YRC Freight) or **high-end automobile hauling** (such as Reliable Carriers, Inc.). If you're in the right place at the right time, you'll see a string of big trucks heading to the next concert for a musical group's tour, or the tractor-trailers that haul the NASCAR teams' equipment and vehicles around the country. This work can be erratic, seasonal, and sometimes awesome!

Watch this episode of American Trucker as they show how a NASCAR hauler gets it done. These guys are *livin' the life!*

Boat Haulers

Here's another specialty type of hauling you might want to consider once you get some experience. Without that experience, it can be tough to get started. Boat hauling usually falls under the Flatbed Hauling category because most boat loads are hauled on flatbed or low boy trailers (and possibly in the oversize category), though some auto transport carriers cross over and haul boats as well. But there are also special boat trailers for the bigger boats. More information can be found on USBoatHaulers.com.

Ice Road Trucking

Ever since Ice Road Truckers became popular on the History Channel (how *this* is history, I'm not sure!), drivers are lining up to get a shot at "big riches" and a job up there. Way up in Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories of Canada.

It's just like how Deadliest Catch made crab fishing such a highly sought out job for people wanting to make a "lot of money" quickly. (If you want an opportunity right here in the good ole' USA or you're looking for a similar challenge, Oil Field trucking might be a more realistic option. A little bit warmer, but the conditions can still sufficiently suck. Terrific!)

Since my focus is on trucking in the United States, I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this one. But if you *really* want to get into this, Smart Trucking has a lot of information, including job description, companies that are hiring, and some comments.

Specialty Car Haulers

Certain types of vehicles require much more care, protection, and skill when being transported. This usually means "high-dollar" types of cars. They're worth a *lot* of money. There are several different types of trailers designed to haul these vehicles, but basically, they're considered "Enclosed Trailer Vehicle Transport." *Any* group of vehicles can be transported in an enclosed trailer, but exotic and classic vehicles especially need this extra level of protection.

For a glimpse of this type of specialty hauling, see this video.

What Type of Hauling Appeals to *You*?

As you can see, there are many ways to make a living as a truck driver. Depending on your choices and goals, you can make trucking fit into your situation, anywhere in the country.

Remember that if one type of hauling is not for you, you can consider trying another type that might better suit you.

I'm not condoning job hopping and always encourage drivers to stay at each job for a decent amount of time, if possible. But not all types of hauling are for everyone.

Like I said earlier, most flatbed drivers wouldn't even consider changing to another type of trucking. They're "flatbedders for life." Once you find the right fit, you'll know it. It'll feel more natural, and you'll enjoy your trucking life a whole lot more.

I hope this chapter has given you a better idea of all that's possible in this big world of trucking!

Chapter 6: How Will You Get Paid and How Much Can You Really Earn?

This section describes all the ways truckers can get paid, as well as how much they can potentially make... realistically! Most drivers get paid through the motor carrier they're working for (company drivers, or owner-operators leased on to the company); others can get paid directly by the customers (for example, independent owner-operators).

Pay Information for New Drivers

How much you can earn as a rookie driver depends on the type and quality of truck driver training you receive. Here are some key facts about driver pay in different situations you're likely to encounter.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "the median annual wage for heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers was $40,260 in May 2015". They break it down like this: $40,260 per year and $19.36 per hour.

But trucking is *not* your average profession. It's not a 9-5 job. Most drivers are not salaried. Truck drivers (company, OTR) get paid by the mile, but are still "working" when they stop to check the load, the tires, fuel the truck, talk to shippers and receivers, supervise loading and/or unloading or handling lumpers (labor that loads/unloads), plus *many* other typical duties. That's not even taking into consideration that OTR drivers sleep in the truck while they're away from home. Try and *really* figure out an over-the-road driver's hourly pay. Good luck with that.

Bottom line, OTR drivers don't make great hourly pay when you consider all the hours it takes to get a load delivered. But take heart, there are many advantages that OTR drivers *do* have.

How Much Money Will You Make Immediately Following Truck Driving School?

If a driver graduates from a high-quality truck driving school, and the trucking company doesn't require on-the-job training (see below), he's probably ready to get out on the road right away.

A brand-new driver can make $.25-30 per mile, and drive between 2500-3000 miles per week. This adds up to anywhere between $600.00 to $900.00 per week, not counting any extras like extra stop pay or bonuses.

Training with A Driver-Trainer Until You're Ready to Go It Alone

In some situations, trucking companies will put a new driver through a type of on-the-job training with a driver-trainer. This training could last anywhere between a few weeks to several months, depending upon the company.

During this time, a driver will earn less (perhaps earning anywhere between $.15 to $.25 per mile, *and* with less miles driven). This lower pay only lasts until the driver is ready to drive on his own.

When you've done your training through an in-house motor carrier training program (company-sponsored truck driving school), you'll most likely start driving with a driver-trainer.

Factors Which Affect Driver Pay

What commodity is being hauled?

This can refer to the product being hauled (dry freight, household furniture, livestock, etc.), or to the type of trailer used to haul it (flatbed, tanker, dry van, reefer, etc.).

Hauling loads with hazardous materials pay more because they're inherently more dangerous. You'll need to get a hazmat endorsement, and

go through special training, but once you're qualified, you can make more money per mile.

For example, Reliable Carriers hauls high-dollar products including antiques and dream cars. That's why they have some of the nicest trucks on the road! See Reliable in action here.

Generally, if the job is dangerous (like hazmat or flatbed), requires specialized knowledge, and/or involves high-dollar products, it's going to pay better than the average job in trucking.

Length of time out on the road

How long a driver wants to stay out on the road will have a big effect on pay. If a driver's willing to be away from home for a while, he's going to make a lot more money. There's a saying that you're only making money if the wheels are turning. For the most part, this is true.

Where you live (area of the country)

A driver's pay can be affected by where in the country he lives. Local drivers in bigger city areas will tend to make more than others. But OTR (over-the-road) driver pay won't be affected as much by location. This leads to a definite strategy for drivers who are a little flexible about where they live. An OTR driver can save more of his pay if he lives in an area with a lower cost of living.

My wife and I, and our 3 kids all lived in the Fort Collins, CO, area. We had a smaller house, but wanted a bigger one. With land. But making $.40/mile, I was only bringing home a little over $1,000 a week, which was not enough to move up to a bigger house in Colorado. Try looking for a 4-bedroom, 2 bath house, and put “acre” in the search field. All 6 results were over $2000.

So, being a bit adventurous, I started looking on Craigslist in several states. My main criteria: it needed to be near decent sized cities, and on major interstate lanes. We looked in the southeast, the Midwest, you name it. We settled on the Greenville, SC, area. Got the property we wanted, *and* cut our rent in half. I found a good job driving up and down the east coast, and got home every week.

Try a sample search. For example, Google “craigslist Missouri.” Here’s the first result. Then pick a city, preferably an area on an interstate, or at least a major U.S. highway. Then click apartments/housing. Select your criteria on the left and acre or backyard or pond (whatever you want) in the search field and click enter.

This will give you a good idea the type of property that's available in an area. Then, on the apartments/housing results page, look to the top, and change "results" to "jobs." Then change "all" to "transport" and clear the search field, and hit enter. Voila! Of course, this last step isn't needed if your current company is OK with you moving elsewhere. Many bigger companies *will* be, if the area is at least near another of its terminals.

I totally understand that not everybody is going to consider moving to a more affordable region. It's tough starting over, in an unfamiliar area. No friends, kids need to adjust to new schools, etc. But if you're young, single, *and/or* adventurous, maybe this could be something to think about.

Warning: Crazy, potentially life-changing idea ahead...

If you're a single driver with no family to take care of and willing to go outside the normal lifestyle, there's another way to get ahead. Put your stuff into storage, get an OTR job, and live in your truck. No rent. Stay out on the road. Your company will love you. After a few weeks, or on the days when there's not a load available that day, get a hotel. You can get a nice room for less than $70 in most areas. So, 4 days a month, kick back. Swim in the pool. "Rent" will be $280 per month. You could save thousands every month. Just throwing out an idea, future driver!

Naturally, there are **other factors at play here**. A driver's work ethic, desire, motivation, goals, and family situation are a few of the factors affecting how much money they can make.

In Trucking, Experience Pays!

Usually, the more experience you have, the more money you'll make. Most trucking companies pay drivers more for each year of experience, but this varies widely.

Some will only increase pay per mile based on how long you've worked for *them*. These days, having just one year of experience often qualifies a driver as "experienced."

An experienced driver should be able to make *at least* $.30 per mile, while driving at least 2700 miles per week, which is at least $800.00 per week.

On the higher side, drivers with several years of experience can get up to $.40 per mile or more, and drive over 3000 miles per week, depending on the type of trucking they're doing.

Of course, some companies pay drivers on a different basis; you may be paid by either a percentage of the gross, paid by the load, etc. However, the differences in net pay won't be that great.

This pay information is primarily for over-the-road, company drivers. Local drivers usually get paid by the hour, by the load, or by a percentage. Drivers with seniority are usually compensated with higher pay in local driving jobs, as well as getting the good local jobs in the first place!

Drivers Get Paid in a Variety of Ways

By the Mile

There are two basic methods of calculating mileage when paying drivers based on the number of miles they drive.

Book miles

Many motor carriers pay drivers "book" miles. These are the miles driven based on a set mileage amount from one point to another. Many drivers have complained about this for years, claiming that the miles between the given points are "as the crow flies" miles, not the actual miles (sometimes called "hub" miles, explained below) the truck traveled.

Up until recently, the Household Movers Mileage Guide was the industry standard. More recently, companies have been using other programs (like PC Miler, a computer program) in their mileage calculations. These mileage calculations seem to be closer to the actual miles driven.

Hub miles

Hub miles are the actual miles driven from the beginning to the end of the trip. Not many companies pay hub mileage. Apparently, companies believe that too many drivers will take advantage of the system by driving more miles than is necessary to complete the trip (based on past occurrences).

How many miles a driver can log is the most important factor in how much money he brings home. For example, getting paid $.40 per mile is great, but if the company only gets the driver 2000 miles per week, the gross pay is only $800.00. Compare that to a driver who gets paid only $.35 per mile but drives 3,000 miles per week. That's a gross of $1,050, or $250 more for the week... a whopping $1000 more for the month!

Obviously, not all drivers want to run as hard (drive more miles) as other drivers. But, when looking for a driving job, and comparing companies, a driver's average miles per week (and I ask current drivers, read driver forums, etc.) is paramount in my decision-making process.

Pay by a percentage of the load

Drivers who work on a percentage basis earn a percentage or portion of the line haul, or gross revenue of each load hauled. Therefore, the better the revenue to the truck, the better the driver's pay. This is like being an owner-operator in the sense that it's performance based. The better *you* do, the better you get paid.

One potential disadvantage is that a driver may have to drive deadhead (empty) miles without pay with this type of payment method. However, the paid/loaded miles usually more than make up for the unpaid miles. Household movers usually get paid on a percentage, as well as many local operations such as hauling waste and recycled products, aggregate materials, rock, asphalt, sand, dirt, etc.

So, if a driver earns 25% of each load, and each load pays $500, the driver will earn $125 for each load. So, if you see rock haulers "barreling" down the highway, now you'll know why! That's another way of saying hauling for a percentage of the load (or getting paid any amount for each load hauled) creates incentive while increasing efficiency!

Pay by the load weight

Owner-operators are usually the only drivers getting paid by load weight, often by the ton. Many of the previous types of loads get paid by weight, including grain and aggregate hauling. These drivers usually get paid by the ton. Some companies will add in an hourly rate. It just depends on the company and the product. For example, if a load pays $4.00 a ton and you haul 20 tons, that's $80.00 plus the hourly rate for just that one load.

Contract drivers

The contract driver is not considered an employee of the company, but an independent contractor. Basically, the driver is in business for himself, as no taxes are taken out of his pay. However, the truck is still owned by the company. This type of driver usually receives a percentage of the load pay, but can also get paid by the mile. Out of this amount, the driver must pay for such expenses as fuel, maintenance, labor, etc.

Pay for each load hauled

Local construction haulers and gasoline/diesel fuel haulers are examples of drivers who get paid for each load they haul. They'll usually load at the same location each time (quarry, refinery, etc.) and deliver to multiple locations (construction sites, new housing or roads, gasoline service stations, etc.) throughout the day.

Hourly Pay

In many local trucking operations, drivers get paid an hourly wage. They usually have a specific job to do, and tasks to perform each day. There is usually less stress involved in working when an hourly wage is guaranteed, but there is also less opportunity for increased income. The driver knows how much money he is going to make (not including overtime), and he often has a set daily routine. There is a totally different mindset involved when you're working for an hourly wage. Of course, the main advantage of local hauling is getting home every day!

Owner-operators, especially those hauling aggregate materials also can get paid hourly, often in combination with mileage or tonnage pay.

Additional Pay and Bonuses

Companies often pay bonuses as an incentive for driving slower and more safely. Bonuses are often paid quarterly or semi-annually. Bonuses can be paid for fuel efficiency (above average gallons per mile), average speed/rpms, and for many other things. The Qualcomm system can be

used in this capacity, as well as other devices which also attempt to analyze driving performance. Use of these devices varies from company to company, and sometimes even from truck to truck within a given company.

Fuel efficiency bonus

This is an incentive for the driver to drive slower (and thus safer in the process) and to cut down on idling time (the time the engine is running while stopped). Common practice is to offer an additional cent per mile for keeping the miles per gallon over a specified amount (5 mpg, for example).

Idle time is becoming more and more important to trucking companies. Most newer trucks today have APUs. That's the Auxiliary Power Unit. The APU provides electricity, heat, and A/C to the inside of the tractor. These units run without the truck having to idle. This can literally be a life-saver. Back before these became popular, I've spent many a night running the truck to stay warm or cool. And many a *day* explaining to my company why the truck's idle percentage was so high (and why I wouldn't be getting my fuel bonus that month!). Drivers today have it much better!

Other devices used to cut down on idling are engine heaters, and Optimized Idle, a system which turns the truck on and off to keep the cab cool or warm (within a set temperature) and to keep the batteries charged and the engine warm.

Updated 2017: IdleAir is still in and still opening new locations. However, many drivers won't use them for one reason or another - recirculated air from previous users, especially smokers. I've been there, and it can smell horrible! Check out a discussion on this at The Truckers Report Forum.

Also, most bigger companies keep their trucks governed (limited) between 60-65 mph these days. That, along with APU usage, pretty much eliminates most of the usual fuel bonuses.

Bonus for having no moving violations or accidents

Self-explanatory! Just know that companies frown on violations and accidents for many obvious reasons. For one, they put a driver's ability to drive at risk. For another, company insurance rates go up to cover the increased risk that drivers with less than clean MVRs bring to the team.

Safe load handling bonus

This is for having no cargo claims or missing or damaged cargo. This can happen for many reasons including: driver failing to properly secure cargo, driving too fast for conditions, or not counting pieces or pallets when loading or unloading freight (when required to), just to name a few things.

Paperwork (including log book) proficiency

Paperwork mistakes cost companies time. Some companies will compensate you if you consistently fill it out correctly! Most companies, however, will just expect this from you. The industry is relying more and more on electronic logging devices (ELDs) that automate logging entirely, leaving little room for error, or extra pay!

Mileage bonus

Many companies will give you (or promise to when you sign on) bonus mileage pay (usually an extra penny or two per mile) for any miles over a certain number (often, over 10,000 miles in a month). When you consistently fall "just short" of the magic number each month, despite

being “ready, willing, and able” to drive more miles, it’s time to begin asking questions. It could be more than a coincidence!

On-time pickups and deliveries

This is another obvious one which most companies will just expect you to do on a regular basis. But, with other companies, *so* many drivers are late, the company must give drivers a little extra incentive to be on time.

Additional stops

Most companies will pay you extra money for multiple deliveries (stops). Usually, the first delivery is included in your pay, with additional deliveries earning you extra money. Extra stop pay could be anywhere between $10 and $50 (or more) per stop.

Loading and unloading pay

Some companies give you the option of loading or unloading your own freight. You may have to load or unload the trailer by hand (individual, stacked boxes are common), by the combination of using a standard pallet jack and by hand, by using a motorized pallet jack (common in the food service industry), or, if qualified, operating a forklift to load or unload. The pay will depend on which method used.

In other words, **this is your long-haul driver exercise program!** And *you* can get paid for participating! Great, right? All kidding aside, you *should* take advantage of such opportunities. Sitting in the same position all day long, every day, is *not* great for your body. Take my word for it!

Detention pay

Some companies will pay you extra money if for whatever reason you’re required to wait at the customer a long period of time. Others will pay you by the hour after certain number of hours determined by the individual company. This will usually be several hours, but every shipper, receiver, *and* company is different!

Layover pay

You could get laid over for any number of reasons, but truck breakdowns and waiting for loads are the most common. Most companies will not pay layover until it's been at least 24 hours. Then they'll typically pay you a certain amount per day.

For more information about owner-operators (including pay information) go back to Chapter 4!

Higher Mileage Pay for Short Trips

Some companies will pay you more when a run is shorter, like under 500 miles. Because drivers mainly get paid "when the wheels are turning," this can make the trip and time spent worthwhile, especially when combined with additional stop pay.

Higher Mileage Pay for Trips to (or Through) New York City

Ahhh, New York City! For "travelers" to this great city, you're in for a treat! Lovely scenery, well maintained streets and highways, and courteous people who will go out of their way to help a driver in need.

Hmmm. Maybe I went a little too far just then!

Actually, some drivers have been heard to say, "you couldn't pay me enough money to drive in New York City!"

Yeah, in reality, it's tough to drive there. Or even *around* or *through* NYC. It takes a great deal of patience, self-control, skills, trip planning, and other good qualities as well. Oh, and a good sense of humor will certainly help. Here's a quick glimpse of driving in Manhattan.

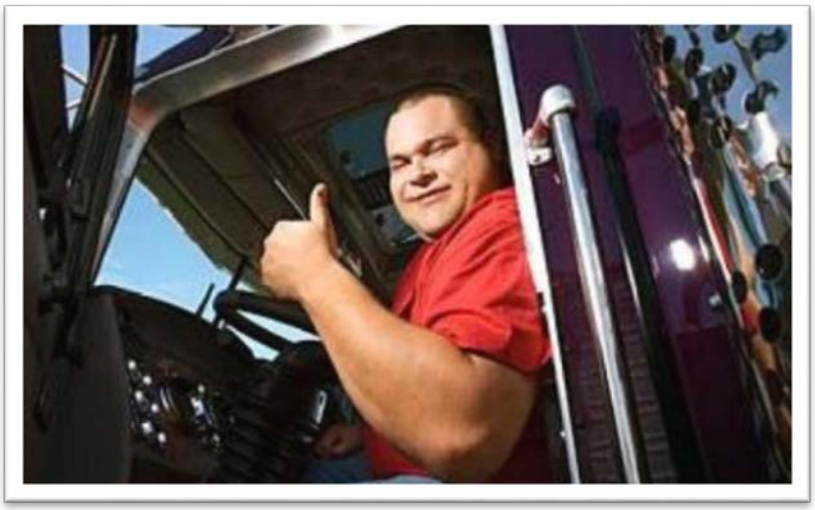
These were “my people” for a long time. And I still like to drive a 4-wheeler there. Well, at least when traffic isn’t in gridlock! But, driving a tractor trailer in the big city? Nope. Not anymore. I now prefer wide open spaces, like out west. (Well, except for Los Angeles!)

It’s just much easier to drive a truck when there’s not so many people around you!

Many trucking companies will pay you extra NYC “hazard” pay. It could be an extra $50, $100, or it might be more. And it’ll be up to you whether this extra pay is worth it. Funny, L.A. traffic can be almost as bad as NYC, but companies will rarely pay more for going there!

There are also many companies who will say “No NYC!” in their job descriptions. If a company goes there *ever*, many drivers will say *no deal* and look elsewhere for employment. This is usually just from reputation alone. These drivers just *heard* how much aggravation driving in NYC can cause or how tough driving a truck is there – but that’s not to say it isn’t true!

Chapter 7: The Image of the Trucker Over the Years



How truckers, and the trucking profession, have been viewed by the public has evolved over the years. The trucker's public image seems to have gone from good to bad, and from bad to worse. Whether it's in country music, movies, or on television, trucking has not always received very fair treatment.

Truckers in Movies, Television, Country Music, and the News

Unless truckers are depicted in a negative fashion, with lots of crashes and explosions, don't find it as interesting anymore.

After getting relatively little attention for many years on the big or small screen, trucking suddenly became very popular in the 1970s. Truckers were depicted in movies such as *White Line Fever*, *Convoy*, and the immensely popular *Smokey and the Bandit*.

Convoy was fueled by the song of the same name, by C.W. McCall, in which a bunch of truckers got together in a convoy (a group of truckers traveling together down the road, not to be stopped), to protest the wrongdoings of "Smokey Bear" (CB talk for law enforcement, or specifically, Highway Patrol).

For the most part, the truckers in these movies, although renegades, were the good guys. This was the case with *B.J. and the Bear,* a television series about a trucker and his pet monkey, traveling the road, and solving crimes. And if you don't remember, nope, I'm not even kidding!

In the nineties, if truckers were depicted in movies, it wasn't very favorable. In *Breakdown* and *Thelma and Louise,* truckers were shown as a kidnapper and as a bellowing pervert, respectively. To its credit, *Black Dog* was about a trucker whose primary concern was for his family, and who had no choice but to do what he had to do (*And*, of course, there were lots of explosions and crashes along the way!). For more, go to Trucker Country's Trucker Movies Page.

The entertainment industry can't be blamed for the way it depicts truckers and trucking in general. People go to the movies primarily to be entertained, to laugh, and to be inspired.

Trucker movies are often exaggerated and sensationalized to attract the average consumer. Nobody wants to see a movie about truckers driving down the road, staring out the window, with nothing bad or crazy happening!

So, the industry produces a movie they know the public will be interested in seeing. They are naturally more interested in the bottom line (money), than they are about showing truckers (or anyone else, for that matter) in a more accurate or positive light.

Country music, on the other hand, has usually treated truckers a little more honestly. One of the reasons is because country music is all about telling stories about people's lives. And truckers love to tell stories!

Truck driving songs go all the way back to 1939, with Ted Daffan's "Truck Driver's Blues," performed by Cliff Bruner and His Boys. Many more were to follow, including 1954's "Truck Driving Man" by Terry Fell, and 1963's "Six Days on the Road," which was a national hit by Dave Dudley. Check it out now, along with some familiar footage!

"Six Days..." was written by two truck drivers, and talked about the road, longing for home, speed traps, and shifting gears (or having the truck *out* of gear, "Georgia overdrive").

In the 1970s, *Convoy* by CW McCall, was a national hit, bringing trucking and the CB radio into vogue. It seemed like everyone, and not just truckers, had a CB radio and were talking the lingo.

Let them truckers roll, 10-4!

Another popular trucking song was Kathy Mattea's "18 Wheels and a Dozen Roses," about a trucker's last trip on the road before coming home to his family, a song many truckers can relate to. Of course, there's Garth Brooks' "Papa Loved Mama," about a trucker who caught his wife cheating, and crashed his truck into the motel, killing himself and all involved. Hopefully not *too* many truckers can relate to that one! For more trucking songs, go to Trucker Country's Trucking Songs page.

Truck drivers do most of their work in full view of the public. Some people combine the depictions of truckers in film and song with their daily driving experiences and find trucking fascinating, envisioning themselves doing the job. They may have a romantic view of the trucker's life as one of freedom and adventure (and at times, it is); others just view truckers as a

nuisance, as someone who is keeping them from getting where they need to be, or even as hazards to their own safety.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned above, all it takes is one "super trucker," hogging the fast lane and tailgating dangerously close behind a four-wheeler, to make *all* truckers look bad.

If someone driving on the highway has contact with 100 courteous truck drivers, then gets cut off by one renegade truck driver, which image do you think this person is going to hold onto?

Creating a *New* Image of the Professional Truck Driver

One of my goals is to help drivers develop a professional mindset. A mindset that's focused on safe and courteous driving. This brings us back to the trucker's public image. If we can change the trucker's mindset,

maybe we can eliminate the rude, reckless, and dangerous driving habits which give all truckers a bad name.

So, what's more important, a truck driver's image, or his or her character? To the public, what matters is how safe they drive, and how professional they are. To their company, what's important is how effective their job performance is. To drivers, what's most important is how successful and satisfied they are... professionally and personally, emotionally, and even spiritually.

As much as we all may want to (haha!), we aren't going to bring back the crazy cowboy days we enjoyed in the '70s. Truckers are probably never going to be viewed as heroes again, regardless of how much we sacrifice to do the job. But truckers are the backbone of our country, even if we're the only ones who know it, and we should be congratulated for the work we do.

If you become a trucker, try to keep in mind that you'll be in the public eye. It's our privilege and responsibility to represent our industry with pride. Set an example for other truckers, even for all the "four-wheelers," and show what it means to be a truly professional driver.

Chapter 8: Is Trucking the Career for You?

Make No Mistake. Trucking is Challenging!

To be able to make an informed decision, you'll need to get the whole story, not just a "sugar-coated" tale you may have heard from other publications, websites, or trucking company recruiters.

Either the information in this guide will make your trucking life a whole lot easier, or the many challenges I mention will force you to rethink a career in trucking altogether. The trucking life is perfect for many, but is not for everyone!

There have been too many people who have paid a lot of money (up to $5,000 at some schools) and spent significant time getting truck driver training, only to end up quitting after just a short spell on the road. When you aren't properly prepared to handle some of the challenges discussed in this section, they can hit you like a truck!

Seriously though, when you get into trucking and you're not ready for these challenges, it can ruin more than just your day. Reading these guides will give a tremendous advantage from day one!

As you're reading through the descriptions of these challenges, take the time to honestly consider whether you can see yourself doing this job. No matter which decision you make, the information here will save you time and money, as well as give you a more complete view of trucking. But remember, every job has its challenges. Personally, I love trucking. But of course, I've always loved a good challenge!

The Conditions Are Always Changing!

From monotonous to stressful in a heartbeat.

A truck driver experiences a wide range of emotions and feelings in trucking. The over-the-road driver (when not on a dedicated route, anyway) is always going somewhere new, which can often be stressful, especially when the driver is new to trucking.

But this can bring a sense of accomplishment in meeting the challenge, completing the task, and getting the load to the destination. Trucking can be exciting, and is often quite adventurous.

However, the driving and working conditions can be quite stressful one moment, boring the next. For more regional and especially local truck drivers, there are the seemingly endless trips back and forth, often one after the other.

It is similar for over-the-road drivers who do dedicated routes, in which the loads often go to the same place, on a similar schedule (usually every week or trip). It may *sound* great, but driving the same route can get monotonous (this could describe local as well), especially if you've been on the road for a while. Some drivers prefer this type of trucking. For many drivers, it's comfortable knowing where you're going, and how to get there. This eliminates some of the stress associated with the unknown.

Weather and terrain changes

But even when you are on a familiar, oft-traveled route, there are always changing conditions on the road. The driver often must complete his mission despite inclement weather, tough terrain, unfamiliar routes and surroundings, or seldom traveled parts of the country.

Having to drive up a mountain pass which you never crossed before, and doing so in winter conditions, can be a bit scary. And doing all of this will not earn a truck driver any more money than would driving across I-70 in Kansas, on a sunny summer day.

Pickups and deliveries frequently send drivers to big cities, negotiating the truck through extremely small streets, dealing with the possibility of accidents, unexpected delays, time restrictions, and anything else that heavy traffic is likely to cause. On top of that, you'll be trying to make the delivery deadline. And when you're not going to a big city, you'll almost certainly have to go through or around a big city. It pays to be ready!

Truckers Have a Lot of Responsibility

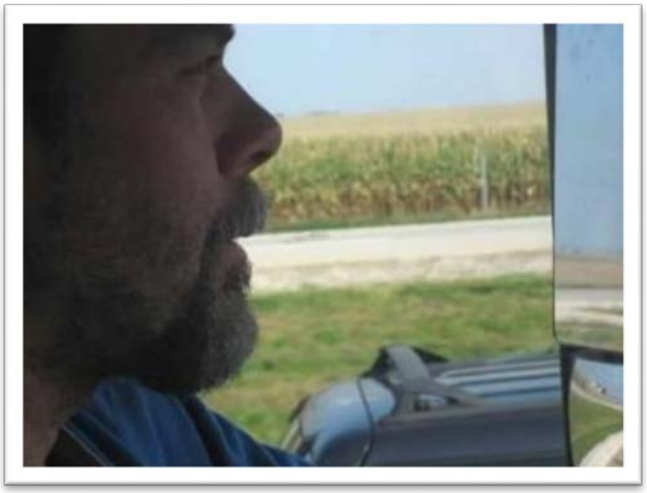
That sounds like a fairly obvious statement, but it needs to be pointed out. Your truck and your cargo are the two vitally important elements of your job that must be handled professionally and with great care. First, the truck is a potential danger to many people's lives if not operated skillfully and safely. Second, there is a lot of money and property involved.

A tractor-trailer, in the U.S., grosses up to 80,000 pounds, and LCVs often gross much more than that. A trucker is responsible for the truck, the trailer, and the freight they haul. If you've ever seen a jackknifed tractor-trailer, or one involved in a head-on collision, then you know how serious this business can be.

You will regularly be responsible for potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars of equipment and cargo. On top of that, this all must be done in the real world, where conditions are always changing.

In the end, there is a sense of pride and satisfaction that comes with handling these responsibilities, knowing that you've done a good job. Most of the public has no idea of all that's involved in the trucker's daily life.

Truck Drivers Must Handle Things on Their Own



Most truck drivers (especially over-the-road drivers) are expected to work on their own, without any direct supervision. This is quite different from most people's work lives. The new driver must make this transition smoothly, or they will not last. No boss is looking over his shoulder to make sure they're doing a good job. The only real barometer is the result. The truck driver's main responsibility is getting the load to its destination safely, and on time.

Initially, being on your own may sound great. But as time goes on, this can become your greatest challenge. I believe that to succeed long term in trucking, you need to be somewhat of a loner. I don't mean someone who doesn't want to associate with other people; just someone who can handle being alone for long periods of time.

But an over-the-road trucker has choices about how *much* of a loner they want to be. Some drivers enjoy talking on the CB to other drivers, rolling on down the road, and hanging out at truck stops with other drivers, happy as clams! There is almost always someone nearby to talk with!

Others pretty much keep to themselves, and just concentrate on the job they need to do and getting home to their family. Some of these truckers

are self-contained, in which they have just about everything they need within the confines of their own tractor.

For the most part, it's up to the individual driver how he wants to operate. I go back and forth between the two different styles depending upon how I'm feeling, and what type of load assignment I'm on.

The Physical and Mental Challenges of Trucking

The public usually just sees the truck driver driving, and in trucking there *are* long stretches of just sitting and driving, for hours on end. But trucking is often very physically demanding. For some drivers, just sitting and driving *is* the physically demanding part. Driving can be mentally demanding as well, and often requires a great deal of focus and patience.

Local drivers are often expected to unload their own trucks (food service drivers, for example), and do many more deliveries than OTR drivers. This is a major consideration, especially if you're not in good shape, are older, or live in an area with extreme weather conditions. But of course, how much labor a driver does still depends on the type of trucking performed.

As far as OTR drivers are concerned, the type of trucking will usually determine how much physical activity is involved. For example,

- Flatbed drivers must regularly secure and tarp their loads, and must fold their tarps, which can be a challenge.
- Tanker drivers usually must carry around hoses, but don't have to physically unload the product.
- Household moving drivers can usually control the amount of labor they do themselves, and how much they delegate to hired labor.

As far as dry and reefer van loads are concerned, freight can be loaded and unloaded by the customer, a hired lumper, or the driver himself. It seems that the more experienced drivers will usually pay lumpers to load or unload. But, remember, that this may be the only opportunity a driver is able to get any exercise. And there is usually extra money paid for labor,

which can be helpful, especially in the early years when the driver pay is lower.

Driving hundreds of miles, day after day

Driving over 600 miles a day for many days in a row is more than most people can handle. You may think you can handle it because you drove cross country in a car, and had no problem doing it. But driving a tractor trailer is quite a bit different than driving a four-wheeler. It's as much mentally as it is physically tiring.

There's constant monitoring of all sides of your vehicle, looking out for other vehicles, and anticipating their actions; monitoring of your mirrors to keep the trailer in between the lines, an awareness of your overall weight and size, driving through every kind of condition, through all types of stress factors, delivery deadlines, etc.

Check out this video as Sergei drives his truck into New York City and you'll see what I'm talking about! Also, check out his Heavy Haul TV channel for tons of interesting and educational videos of trucking.

Difficult Company Policies

Short runs/trips

A short run (sometimes called a "mini") is a load assignment with a small number of miles, often less than 300. Some companies will give you extra mileage pay for doing these types of runs, but many will not. These are OK occasionally, especially if they're drop and hook, but if you must spend a lot of time picking up or delivering these loads on a regular basis, you might not end up making very much money!

When "book" miles aren't even close to "hub" (actual) miles.

Unfortunately, some companies try to skim money from drivers wherever they're able. One of these areas is in "book" mileage pay. If a load is going from Denver to Atlanta, the "book" miles are approximately 1400 miles. But, if the pickup is in Northwest Denver, and the delivery is in Southeast Atlanta, or a similar suburban area in either case, there will be an extra 30 to 50 miles above what the "book" miles say. Also, "book" miles don't usually account for multiple pickups or deliveries in the same area. This can be many extra miles, plus plenty of unpaid time spent in the process.

Small trucking companies with questionable motives

Check out any company thoroughly before going to work for them. (This is covered in greater detail in Book 2.) But be especially careful when considering working for a small company, or an owner/operator with only one or a handful of trucks. There have been more than a few instances of drivers not getting paid fairly, and sometimes, not getting paid at all – and that's only in my personal experience!

Lower pay rate for empty miles

Company drivers should be paid for *all* miles driven, as long as the drivers are not going out of their way and stay "in route" in a given trip. This should be spelled out plainly for the drivers before they even set out on their first run.

Not getting paid for unloading

Most companies will reimburse drivers who do their own loading and unloading, but some will consider it as part of the driver's job, and will not pay extra. If the driver gets above average mileage pay, this may make up for it. Also, a lot depends upon whether it's a "live load" or "drop and hook."

Not getting home or family time

There are many times when an over-the-road driver may have difficulty getting home time. How important this is, depends on them, and their situation. If a driver is single, and is looking to make as much money as possible, getting home time may not be all that important. But if they have a family at home, they may want to get home as much as possible.

Sometimes, when a driver is first hired, they're told they'll get home every weekend, or every week. Then, when they get on the road, they find that they'll be lucky to get home every two or three weeks. Unfortunately, many

companies will tell you whatever you want to hear just to get you "on board." There are ways to prevent this, which will be discussed later.

Most over-the-road carriers will keep you on the road, away from home, for long periods of time, 10 days to 3 weeks on average. There are many exceptions to this, of course, as some carriers will get you home every week, or every weekend. But this is more indicative of a regional carrier, or a company who either provides or contracts their own transportation.

Because you'll be on the road most of the time, you will probably not be able to do some of the things you're used to doing. Eating out (or in) with your family, going to church regularly (at home, not in a truck stop chapel), playing sports or going to the gym to work out, and anything else you do at home on a regular basis, may radically change.

If you do have a family, be prepared for some difficulties, unless you and your family just prefer to be apart. You may miss birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and just spending quality time with your loved ones. It can sometimes be more difficult on the person who stays at home than for the truck driver.

Simply put, it can be difficult to maintain a normal family life while living on the road. However, I'm depicting a worst-case scenario. You may get to work for a carrier whose dispatcher will work with you on many of these difficult areas. Most times, in my experience, if you give enough notice, dispatchers will do their best to get you home for key events.

Many factors must be taken into consideration when you're on the road and you need to get home. One, as I just mentioned, is how much notice you've given. Factors include: where you are at the time, what kind of freight you're hauling, the time of year, your carrier's "deadhead" policies (driving with no load), plus others.

Advice for When You're on the Road, and Away from Your Family

Stay in touch as often as possible

Either talk to your family or chat/message them regularly. For when you're driving (most of the time, right?), connect your smart phone with your truck stereo. This way, you can talk to your friends, family, and company/dispatch hands-free. You know how important this is these days. But you still see drivers, with all these inexpensive hands-free options available to them, with their phone in hand up to their ear. Sorry if this offends you, but there's no excuse for this.

It depends on your truck, but most newer vehicles come with an auxiliary audio jack. Simply plug in and you're all set. Other options are USB port, Bluetooth, cassette tape or CD adapters, and FM transmitters. With the last option, you just set it to a radio station not frequently used; otherwise, you must set it differently when you go through cities where that station isn't available. Check out a simple demonstration of different methods, or for connection through FM transmitter or search YouTube for "connect phone to car stereo."

This is great for talking as I've said, but there are other uses. Listening to podcasts, audiobooks, music programs, etc., are all possible using this method.

Make a habit of communicating with your family at the same times every day

Calling when you wake up (but remember the time differences), and/or before you go to sleep, can establish a routine everyone can look forward to. Also, my family looks on the atlas or on the wall map to find out where I am, and to get an idea of when I'm on my way back home, and how long it should take me to get there. And of course, these days you can follow along on Google maps!

Encourage your family to be active and involved

If your spouse is involved in any activities (church, a business of some type, friends, etc.), it will be much easier for him or her to deal with you being away on the road. Depending on their ages, your kids will probably be involved in school, or other activities. Maybe you can even help them with their homework while on Skype or FaceTime!

When you're at home, try to spend as much time with your family as possible. I know, you'll need to unwind first, and just sit back and watch TV for a while. But after that, try to be a little proactive, because your family is important. Having a support system at home can really make the difference when you're away for long periods of time.

Don't get me wrong, if you're married and you have a family and a house, trucking can still be the career for you. It may not be quite as easy, and you'll be wanting to spend as much time at home as possible (depending on your situation), but it can work well after you've all adjusted to the change.

Trucking is a Great Career (For the Right Person!)

Trucking is a career like no other. It can take you almost anywhere you want to go. There are many different types of trucking a driver can choose from, many ways to drive a truck, and many areas of the country in which

to work. Whether your goal is ultimate success in all areas a life, including areas other than trucking, or simply a good paycheck and a steady job, trucking can be the means to that end.

There are many pros and cons when weighing all the factors in deciding on a career in trucking. There are always challenges, often great satisfaction, and occasionally disappointments and letdowns.

Sometimes trucking is effortless, at times even fun, as you're driving down the road taking in a beautiful area of the country, while listening to your favorite music or show.

But at other times it can be tough, as you may be unloading your trailer by hand, or waiting all day for a receiver to get around to unloading you. And then you have to drive all night!

If you've chosen a career in trucking, I congratulate you on your decision. I'm sure it wasn't an easy one to make! I encourage you to persevere through the challenges and difficulties that are especially prevalent when you first get started in trucking. It *will* get easier as you learn and gain experience.

Try to learn from those truckers who've been doing this job a long time, and who are good enough to try to help you.

The rest of these books will give you more practical advice on a great number of subjects, starting with getting trained and licensed, and finding a trucking company to work for. Try to understand how important this beginning period will be to your career in trucking. Getting off on the right foot is essential if you're going to have success. Good luck in your career, and beyond.

Even if you've just now decided that trucking is *not* for you... thanks for reading anyway! Now, at the very least, you know a little more about the job and life of a trucker. Perhaps you'll even drive a little smarter around big rigs knowing what you now know.

I hope this book has been a great help to you. It is never easy beginning a new job, let alone a whole new career. Go to TruckerCountry.com for valuable truck driving information and resources. Also, as these ebooks are updated and revised, we'll send you instant updates.

Here's a video that'll give you a glimpse into the life of a truck driver. Get out your popcorn, it's full movie length. It's not that new, but it's still worth checking out. While watching, try to imagine yourself doing this job and life; constantly on the road, driving all the time, eating in truck stops, sleeping in a truck!

Be forewarned: *everything* in your life will be different!

I wish you luck in your whichever direction you go and thanks again for reading!

Jim Purcell
TruckingMadeEasy.com
TruckerCountry.com

Reference and Supplemental Material

Trucking Terminology and Transportation Definitions

Trucking Terminology

Transportation Definitions

Trucking Terminology

ABS (Anti-lock braking system)
The ABS system helps the driver retain control of the vehicle under heavy braking conditions.

Air Brake
A brake which is operated by air. The air brake system on tractors consists of air lines, valves, tanks, and an air compressor.

Air Ride Suspension
The suspension system supports the weight of the load, plus the trailer on air filled rubber bags rather than the old system which used steel springs. The compressed air is supplied by the air compressor and reservoir tanks which provide air for the air brake system.

Air Spring System
The system in which the container and plunger are separated by pressurized air. When the container and plunger attempt to squeeze together, the air compresses and produces a spring affect.

Air Tank
A reservoir for storing air for use in the air brake system. Braking would be impossible without an adequate supply of air.

Axle
A structural component to which wheels, brakes, and suspension are all attached.

Types of axles:

- Steer Axle: the front axle of the tractor.
- Drive Axles: axles with powered wheels.
- Pusher Axles: unpowered, go ahead of drive axles.
- Tag Axles: unpowered, go behind drive axles.
- Rear Axles: may be drive, pusher, or tag axles.
- Trailer tandem axles: generally unpowered, sometimes split apart for distribution.

Back Haul
A return load. Many companies, often ones who haul their own product, take a load from their home location to a certain area the country, then they need to go back to the original location to pick up another similar load. Instead of returning empty, they'll find another load (the "back haul") going back to the original location.

Bill of Lading
Shipping documents or shipping papers for a particular shipment. It contains an itemized list of goods included in the shipment. It also serves as a contract of shipment, and a receipt for the goods.

Blind Spot
The areas around a tractor-trailer which are not visible to the driver through the windows or mirrors.

Bobtail
The tractor operating without a trailer attached.

Bogey
The assembly of two or more axles, often a pair in tandem.

Balloon Freight
Cargo which takes up a lot of space, but is very light.

Bridge Formula
A bridge protection formula used by federal and state governments to regulate the amount of weight that can be put on each of a vehicle's axles, and how far apart the axles must be to legally be able to carry a certain weight.

Bulk Freight
Freight that is not in packages or containers; normally hauled in tankers, grain trailers, and sometimes in regular van trailers.

Cabover
Short for cab-over-engine, designed so that the cab sits over the engine on the chassis.

Cartage Company
A motor carrier that provides local pickup and delivery.

CAT Scales
The most common type of scales at truck stops are CAT scales. These are purported to be the most accurate, and they guarantee the weight reading to be accurate, or else they'll go to court for you and pay the fine.

CB (Citizens Band Radio)
The type of radio that's used by truckers to communicate with each other.

CDL (Commercial Drivers License)
The driver's license which authorizes individuals to operate commercial motor vehicles and buses over 26,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight.

Check Call
Calling by telephone, or using the Qualcomm system to check in with your company/dispatcher, usually once a day, early in the morning. This informs them of your progress, and any other important information a company may require.

Clearance Lights
The lights on top of the front and rear of the trailer; often referred to as the marker lights.

Clutch Brake
The clutch brake is engaged when you push the clutch all the way to the floor. You only do this when you're stopped, and need to get the truck into gear.

Comdata
The company that issues Comchecks and Comcard.

- Comcheck: blank checks you receive from your company to get cash advances when you're on the road, or for certain truck expenses, lumpers, etc. When you need a cash advance, you tell your dispatcher how much money you need, and he gives you a code to place on the check. This is a reference number the truck stop (or wherever you're getting the cash advance) uses to verify that the check is good.
- Comcard: a fuel card you're issued by your company for you to use for fuel, oil etc. Can also be used to receive cash advances.

Commentary Driving
Many truck driver training programs utilize the commentary driving concept. This is an important tool to help the student understand both how a truck driver thinks and sees things as he drives down the road, and how the student will have to modify his own thinking in order to be a safe and effective truck driver. While training, the trainer first drives down the road while verbalizing everything he is thinking, seeing, and doing. This is done to give a clear example of what is required of the driver in the day-to-day operations of a big truck. Then the student takes a turn driving and openly verbalizes what he's thinking about and exactly what he's seeing so that the trainer and other students can hear and evaluate his observations, while comparing the two different approaches.

Container
A shipping container is a standard sized metal box used to transport

freight. It is used in Intermodal Transportation, which utilizes different modes of transportation ship, rail, and highway. International shipping containers are 20 to 40 feet long, and must conform to International Standards Organization (ISO) standards and are designed to fit in ship's holds. Containers are transported on public roads on a container chassis trailer pulled by a tractor. Domestic containers are up to 53 ft. long, and are of lighter construction; these are designed for rail and highway use only.

Container Chassis
A type of trailer specifically designed to carry a shipping container.

Conventional
A style of tractor in which the cab sits behind the engine compartment, instead of over it (as in the case of the Cabover)

Converter Dolly
The assembly which connects trailers together, as in a set of double or triple trailers. This assembly is equipped with the fifth wheel for coupling.

Consignee
The receiver, who accepts your delivery.

Cube
This is the capacity, measured in cubic feet, of the interior volume of a trailer.

DAC Services
A pre-employment screening service many trucking companies use to help them select drivers.

Day Cab
A tractor which has no sleeper berth. Often for local work where the driver gets home every night.

Deadhead
Driving a tractor-trailer without cargo, or without paying load.

Detention
Extra driver pay for time spent waiting at a customer facility.

Dock Lock
A safety device that hooks to your trailer's bumper when you're backed to a loading dock. This device is controlled from inside the facility, and it prevents the trailer from being able to move away from the dock, especially considering the safety of the forklift driver and anyone else inside the trailer. See the section on " picking up the load".

Drop and Hook
Taking a loaded trailer to a shipper/receiver, dropping the trailer (unhooking the trailer, and leaving it at the customer's facility), and then hooking up to, and leaving with, another loaded trailer. Most drivers prefer this because there's no waiting, sometimes for hours, for your trailer to get unloaded or loaded.

Drop Pay
Extra pay for a delivery, usually an extra stop.

Dry Freight
Any freight that's not refrigerated.

Empty Call
The call you make to your dispatcher to inform him that you're unloaded/empty, and need a new load assignment.

Fifth Wheel
The coupling device attached to a tractor or dolly which supports the front of the semitrailer and locks it to the tractor or dolly. The center of the fifth wheel hooks to the trailer's kingpin, at which point the trailer and tractor or dolly pivots.

Fingerprinting
A common term for when drivers must unload the trailer by themselves.

Fixed Tandem
The assembly of two axles and suspension that is attached to the chassis in one place and cannot be moved back and forth.

Floating the Gears
When you shift gears without using the clutch.

Freight
The cargo you're hauling. The same as product, commodity, load, etc.

Freight Lane
The route, often an Interstate or major highway, on which a great amount of freight flows back and forth. If you work for a company which uses regular freight lanes, it will be beneficial to your home time if you live on or near one of these freight lanes.

Frequent Fueler
Many of the major truck stops have frequent fueler programs or cards which drivers can sign up for. These programs give you credit or cash back for each gallon of fuel you purchase.

Full Trailer
A trailer supported by axles on the front and on the rear of the trailer.

GAWR (Gross Axle Weight Rating)
The maximum weight an axle is rated to carry by the manufacturer. Includes both the weight of the axle, and the portion of a vehicle's weight carried by the axle.

GCW (Gross Combination Weight)
The total weight of a loaded combination vehicle, such as a tractor-trailer.

Georgia Overdrive
Taking the truck out of gear when you're going down a hill, which enables the truck to go extremely fast. Not only *not* recommended, but grounds for immediate termination.

G.B.L.
Government Bill of Lading.

Governor
A device which limits the maximum speed of a vehicle. Used by a great

number of trucking companies who want to save on fuel expenses, and limit accidents.

Grade
A significant change of elevation; either an upgrade, or downgrade, the steepness of which is determined as a percentage. For example, a road with a 5% downgrade decreases 5 feet for every 100 feet of travel.

Gradeability
A vehicle's ability to climb a certain percentage of grade at a given speed. For example, a truck with a gradeability of 6% at 60 mph can maintain 60 mph on a 6% grade.

GVW (Gross Vehicle Weight)
The total weight of a vehicle; the vehicle's weight, and the contents of the trailer and tractor.

GVWR (Gross Vehicle Weight Rating)
The total weight a vehicle is rated to carry by the manufacturer, including its own weight and the weight of the load.

Hazmat
Hazardous materials, as classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Any transportation of hazardous materials is regulated by the United States Department of Transportation. To haul hazardous materials, a driver needs a hazmat endorsement on his CDL, plus special training.

Headache Rack
A metal barrier station behind the tractors cab, to prevent loads from coming forward and crushing the tractor (and anyone inside). Most common on tractors pulling flatbed trailers.

Hydroplaning
When the tires lose contact with the road due to excess water.

Interaxle Differential
On tractors with tandem rear axles, the interaxle differential allows each axle to turn independently.

Jackknife
When the tractor is at an extreme angle to the trailer. Can be done intentionally, as in jackknife parking sometimes necessary in tight spaces, or unintentionally, as in a jackknife accident common when slippery or windy conditions are present.

Jackrabbit Start
Releasing the clutch too quickly, which causes the vehicle to jerk forward.

Jake Brake
An engine retarder which helps to slow vehicles, especially on down grades.

Johnson Bar
The trailer hand valve, commonly used to test the brakes after coupling the tractor and trailer. Also known as the trolley valve.

Kingpin
A thick, metal pin located underneath the front of the trailer. This kingpin slides into, and connects with, the locking jaws of the fifth wheel of the tractor or dolly, thereby attaching the tractor/dolly to the trailer.

Kingpin Lock
A locking device which is placed around/over the kingpin, which prevents a fifth wheel from connecting to it, and taking the trailer. Highly recommended if you plan on dropping the trailer in an unsecured location, which includes truck stops.

Landing Gear
Retracting legs which support the trailer when it's not connected to a tractor.

Layovers
Any off-duty time while away from home.

Loaded Call
The call you make to your dispatcher from the shipper once your trailer is loaded, and the bills are signed.

Lift Axle
An extra, unpowered axle which is needed only when the vehicle is loaded, and which allows it to meet Federal and state vehicle weight standards. The axle can be raised or lowered by an air spring suspension system.

Linehaul
Moving freight from one point to another, usually by LTL carriers from one of its terminals to another.

Load Locks
Long metal bars which retract and expand to fit in place from one side wall of the trailer to the other, thereby holding back, and securing the load/cargo.

Log book
The record book in which truck drivers record their trucking activities, the hours of service and duty status for each 24-hour period.

LCV (Long Combination Vehicle)
Any combination of a truck tractor and two or more trailers or semi-trailers which operate on the Interstate System at a gross vehicle weight (GVW) greater than 80,000 pounds.

Low Boy
An open flatbed trailer, where the main body of the trailer is very low to the ground so that it can haul oversize or wide loads; often construction equipment, or other extremely bulky or heavy loads.

LTL (Less-Than-Truckload)
A quantity of freight less than that required for the application of a truckload rate, usually less than 10,000 pounds. These smaller loads are consolidated by an LTL carrier into one vehicle headed for multiple destinations.

Lumpers
Casual laborers who load and unload trailers.

MVR Report
A driver's motor vehicle record, which shows all violations, accidents, etc.

Mini
Any shipment which is under 100 pounds.

No Touch
A situation in which the driver doesn't have to load or unload (no touching, or fingerprinting) the load/cargo.

Omnitracs, formerly Qualcomm
A satellite tracking device and communication tool that can also be used to monitor speed, braking, idling, and other barometers

Opti-Idle
Equipment which starts and shuts down the truck to keep the truck a certain temperature inside, while reducing idling time.

OS&D Department
The Department of your company which handles overage, shortage, and damaged cargo. See the section on OS & D in "at the shipper."

Out of Route
Motor carriers usually use set mileage amounts for distances between cities. If a driver goes over this amount, any miles over the set amount are considered *out of route* miles.

Overage
Extra freight which shouldn't have been shipped.

Owner-Operator
A truck driver who's in business for himself; and owns and operates his own truck/s, trailer/s, and/or equipment; an independent contractor.

P&D
Pickup and delivery operations.

Pallets
The wooden base onto which a product is loaded. It has slats on the sides which enable a forklift to move products easily.

Pay Load
The weight of the cargo being hauled.

Peddle Run
A load which has multiple, and often frequent deliveries.

Piggyback
A semi- trailer built with reinforcements to withstand transport by a railroad flatcar.

Piggybacking
The term used for the situation in which loaded highway trailers are loaded onto railcars, and taken to railheads. From there, local trucks take the trailers the rest of the way to their destination.

Pigtail
The electrical line supplying electric power from the tractor to the trailer, coiled like a pig's tail.

Pintle Hook
A coupling device used in double and triple trailer, and truck-trailer combinations.

Placard
A sign showing the type of hazardous materials loaded on the vehicle, placed on all four sides of a trailer.

Power Divider
See *Interaxle Differential.*

Private Carrier
A business which uses its own trucks to transport its own products and/or raw materials.

PTO (Power Takeoff)
A device used in tractors which transmits tractor engine power to auxiliary equipment.

Public Scales
The scales the general public is able to use to weigh their vehicles.

Pull Trailer
A short, full trailer (supported by axles on the front and rear of the trailer), with an extended tongue.

Pup Trailer
A short semi-trailer, usually between 26 and 32 feet long, and having only a single axle at the rear.

Qualcomm (now Omnitracs)
A satellite tracking device and communication tool that can also be used to monitor speed, braking, idling, and other barometers of a driver's efficiency.

Receiver
The customer who accepts your delivery/shipment; Also known as the consignee.

Relay Driving
In LTL shipments, a driver only takes a load a portion of the way, usually for the duration of one driving shift. The driver then turns the truck over to another driver to continue the trip.

Reefer
A refrigerated trailer, where the temperature is controlled by a refrigeration unit (the reefer unit). A *reefer* can either refer to the reefer unit or the entire reefer trailer.

Retarder
The device used to assist brakes in order to slow a vehicle. There are many different types of retarders; including engine retarders, transmission-mounted hydraulic retarders, and axle mounted electromagnetic retarders. An engine retarder commonly called a 'Jake Brake' is used in most trucks today.

Rider Policy
The company's policy regarding allowing passengers in the truck with the driver.

Runaway Truck Ramp
An emergency escape ramp used on steep downgrades for trucks which have lost braking power.

Ryan Recorder
A monitoring and recording device which is placed inside of a temperature controlled trailer.

Seal
A plastic or metal band (once it's broken, it cannot be reconnected) placed on the trailer door latch. An intact seal ensures that the trailer doors have not been opened, and the cargo is untouched.

Semi-trailer
A trailer supported at the rear by its own axles and wheels, and at the front by fifth wheel from a tractor or dolly.

Service Plaza
A rest area found on turnpikes or toll roads. These usually have truck parking, restrooms, vending machines, telephones, and often fast food restaurants.

Shag
A local delivery, or trailer movement.

Sleeper
A sleeping compartment situated behind the tractor's cab, behind the driver's seat, or an integral part the cab.

Sliding Tandem
A mechanism that allows a tandem axle suspension to be moved back and forth at the rear of a semi-trailer in order to distribute the weight between axles, and adjust the length between kingpin and tandems.

Sliding Fifth Wheel
A fifth wheel with a sliding mechanism which allows it to be adjusted to distribute the weight of the axles, varying the overall vehicle length and weight per axle.

Slip-seat
When a driver is not assigned to a regular tractor, but moves in and out of tractors as they become available.

Space Cushion
The area between the vehicle and other vehicles on the road. It is important to keep an adequate space cushion to avoid accidents, etc.

Spread Axle
A tandem axle assembly that can be spread farther apart than the standard spacing. When the tandems are spread to 8 or 9 feet, each axle is weighed independently, with each allowed up to 20,000 pounds (or 40,000 pounds for the combined tandem weight).

Spotter
A yard driver who moves and parks trailers in a terminal yard (In some places, they're known as a 'yard dog' or 'yard jockey'). The vehicles used to move the trailers are designed so that the driver just walks behind the driver's seat to hook up the airlines, and includes a hydraulic lift to lift up the trailer without having to crank up the landing gear, so that the trailers can be moved quickly.

Tandem Axle
A pair of axles grouped closely together; either the drive axles on the tractor or the tandem axles of the trailer.

Team Driving
Two drivers who alternate between driving and non-driving time (sleeping, resting, etc.) in order to expedite the shipment and maximize the overall production of the truck.

TL (Truckload)
A quantity of freight sufficient to fill a trailer, usually greater than 10,000 pounds.

TL Carrier
A trucking company which usually dedicates trailers to a single shipper's

cargo, as opposed to an LTL carrier, which often transports the combined cargo of several different shippers.

Tractor
A truck designed primarily to pull a semi-trailer using the fifth wheel which is mounted over its drive axle/s. May be called a truck/highway tractor to differentiate it from a farm tractor.

Tri-axle
Any combination of three axles grouped together.

Trip Leasing
The term used for the practice of contacting other trucking companies in an area where a driver needs a load, and selecting from available 'overbooked' loads.

Truck
A tractor which carries cargo in a body (van, tank, etc.) which is mounted to its chassis, possibly in addition to a trailer which is towed by the tractor. This is common in truck-trailer combination vehicles which haul fuel, or other liquid.

Truck-Trailer
A truck-trailer combination consists of a truck which holds cargo in its body which is connected to its chassis, and which tows a trailer.

WIM (Weigh-In-Motion)
The system which allows a vehicle to be weighed while still in motion on the interstate, usually just before coming to a weigh station.

Transportation Definitions

Motor Carrier
A company that provides truck transportation. There are two types of motor carriers, private carriers and for-hire carriers.

Private Carrier
A company that provides truck transportation of its own cargo, usually as a

part of a business that produces, uses, sells and/or buys the cargo being hauled.

For-Hire Carrier

A company that provides truck transportation of cargo belonging to others and is paid for doing so. There are two types of for-hire carriers, common carriers and contract carriers. A for-hire carrier may be both a common and a contract carrier.

Freight Forwarder

A company that arranges for the truck transportation of cargo belonging to others, utilizing for-hire carriers to provide the actual truck transportation. The Forwarder does assume responsibility for the cargo from origin to destination and usually does take possession of the cargo at some point during the transportation. Forwarders typically assemble and consolidate less-than-truck load (LTL) shipments into truckload shipments at origin and disassemble and deliver LTL shipments at destination.

Broker

A company that arranges for the truck transportation of cargo belonging to others, utilizing for-hire carriers to provide the actual truck transportation. However, the Broker does not assume responsibility for the cargo and usually does not take possession of the cargo.

Note: These trucking definitions are simplified. Legally acceptable definitions of these activities would be longer, more complex, and supported by the results of many administrative proceedings, court decisions and judicial opinions. If there is any question about the applicability of these simplified definitions, a legal authority should be consulted.

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CB Terminology and Trucker Slang

Anyone new to trucking should get familiar with CB radio terminology and 10-codes. If you've seen Smokey and the Bandit, you probably already know what 10-4 means. You may even know what it means if another trucker on the CB radio says, "There's a bear at your back door" (whether you knew what it meant or not, should you be scared?). This page lists several helpful tables about the CB radio, including CB radio 10-codes and CB radio terminology, trucker slang, CB lingo...whatever you wanna call it! Essential knowledge for truckers, maybe just amusing to everyone else.

CB Terminology Used by Truckers

CB Radio "10-Codes"

CB Slang for Popular Cities

CB Terminology (Or Trucker Slang)

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Affirmative	Yes

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
All locked up	The weigh station is closed.
Anteater	Kenworth T-600; this truck was so-named because of its sloped hood, and was one of the first trucks with an aerodynamic design. Also known as an aardvark.
Alligator	A piece of tire on the road, usually a recap from a blown tire, which can look like an alligator lying on the road. These alligators are hazards which are to be avoided, if possible. If you run over them, they can "bite you" - bounce back up and do damage to hoses or belts, fuel crossover lines, or to the body of your tractor. They can also bounce up and go towards another vehicle, possibly causing an accident. A baby alligator is a small piece of tire, and alligator bait is several small tire pieces. Sometimes called just a "gator".
Back door	Something behind you. "There's a bear at your back door".
Back it down	Slow down.
Backed out of it	No longer able to maintain speed, necessitating a need to downshift. When a truck's climbing a steep incline, and for whatever reason, the driver has to let up off of the accelerator, he'll lose whatever momentum he had and have to

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
	downshift. "I'm backed out of it now, I'll have to get over into the slow lane."
Back row	The last rows of parking in a truck stop, often a hangout for prostitutes (see *lot lizards*).
Bambi	A deer, dead or alive
Base station or unit	A powerful CB radio set in a stationary location.
Bear	A law enforcement officer at any level, but usually a State Trooper, Highway Patrol.
Bear bait	A speeding vehicle, usually a four-wheeler, which can be used to protect the other speeding vehicles behind it.
Bear bite	A speeding ticket.
Bear den or bear cave	Law enforcement headquarters, station.
Bear in the air	A law enforcement aircraft which can be monitoring the traffic and speeds below.
Bear in the bushes	Law enforcement (of any type) is hiding somewhere, probably with a radar gun aimed at traffic and recording speeds.
Billy Big Rigger	Another term for *Super Trucker*; one who brags about himself, or his big, fast, shiny truck.
Bingo cards	These cards held stamps from each state a motor carrier would operate in; these cards are no longer used, and have been replaced by the Single State Registration System (SSRS).

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Bedbugger	Can refer to a household moving company or to the household mover himself.
Big R	A Roadway truck.
Big road	Usually refers to the Interstate, sometimes any big highway.
Big truck	Refers to an 18-wheeler or tractor-trailer. "Come on over, big truck".
Bird dog	A radar detector.
Big word	Closed, when referring to weigh stations. There is often a big sign preceding the weigh station indicating whether the station is open or closed, in bright lights. From a distance, you can't tell what the word says, but you can usually tell whether it's a big word or small word. So, when you hear "the big word is out", you'll know that the weigh station is closed.
Black eye	A headlight out. "Driver going eastbound, you've got a black eye".
Bobtail	Driving the tractor only, without the trailer attached.
Boogie	The top gear (the highest gear) of the transmission.
Boulevard	The Interstate.
Brake check	There is a traffic tie-up ahead, which will require immediate slowing down or stopping. "You gotta brake check ahead of you, eastbound".

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Break	If the radio's busy, saying "break-19" is the proper way to gain access to the channel, and begin talking. It even works... sometimes!
Breaking up	Your signal is weak, or fading.
Brush your teeth and comb your hair	A bear is “shooting” vehicles with a radar gun.
Bubba	What you call another driver, often in a kidding way.
Bull dog	A Mack truck.
Bull frog	An ABF truck.
Bull hauler	A livestock hauler.
Bumper sticker	A vehicle that's tailgating. Sometimes called a "hitchhiker ".
Bundled out	Loaded heavy, or to maximum capacity.
Buster Brown	A UPS truck or driver.
Cabbage	A steep mountain grade in Oregon.
Cabover	Abbreviated term for Cab-Over-the Engine (COE) type of tractor.
Cash register	A tollbooth.
Checking ground pressure	The weigh station is open, and they're running trucks across the scales (see "running you across").
Chicken coop	A weigh station, often called just a "coop".
Chicken lights	Extra lights a trucker has on his truck and trailer.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Chicken hauler or truck	A big, fancy truck; a large, conventional tractor with a lot of lights and chrome. Also, one who hauls live chickens.
Comedian	The median strip in between opposite lanes of traffic.
Container	Refers to an overseas container; intermodal transportation.
Come-a-part engine	Cummins engine.
Come back	An invitation for the other driver to talk. Sometimes used when you couldn't hear the last transmission, "comeback, I didn't hear you".
Come on	Telling another driver that you hear him calling you, and to go ahead and talk. "Yeah driver, come on".
Comic book	The log book.
Commercial company	A prostitute, usually in the back areas of a truckstop.
Convoy	A group of trucks traveling together.
Copy	Transmission acknowledged, agreed with, or understood, as in "that's a copy, driver".
Cornflake	Refers to a Consolidated Freightways truck.
County Mountie	County police, often a sheriff's deputy.
Covered wagon	Flatbed type of trailer, with sidewalls, and a tarp.
Crackerhead	A derogatory term; insult.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Crotch rocket	A motorcycle built for speed; not a Harley-Davidson.
Deadhead	Pulling an empty trailer.
Destruction	Road construction.
Diesel car	A semi- tractor.
Diesel cop	A DOT, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement officer.
Donkey	Behind you. "A bear is on your donkey".
Do what?	I didn't hear or understand you.
Double nickel	55 mph.
Doubles	Refers to a set of double trailers.
Drawing lines	Completing your log book
Driver	What drivers call other drivers on the CB, especially if their CB handle is not known.
Driving award	A speeding ticket.
Downstroke	Driving downwards, downhill, on a decline.
Dragon wagon	A tow truck.
Dragonfly	A truck with no power, especially going uphill.
Dry box	An unrefrigerated, freight trailer. Also considered a dry van
18-wheeler	Any tractor-trailer.
85th Street	Interstate 85.
Evil Knievel	A law enforcement officer on a motorcycle.
Eyeball	To see something.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Feeding the bears	Paying a ticket or citation.
Fingerprint	To unload a trailer by yourself.
Flip-flop	Refers to a U-turn, or a return trip.
FM	An AM-FM radio.
42	Yes, or OK.
Four-letter word	Open; referring to weigh stations being open or closed.
4-wheeler	Any passenger vehicle; cars or pickups.
Freight shaker	A Freightliner truck.
Front door	In front of you.
Full-grown bear	State Trooper, or Highway Patrol.
Garbage hauler	A produce load, or produce haulers.
Gear Jammer	A driver who speeds up and slows down with great frequency.
General mess of crap	A GMC truck
Georgia overdrive	Putting the transmission into neutral on a downgrade, to go extremely fast. Definitely not recommended!
Go-go juice	Diesel fuel.
Good buddy	This used to be the popular thing to say: "10-4, good buddy". Not used much anymore, but is now used to mean homosexual.
Good neighbor	Usually used when you're showing appreciation to another driver, as in "thank you, good neighbor".

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Got my nightgown on	I'm in the sleeper, and ready to go to sleep.
Go to company	When you tell another driver from your company to go to the designated company CB channel. Drivers do this so that they can talk about company business or personal matters without monopolizing channel 19.
Go to the Harley	Turn your CB to channel 1.
Got your ears on?	Are you listening
Gouge on it	Go fast, put the throttle to the floor, step on it, etc.
Granny lane	The right, slower lane on a multi-lane highway, or on the Interstate.
Greasy	Icy, or slippery.
Greasy side up	A vehicle that's flipped over.
Green Stamps	Money.
Grossed out	Your gross vehicle weight is at maximum capacity; commonly 80,000 pounds.
Ground pressure	The weight of your truck, as in "the scale's testing your ground pressure".
Gumball machine	The lights on top of a patrol car.
Hammer down	Go fast, step on it.
Hammer lane	The left, passing lane of traffic.
Hand, Han	What a driver sometimes calls another driver. Stems from the term farmhand, and means helper, or fellow worker.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Handle (CB handle)	The FCC encourages the use of CB handles. CB handles are nicknames which are used to identify the speaker, in place of on actual name. A driver often selects his own handle, one that he feels reflects his personality, or describes his way of driving.
Happy Happy	Happy new year; "Have a happy happy, driver".
Having "shutter trouble"	Having trouble keeping awake.
Ho Chi Minh Trail	Refers to California Highway 152, known for its abundance of accidents.
Holler	Call me on the radio, as in "give me a holler when you get back".
Home 20	A driver's home location.
How 'bout	When you're trying to contact other drivers, you can say "how 'bout you, eastbound?".
Hood	A conventional tractor, as opposed to a cab-over.
Hundred dollar lane, high dollar lane	In certain heavily populated areas, trucks will be prohibited from driving in the far-left lane, with a heavy fine for violators. This term refers to that prohibited lane.
Jackpot	Same as gumball machine, refers to a patrol car's lights.
Key down	When you talk over somebody who's trying to transmit. A bigger, more powerful radio can easily drown out a lesser one.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Key up	Pushing the transmit button on the CB Mike. "Key up for about 20 minutes, and tell me how *bad* you are".
In my back pocket	Behind you; a place you've passed.
In the big hole	The top gear of the transmission.
K-whopper	A Kenworth tractor, or just KW.
Kojak with a Kodak	Law enforcement using a radar gun.
Land line	A stationary telephone; not a cellular-phone.
Large car	A conventional tractor, often with a big sleeper, lots of chrome and lights, etc.
Left Coast	The West Coast.
Local information	A driver asks for local information when he needs directions in area he's unfamiliar with.
Local-yokel	A county, city, or small-town officer.
Lollipop	The small reflector or marker poles on the sides of the highway.
Lot lizard	A prostitute that solicits truck-to-truck in a truck stop or rest area.
Lumper	Casual labor that loads or unloads your trailer, often requiring payment in cash.
Male buffalo	A male prostitute.
Mama-bear	Refers to a female law enforcement officer.
Mash your motor	Go fast, step on it. Same as *gouge on it* and *hammer down*.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Meat wagon	An ambulance.
Merry merry	Merry Christmas.
Motion lotion	Diesel fuel.
Moving on	Heading down the road.
Mud duck	A weak radio signal.
Negatory	Negative or no.
95th Street	Interstate 95.
On the side	On standby.
Parking lot	An auto transporter, often used when the trailer is empty.
Pay the water bill	Taking a rest room break.
Pickle park	A rest area frequented by lot lizards (prostitutes).
Pigtail	The electrical connection from the tractor to the trailer.
Plain wrapper	An unmarked law enforcement vehicle, usually said with color added as a description: "you've got a plain brown wrapper on your back door".
Plenty of protection	Usually means there's plenty of police in the area, but I've heard it used to tell drivers to go ahead and step on it because there's speeding four-wheelers ahead blocking or covering for them.
Pogo stick	Usually a metal, flexible support located on the tractor catwalk, that holds up the connections to the trailer.
Power up	Go faster, speed up.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Preeshaydit	Thank you, I appreciate it.
Pumpkin	A Schneider truck, because of its orange color.
Radio	A CB radio.
Radio check	How's my radio working, transmitting, getting out there.
Rambo	Someone who talks tough on the radio, especially when no one else knows where they're located.
Ratchet jaw	Someone who talks a lot on the radio, while keying-up the whole time and not letting anyone else get a chance to talk.
Reading the mail	Not talking; just listening to the radio.
Reefer	Usually refers to refrigerated van trailer, but sometimes just to the reefer unit itself.
Rest-a-ree-a	A funny way to say rest area.
Road pizza	Road kill on the side of the road.
Rockin' chair	A truck that's in the middle of two other trucks.
Roger	Yes; affirmative.
Roger beep	An audible beep that sounds when a person has un-keyed the mike, and finished his transmission. Used on only a small percentage of radios, and not recommended.
Roller skate	Any small car.
Rooster cruiser	A big, fancy truck; a large, conventional tractor with a lot of lights and chrome.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Runnin'you across	The weigh station is open, and they're weighing trucks, probably in a quick fashion.
Salt shaker	The road maintenance vehicles that dumps salt or sand on the highways in the winter.
Sandbagging	To listen to the radio without talking; also "readin' the mail".
Sandbox	An escape ramp, which sometimes uses sand to stop vehicles.
Schneider eggs	The orange cones in construction areas.
Seat cover	Sometimes used to describe drivers or passengers of four-wheelers.
Sesame Street	Channel 19 on the CB.
Shaky	Refers to California in general, sometimes Los Angeles, and, occasionally, San Francisco.
Shiny side up	Your vehicle hasn't flipped over after a rollover or accident. "Keep the shiny side up" means to have a safe trip.
Shooting you in the back	You're being shot with a radar gun as your vehicle passes a law enforcement vehicle.
Short short	A short amount of time.
Shutdown	Put out of service by the DOT because of some violation.
Sleeper creeper	A prostitute; same as a lot lizard.
Skateboard	A flatbed, or flatbed trailer.
Skins	Tires.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Smokin' scooter	A law enforcement officer on a motorcycle.
Smokin' the brakes	The trailer brakes are literally smoking from overuse down a mountain grade.
Smokey or Smokey Bear	A law enforcement officer, usually highway patrol.
Split	A junction, where the road goes in separate directions.
Spy in the sky	A law enforcement aircraft, same as a "bear in the air".
Stagecoach	A tour bus.
Stand on it	Step on it, go faster.
Swinging	Carrying a load of swinging meat.
Taking pictures	Law enforcement using a radar gun.
10-4	OK, message received. Some drivers just say "10".
Thermos bottle	A tanker trailer.
Through the woods	Leaving the Interstate to travel secondary roads.
Throwin' iron	To put on snow tire chains.
Too many eggs in the basket	Overweight load or gross weight.
Toothpicks	A load of lumber.
Travel agent	The dispatcher, or sometimes a broker.
Triple digits	Over 100 mph.
VW	A Volvo-White tractor.

CB Terminology	Meaning or Translation
Wagon	Some drivers refer to their trailer as a wagon.
Walked on you	Drowned out your transmission by keying up at the same time.
Wally world	Walmart (the store or the distribution center), or a Walmart truck.
West Coast turnarounds	Uppers; speed or benzedrine pills; so-called because a driver could drive from the East Coast to the West Coast, and back again without having to sleep. Obviously illegal!
Wiggle wagons	A set of double or triple trailers.
Yard	A company terminal, drop lot, etc.
Yardstick	A mile marker on the highway.

CB "10-Codes"

10-Code	Translation
10-1	Receiving poorly
10-2	Receiving well
10-3	Stop transmitting
10-4	OK, message received
10-5	Relay message
10-6	Busy, standby
10-7	Out of service, leaving air
10-8	In service, subject to call

10-Code	Translation
10-9	Repeat message
10-11	Talking too rapidly
10-12	Visitors present
10-13	Advise weather, road conditions
10-16	Make pickup at...
10-17	Urgent business
10-18	Anything for us?
10-19	Nothing for you, return to base
10-20	My location is...
10-21	Call by telephone
10-22	Report in person to...
10-23	Stand by
10-24	Completed last assignment
10-25	Can you contact
10-26	Disregard last information
10-27	I am moving to channel...
10-28	Identify your station
10-29	Time is up for contact
10-30	Does not conform to FCC rules
10-32	I will give you a radio check
10-33	Emergency traffic

10-Code	Translation
10-34	Trouble at this station
10-35	Confidential information
10-36	The correct time is...
10-37	Wrecker needed at...
10-38	Ambulance needed at...
10-39	Your message delivered
10-41	Please tune to channel...
10-42	Traffic accident at...
10-43	Traffic tie up at...
10-44	I have a message for you
10-45	All units within range please report
10-50	Break channel
10-60	What is next message number?
10-62	Unable to copy, use phone
10-63	Net directed to...
10-64	Net clear
10-65	Awaiting your next message, or assignment
10-67	All units comply
10-70	Fire at...
10-71	Proceed with transmission in sequence
10-73	Speed trap at...

10-Code	Translation
10-75	You are causing interference
10-77	Negative contact
10-81	Reserve hotel room for...
10-84	My telephone number is...
10-85	My address is...
10-91	Talk closer to mike
10-93	Check my frequency on this channel
10-94	Please give me a long count
10-99	Mission completed, all units secured
10-100	Rest stop
10-200	Police needed at...

CB Slang for Popular Cities

Terminology	U.S. City
The Big A	Atlanta, Georgia
Air Capital	Wichita, Kansas
Armadillo	Amarillo, Texas
The Alamo	San Antonio, Texas
The Astrodome	Houston, Texas
The Apple	New York City
Bean Town	Boston, Mass.

Terminology	U.S. City
Beer City	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Big D	Dallas, Texas
Big O	Omaha, Nebraska
Bull City	Durham, North Carolina
Bikini	Miami, Florida
Bright Lights	Kansas City, Missouri
Capital City	Raleigh, North Carolina
CB Town	Council Bluffs, Iowa
Cigar City	Tampa, Florida
Circle City	Indianapolis, Indiana
The Cities	Minneapolis and St. Paul, Mn
Cow Town	Calgary, Alberta
The Dirty	Cleveland, Ohio
The Flag or Flagpole	Flagstaff, Arizona
Philly	Philadelphia, Pa
The Gateway	St. Louis, Missouri
Gold City	Goldsboro, North Carolina
Guitar	Nashville, Tennessee
Hog Town	Toronto, Ontario
Hotlanta	Atlanta, Georgia
The Irish	South Bend, Indiana

Terminology	U.S. City
Lost Wages	Las Vegas, Nevada
Mardi Gras	New Orleans, Louisiana
Mile High	Denver, Colorado
Motor City	Detroit, Michigan
Music City	Nashville, Tennessee
The Nickel	Buffalo, New York
Okie City	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
The Peg	Winnipeg, Manitoba
Queen City	Charlotte, North Carolina
The Rubber	Akron, Ohio
Sack of tomatoes	Sacramento, California
Shaky City	Los Angeles, California
Steel City or Town	Pittsburgh, Pa
The Swamp	Montreal, Quebec
Windy City	Chicago, Illinois

A Brief History of Trucking

For thousands of years, people have had the task of moving goods of value from one place to another. In the Roman Empire, there was the Appian Way, one of the earliest known highways. The Romans charged a toll to use the road, and provided maintenance and protection in return.

The first people to hook animals with wagons were called teamsters. “Teams” of draft animals (horses, oxen, or mules) hauled the wagons. This is where the “Teamsters” union representing truckers got its name.

From this modest beginning came trucking as we know it today. Trucks are virtually everywhere now.

The following section describes the beginnings of modern trucking: from the late 1800s, with their "horseless" vehicles, all the way up to the trucks of the 21st-century.

Trucking's Progression Through the Years

The late 1800's: The beginning of "horseless" vehicles

The development of trucks took a back seat to the development of the automobile. Nevertheless, the rate at which we progressed from hauling goods by horse and buggy to the vast world of trucking we know today, is staggering. It has been just over 100 years since the first trucks were introduced.

For centuries, man had been attempting to use engines on wheels to move goods, haul crops, or lighten the load of a variety of farming tasks. They tried one power source after another, when, in 1895, there were significant developments. At first, steam and electricity competed with gasoline for primacy. Two pioneers, Henry Morris and Pedro Salom, of Philadelphia, introduced electric vehicles, which ran on batteries weighing over 100-pounds. They were used as delivery wagons and cab carriages, and could reach speeds of 20 miles per hour and travel up to 100 miles on one charge.

That same year, George B. Selden was given America's first gasoline motor vehicle patent. His vehicle was designed to haul goods as well as carry passengers. It featured a 2 cycle, internal combustion engine using hydrocarbon fuel, and a rudimentary clutch between the engine and the wheels.

In the late 1800's, many advancements were made; the most significant was the Hansom electric cabs in New York City and Philadelphia. However, only the well-off could afford such “pleasure rides.” The problem with electrically run vehicles was the limitations of the batteries. This limited their range to the big cities. In addition, there were a lack of roads which limited all “horseless” vehicles. It was, ironically enough, trucks which made those roads possible a short time later.

1899 saw other developments including the first motor vehicle and driver licensing in Chicago. Also noteworthy was the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company selling its solid rubber tire manufacturing facilities (which early vehicles relied on), and concentrating on pneumatic tires. These were newly patented tires which contained a cushion of air inside the rubber for a smoother ride.

The Early 1900's: Steady progress and innovations

The roads in these days were basically glorified dirt paths, and this caused the truck manufacturers to design accordingly. Key features were a vehicle’s strength and durability, and its ride and suspension capabilities. Gasoline powered vehicles became more popular. By 1907, there were more than four times as many manufacturers of gasoline trucks than there were of electric or steam-powered trucks (although the electric truck was still more popular for heavy hauling).

In 1908, traffic became a problem for the first time in the cities. In New York City, new regulations came into effect. Traffic police became necessary, truck and wagon traffic were relegated to right lanes only, the first one-way streets were seen, and hand signaling established. Overall production for the year reached 1500 trucks.

In 1909, a Sternberg truck (later to become Sterling) traveled through snow covered roads with a full load. The 100-mile trip took seven hours and forty minutes, used twelve gallons of gasoline, and just two quarts of oil.

However, it was the Ford Roadster which was the basis of many trucks. Many owners of the Roadster automobile had the frame replaced with a truck frame (purchased from companies like Form-A-Truck). These were the first Ford trucks. Production in the States reached 3300 trucks.

1911 was a key year in that the patent owned by the pioneer Seldon ended, and manufacturers were free from paying expensive royalty and licensing fees. This was the year the Delco electric self-starter was introduced, which eventually replaced hand cranking.

By 1914, World War I began. Many more trucks were ordered, and overall truck production would reach almost 25,000 trucks. Every type of business was beginning to utilize trucks in their day-to-day operations.

1915-1930: Trucks becoming key to business in America

Gasoline prices continued to rise, to 14 cents a gallon in 1915, then to 24 cents a gallon in 1916 (in New York). The war in Europe caused shortages which increased prices. Truck manufacturers had to increase their focus in fuel efficiency systems, along with other innovations that were being made.

In 1916, production rose to over 92,000 trucks, and the need for an improved highway system became critical. Progress was extremely slow, but hope came when plans were made for the development of a national highway network. The Federal Aid Road Act apportioned funds to states for this purpose.

The war ended victoriously in 1918, despite continued fuel shortages. Nonetheless, the congestion on the railroads caused farmers to instead use trucks to deliver food to the nation. The use of pneumatic tires increased, and the nation now fully backed road-building. In 1919, production rose to almost 276,000.

The Federal Highway Act of 1921 was enacted, which provided states with government funding for designated Federal-Aid roads. This was often a tedious process, as states and local agencies disagreed on how to accomplish the task. However, in 1922 many roads were good enough to allow the public to see the country for the first time, either in automobiles, or the newest luxury buses. Balloon tires were beginning to be used in heavier trucks. Production by the end of 1925 was over 500,000.

Truck manufacturers were beginning to take a cue from automobiles when it came to driver comforts, closed cabs, and other amenities. Also, the increasing use of pneumatic tires were estimated to save millions of dollars in road repairs.

In 1929, Fruehauf introduced an advanced trailer, with an automatic locking device on the fifth wheel connection. Connection or disconnection was said to take only thirty seconds. Production by year's end was almost 900,000.

1930's: The Depression, government regulation, and unionization

The stock market crashed in late 1929 which sent the country reeling into the Great Depression. But, ironically, it was the Depression which made available an enormous amount of cheap labor, which was used in building a national road system. Bridges and highways were built, including Route 66, the first national highway, which would eventually be 2400 miles in length. Today, historic Route 66 can still be seen in sections, and comprises parts of I-40, I-15, I-44, and I-55.

The Federal Motor Carrier Act of 1932 gave the Interstate Commerce Commission regulatory powers over buses and trucks involved in inter-state commerce. The Act stated that only certain motor carriers could haul certain goods within a specified area. Those with an interest in trucking (especially Private Carriers), argued that most of the trucks affected were privately owned, and shouldn't be subject to government control, to no avail.

Also in 1932, the Indiana Motor Truck became the first to offer a model with a diesel engine, which was introduced by Cummins a year earlier. Production dipped to just over 200,000.

By 1933, a survey showed that thirty-nine states limited the number of hours a truck driver could drive continuously. Also, that year, continued restrictions forced manufacturers to streamline trailers, and make lighter materials and improved drop frames. To give an example of the lengths the manufacturers would go to, in 1933, Booster Trailer Corporation developed a semitrailer which carried its own engine, transmission, and drive line to assist the tractor in pulling hills.

In 1934, because of restrictions on length and axle weights, several manufacturers offered models with engines under the seat, or “camel backs” as they were commonly called. However, it was one sales organization’s description which stuck: the “cab-over-engine.”

Mack Trucks introduced “traffic type” models, which featured driver-comfort design including leather-covered, deep-comfort spring seats and back cushions. The trucks also featured improvements in heating, lighting, and ventilation. Production jumped back up to 576,000.

In the early 1930's, truck drivers had to endure a variety of hardships. They were constantly fighting for decent pay and working conditions. The Teamsters Union attempted to organize truck drivers, but the result was often bloody confrontations between owners and drivers. In 1934,

President Roosevelt allowed labor to organize, which among other things, contributed to a rise in wages.

Government regulation:

Up until 1935, large, interstate union carriers were trucking's "monopoly sector" (as opposed to the competitive sector). Federal regulation was established in 1933 whereby most operating rights were limited to those owned by companies in existence at that time. These larger trucking companies were able to put smaller companies out of business by underbidding them (cutting rates, which are the amounts that are charged to haul a certain commodity from point to point). In the process, shippers greatly benefited as well.

The Interstate Commerce Commission regulated rates and routes, hours of service, and truck safety regulations in the Motor Carrier Act of 1935. This was the beginning of government "regulation" which would last 45 years. This regulation ensured that these larger companies would not be able to underbid smaller companies, and in effect, leveled the playing field. Shippers complained that they were being overcharged by the trucking companies. This regulation of freight rates was also done to ensure that trucking companies would be financially able to keep their equipment in good shape, and therefore be safer going down the road.

In 1937, traffic safety became a major concern with the ever-increasing number of vehicles on the road. The Interstate Commerce Commission established new regulations which covered driver qualifications, driving rules, accident reporting, as well as standards for safety equipment. This began a new era of government "regulation," which continued for over forty years.

The 30s ended as World War II began. The war demonstrated how far the motorized industries came since the first world war. For the first time, armies moved whole regiments by truck. Mobility had become indispensable. Numerous advances continued to be seen in all aspects of trucking, and production was over 700,000.

1940's-1979: World War II, the "Golden Age" of trucking, and 40 years of progress.

It was during World War II that the country saw the greatest increase in truck production and overall productivity. Everything from munitions, supplies, food, and equipment was hauled by the versatile trucks.

Production reached a high of over one million in 1941 alone. Truck stops began appearing all over the country; you could find one wherever there was a big road and trucks. But as far as driver comforts go, there were few available when the drivers were on the road. The trucks usually had no sleepers, heaters, or air brakes. Truck drivers of the old days had to be tough just to survive the road.

Production remained high throughout the war and into peacetime in the late 1940s. Many of the smaller trucks used in the war were converted to civilian uses, mostly as dump trucks and highway tractors. In 1949, coast-to-coast trucking increased, with large amounts of freight going through Chicago terminals. The three biggest long-distance carriers were Denver-Chicago Trucking Company, Inc., Pacific Intermountain Express Company, and Consolidated Freightways, Inc.

Before the war, Peterbilt and Freightliner were two newcomers to the trucking industry. In 1947, neither were doing much business, but were concentrating on the growing long-distance sector of the industry. Most

other manufacturers concentrated on more regional trucking needs. This proved to be a good move, because in the 1950s, the Eisenhower Interstate System began to progress. This would eventually become the interstate highways we know today, with over 160,000 miles of roadway, the lifeblood of our economy.

It was in the 1950s that the Cummins Diesel Engine became more common in trucks (although it was in this decade that Detroit Diesel became a fierce competitor), and Fuller introduced the 10-speed Road Ranger transmission.

Also noteworthy was Fruehauf introducing its new mostly aluminum van-type trailers. This was instrumental in reducing trailer weight. Every pound of weight which was taken from the vehicle's weight allowed the vehicle to haul an additional pound of cargo.

In 1954, Fruehauf, Brown, and Strick offered trailers with air-suspension. In 1956, an Allison transmission featured a retarder, which improved safety on downgrades with its aid to braking power.

In the 1950s, production soared to over one million every year except 1958. As the decade closed, the construction of the federal highway system was rapidly making progress.

In the 1960s, improvements throughout the industry continued. Many more industrial enterprises moved to within close proximity of the highways to take advantage of the growing interstate shipping opportunities.

The concept of piggybacking (shipping highway trailers on railroad flatcars) continued to grow in popularity. Then, in 1965, containerization was on the rise, as America moved towards a mixed-mode system (inter-modal). Intercontinental container transportation had begun.

Here's a good video of semi-trucks from the 1950s and 1960s, including some appropriate music!

1966 was a year of many legislative developments concerning the trucking industry. There were talks of governmental deregulation (a continuation of President Kennedy's recommendations of 1963), and the formation of the Department of Transportation (DOT). The latter was urged by President Johnson. The new department's objectives would include making improvements in national transportation and trucking policies, improve overall safety, furthering traffic capacity, and coordinating intermodal services.

Production steadily rose throughout the 1960s to a high of almost two million at decade's end. Increased restrictions on trucks caused most design and engineering leaders to focus their talent around safety standards set by the DOT.

The years between 1955 and 1970 came to be known as the "Golden Age" of long haul trucking by those who drove during that time. Trucks had new highways to drive over, without much of the traffic we have today. Also, they didn't have the involvement of government agencies which became heavily involved in the operations of trucking companies and their employees in the 1970s.

The 1970s rolled in with governmental agencies demanding ever-increasing control through restrictions and standards. Air pollution became a problem which received much attention, and engine emissions got most of the blame, particularly that which came from trucks' diesel engines.

Also in the 1970s, trucking suddenly became very popular with the public, as we noted earlier. Movies, such as *Smoky and the Bandit* and TV shows such as *BJ and the Bear* portrayed truckers as the heroes, and law enforcement as the bad guys. Trucking represented the freedom which Americans desired.

Now, for your viewing enjoyment, here's a **blast from the past**...the '70s!

The energy crisis appeared in 1974, but did little to slow trucking's forward progress. The industry did have to concentrate on fuel economy more than ever, but production reached almost 4 million by the end of the 1970s.

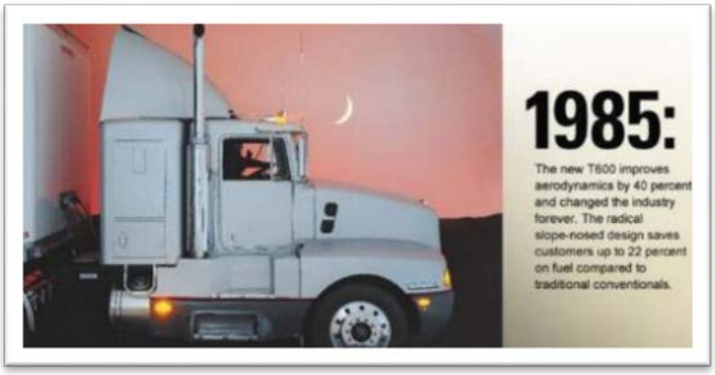
1980-Present: Deregulation, the Recession, and Present-Day Trucking

For 45 years, ever since the Motor Carrier Act of 1935, rates and routes were regulated by the government (specifically, by the Interstate Commerce Commission). But in the 1970s, the government began to feel

that its regulations were stifling commerce and the economy, and that reform was necessary.

With the Motor Carrier Act of 1980, government ended its control of shipping rates. With this deregulation of rates, a rating war ensued, and the major companies put many smaller competitors out of business. This all happened at a bad time, because of the economic recession in the country. Already weakened companies couldn't compete with larger companies. The effects of deregulation are still being felt today, and shippers have continued to grow stronger and more capable to demand lower rates from trucking companies.

Good things have come from deregulation, however. Beginning in 1986, Kenworth introduced the T-600, which was the first aerodynamically designed tractor for greater fuel efficiency.



Many other truck manufacturers soon followed suit, with more efficiently designed tractors coming onto the market. In addition, trucks have become increasingly more comfortable, and technologically advanced (especially computer assisted engines). But the government continued to set new standards for emissions, noise, tires, and fuel economy. These are, in effect, just more regulations for truck drivers, in this new, so-called "deregulated" era.

In 1986, the CDL came into effect for all drivers of heavy vehicles.

Until this time, drivers have been able to have licenses from several states, and be able to hide any bad driving records. To prevent this, the new CDL could only be held in one state. In addition, the CDL introduced background checks, as well as alcohol and drug testing (now expanded to include random testing).

1992 through 1998 saw an economic upswing, which translated into more freight than the industry could handle. But in the year 2000, the economy saw a downturn, and truck production dropped. There has been a slow, steady growth in the economy since then, which is reflected by the increased freight in the transportation industry. January 4, 2004, saw the first revision in the Hours of Service regulations in 65 years. Basically, drivers have been given an extra hour of driving time without having to take an off-duty or sleeper berth break. But, this break now has to be for two hours more than it was before. An additional factor is the ability to restart the 60 or 70-hour rule if a driver takes 34 consecutive hours off. These revisions are said to have taken place so that a driver's working hours and sleep time are more in tune with the body's 24-hour biological clock. The goal is for less driver fatigue, the cause of many unnecessary injuries and/or fatalities. As of early 2016, although there's been a lot of back and forth and threats of changes, these latest rules have, for the most part, remained unchanged. For the latest Hours of Service Rules, go to the FMCSA.

The 21st-century has continued the trend towards high-tech, especially in communications and in truck and truck stop amenities and comfort. Almost every trucker has a cell phone, as they're getting more reasonable in price, and can be used in even the most remote places of the country.

A trucker can have SiriusXM (satellite) radio in his truck for less than a $200 investment, and between $10-$20 a month in access fees. The newer

trucks have more amenities and are more comfortable than ever before, and the newer truck stops have entered the 21st-century as well, with improved facilities, comfortable driver's lounges, and improved computer access. It is a great time to be a trucker, and it should only get better in the years to come.

> **Update 2017:** You may have read recent articles about the current "driver shortage" and how trucking is not an attractive career for young people. Thus, the current driver pool is getting steadily older.
>
> However, I still believe that trucking can be a great career, although it's not an easy job (despite the book's title!). If you follow the advice found in these pages, you can write your own ticket in this industry. But, you've got to be smart. There's a lot of people and companies who will try and take advantage of you, and use you for all your worth, *if* you let them. But just the same, *you* can take advantage of the system! Stick with me. We have a lot to cover!

The Men Who Made Trucking What It Is Today

Edward Gowen Budd:

He was a major innovator of steel technologies for trucks and wheels. In 1916, he formed the Budd Wheel Corporation, which produced a steel-disc wheel that replaced the wooden wheel. This was modified in 1923 for vehicular use.

John Walter Christie:

He was the first active proponent for Front-Wheel Drive. Later, in World War I, Christie became the world's foremost developer of armored tanks and vehicles.

It's been said that he contributed greatly to defeating Hitler!

Louis Clarke:

Many innovations are attributed to this man, who was the father of Autocar Trucks and Automobiles. Among them are porcelain spark plugs, the first circulating oil lubrication system, and others. He was an advocate of left-hand drive, to improve a vehicles visibility.

The cab-over-engine was his concept.

Clessie L. Cummins:

Most drivers today are familiar with the name Cummins. It was Cummins' idea to take the marine diesel engine (diesel was the power concept invented by Rudolph Diesel in 1897), and use it in a Packard automobile chassis. In 1930, he drove it from Indianapolis to New York, and in 1931, a Cummins diesel powered truck drove from New York to Los Angeles.

Cummins founded the Cummins Engine Company in 1931. Today almost all heavy-duty trucks use diesel powered engines.

Henry Ford:

You *may* have heard of this guy. A visionary at an early age, Ford dreamed of "ways to take the work off men's backs and lay it on steel and motor... so as to lighten the chores of farming... that men might have time for a better life."

In 1903, he founded the Ford Motor Company. His primary goal was to build a car that the public could afford. That same year, Ford's first Model-A was sold (for $850). In 1904, he produced a delivery wagon, the Model-E, and in 1908, Ford designed the famous Model-T, which saw extra duty

as a commercial vehicle on farms. By 1935, Ford had produced 3 million trucks, and the rest is history.

Ford also pioneered such standards as the 8-hour day, the 40-hour work week, $5 a day wage, and the assembly line. A great number of his innovations are still used today.

August C. Fruehauf:

At first a farrier, Fruehauf became a manufacturer of trucks and wagons. In 1914, he attached a wagon to a Model-T to haul a boat. This was the first Fruehauf semitrailer. He later introduced many other developments, including the automatic semitrailer, the refrigerated trailer, and drop frame tank semitrailer (for hauling gasoline and oil).

Max Grabowsky:

He was an early pioneer of gasoline trucks, and guided the formation of the Rapid Motor Vehicle Company in 1902. In 1909, this company joined

General Motors and was merged with the Reliance Motor Truck Company, from which came the GMC truck.

Julius P. Heil:

Founded the Heil Company, which pioneered the development of tank trucks, and trailers, and steel tank cars. He later went on to become the Governor of Wisconsin.

Magnus Hendrickson:

Hendrickson invented a hollow-spoke wheel in 1906, which remained popular through the years. Then, in 1926, the Hendrickson team designed a tandem axle with an equalizing beam. Their tandem innovations were an important contribution to the trucking industry.

Arthur W. Herrington:

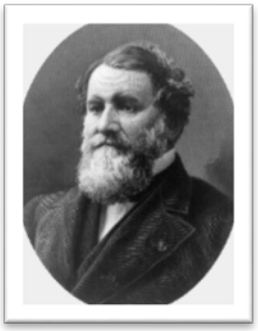
American engineer and manufacturer who developed a series of military vehicles and manufactured four-wheel-drive conversion.

Leland James:

James created the Consolidated Freightway Truck Lines to provide versatile, “you pay for it, we’ll haul it” transportation of any type of freight.

In addition, he established the **Freightliner** Corporation, a subsidiary to Consolidated Freightways. In 1939, Freightliner built light weight, high gross truck tractors and became one of America’s leading haulers.

Cyrus Hall McCormick:



McCormick was a Chicago industrialist and inventor in 1831 of the first commercially successful reaper, a horse-drawn machine to harvest wheat. He formed the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company in 1848 to manufacture and sell his invention, and through innovative marketing techniques the Chicago firm grew into the largest farm equipment manufacturer in the United States. The company eventually became part of the International Harvester Company.

He created the world's greatest saver of farm labor, the International Harvester, in 1831. This was a reaper machine, which cut grain in the fields, and it went on to sell an output of 54,000 machines by 1884.

In 1893, he began developing a vehicle to haul farm produce. A gas engine was installed in a wagon chassis, and it was called an Auto-Buggy. By 1910, the name was changed to International.

The Mack Brothers:

The five Mack brothers got together to manufacture buses, then heavy-duty trucks. In 1906, they launched their first seat-over-engine, which was a predecessor of the cab-over-engine.

Mack produces a variety of chassis types, and in known the world over for its high-quality, heavy-duty trucks, fire equipment, and off-highway equipment.

Charles H. Martin:

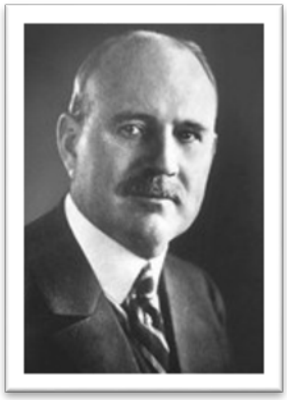
photo courtesy singingwheels.com

Martin is best known for his innovative rocking fifth wheel which couples tractor and trailer. This invention revolutionized the semi-trailer industry. The “Martin Rocking Fifth Wheel” changed how trucking was done with its ease of connecting and disconnecting. Truckers now had the option to “drop” their trailers, often eliminating long waiting times.

Henry G. Morris and Pedro Salom:

Morris and Salom introduced electric vehicles to public transportation in Philadelphia and New York City. These were probably the first “horseless” carriages seen by the public.

Charles W. Nash:



Nash created the productive straight-line conveyor-belt system used at auto assembly plants. He went on to become president of Buick, and when Buick merged with General Motors, president of General Motors.

In 1916, Nash purchased the Thomas B. Jeffery Company, which was best known for its Rambler Quad, a truck used primarily by the U.S. Army and Allied forces in World War I. It became known as Nash Motors, which today is American Motors Corporation.

Andrew Riker:

Riker was a pioneer of electric, gasoline, and steam propulsion systems. He produced a full line of electric passenger and commercial vehicles.

Clarence Winfred Spicer:

The father of the Encased Metal Universal Joint, which enabled the shaft-driven car. He also developed the class “B” Liberty truck used by the army.

William M. Sternberg:

Founded the Sternberg Manufacturing Company, which changed its name to the Sterling Motor Truck Company in 1915. They specialized in cab-over engine highway tractors, but introduced a conventional truck to their line. Their trucks sold well with the army in both world wars. In 1951, Sterling was sold to The White Motor Company, but kept on as a division specializing in custom built trucks.

Charles Arthur Tilt:

Tilt formed the Diamond-T Motor Car Company, which exclusively produced motor trucks beginning in 1911. He was responsible for many innovations, but best known for his advancements in truck design. This company was also bought by The White Motor Company, and stayed on as a division, and continued leader in design.

Windsor, Rollin, and Walter White:

The brothers who formed The **White Motor Truck Company**, started out as sewing machine manufacturers. Their first truck was introduced in 1900, a steam-powered light delivery truck. They introduced their first White gasoline truck, a 3-ton model, in 1910. Also purchased Freightliner and Sterling in 1951, and Autocar in 1953.

Apparently, years later, Walter moved to New Mexico.

Otto Zachow and William A. Besserdich:

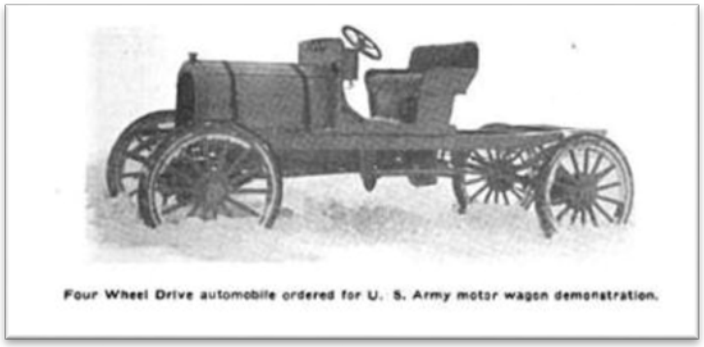


photo courtesy of american-automobiles.com

Their four-wheel-drive truck caused the army to change from its traditional horse-and-cart usage to motorized vehicles. Founded the Oshkosh Truck Corporation, which made popular vehicles for snow removal, construction equipment, and heavy-duty hauling. Today, their Oshkosh products include concrete carriers, special aircraft rescue vehicles, desert oil field trucks, and fire truck chassis.

Reference material: (Motor Trucks of America, by James A. Wren and the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association of the United States, Inc.)

The Trucking Industry and the Railroad

Before trucking came along, the railroad ruled the transportation industry. Freight trains would take the freight to railheads (terminals) where teamsters (people who used animals to pull carts or wagons) picked up the freight and transported it the rest of the way, to places the railroad couldn't reach.

Now, with the advent of trucks to the transportation industry, the quantity of freight hauled by rail is considerably less than it was in the mid-1900s. The main reason is that rail lines do not go through every community. Businesses not located along a rail line, therefore, had to pay extra to receive goods, and could not compete with businesses located by a rail line. Compared to the railroad and air freight industries, trucking had the advantage of being able to make direct, prompt service to businesses.

However, since the 1970s, the concept of piggybacking has given the railroads a boost. This is where loaded highway trailers are loaded onto railcars, and taken to railheads. From there, local trucks take the trailers the rest of the way to their destination.

Well, thanks for coming along for the ride. Stay with me, though, there's much more to come!