



Commercial Driver License (CDL)

Job Seekers Guide

Critical Questions
You MUST Ask Before Selecting A Company
To Drive For

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INTRODUCTION

As a Class “A” CDL driver, you are not just looking for a job, you are seeking a professional vocation with an employer who shares your values. A CDL driver today with a solid driving record is in the “Drivers Seat” (pun intended). YOU decide where you work and the potential opportunities are virtually unlimited. First, let’s look at some background & key information published by the American Trucking Associations (ATA) in their October 2017 “Truck Driver Shortage Analysis”.

American Trucking Associations (ATA) **Background Information**

Over the past 15 years, the trucking industry has struggled with a shortage of truck drivers. The shortfall was first documented in a 2005 report. At that time, the shortage was roughly 20,000 with the shortage expected to surpass 50,000 by the end of 2017.

The industry has historically struggled to attract all segments of the population as just 6% of truck drivers in 2016 were women. This percentage hasn’t changed much historically, ranging from 4.5% to 6% over the last 15 years. In 2016, 38.7% of drivers were minorities, which has jumped 12 percentage points from 26.6% in 2001.

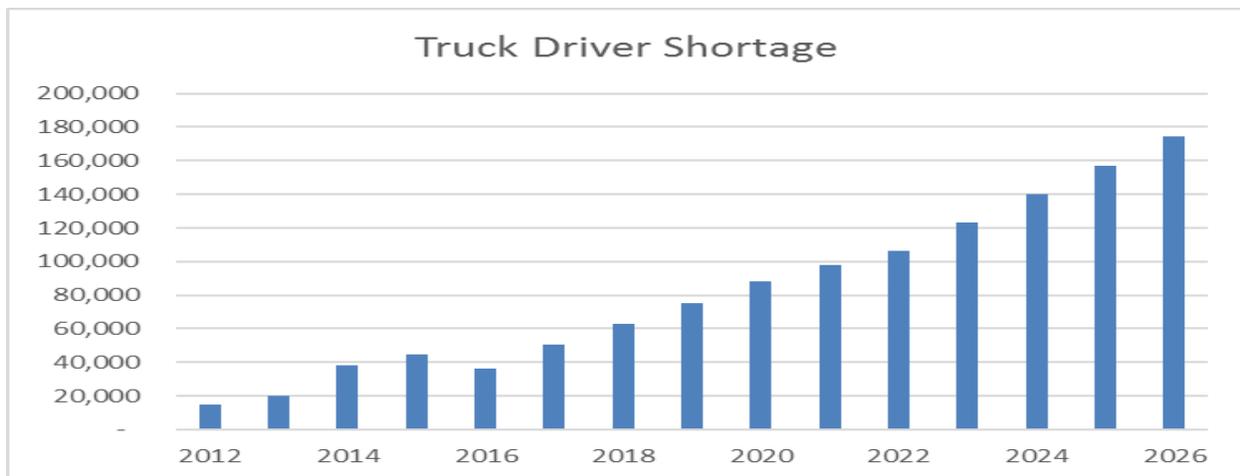
Today, motor carriers struggle to find enough qualified drivers, which makes the impact of the shortage seem much worse than the numbers in this report. Many carriers, despite being short drivers, are highly selective in hiring drivers because they have made safety and professionalism high priorities.

The driver shortage is really a problem for the entire supply chain as 70.6% of all freight tonnage is moved on the nation’s highways.



KEY ATA FINDINGS

If current trends hold, the shortage could swell to over 174,000 by 2026



The truck driver shortage probably seems much worse to motor carriers than the current figures suggest because of a quality versus quantity issue. Many carriers have strict hiring criteria based on driving history, experience, and other factors. As a result, despite receiving applications for employment, motor carriers are finding few eligible candidates, which is a quality issue. According to a 2015 study, 88% of fleets said they were getting enough applicants, but many were simply not qualified. There is no reason to believe that this situation has improved since 2015.

Over the next decade, the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 898,000 new drivers, or an average of nearly 90,000 per year. Replacing retiring truck drivers will be by far the largest factor, accounting for nearly half of new driver hires (49%). The second largest factor will be industry growth, accounting for 28% of new driver hires.



CONCLUSION

The background information and key findings outlined in the ATA report clearly substantiate that CDL drivers in the United States have opportunities afforded few vocations, they can choose where they work provided they have protected their driving record and avoided preventable accidents, equipment inspection violations, speeding citations, other traffic tickets, etc. **A drivers Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) and CSA Score Card for all intents and purposes is a Professional Resume.**

Critical Questions

You MUST Ask Before Selecting a Company to Drive For

Keep in mind that while you are seeking a job, the interview process is a two way street.

Prior to starting your job search, make sure you know why you want to be a commercial truck driver. If currently employed as a CDL driver, define why you want to move to another company and if you are new to the industry, research as much as possible and define which aspect of the industry you are interested in i.e., Long Haul, Regional, Local, Van, Refer, Flatbed, Tanker, etc. Do not hesitate to reach out to industry managers, leaders and other CDL drivers for advice and feedback. Narrowing down the “Why” and defining your basic expectations will significantly help you in making a thorough well thought out employment decision.

While in no specific order nor all inclusive, some key questions you should consider prior to accepting an employment offer from a motor carrier include:

- What are the minimal hiring standards and do I meet or exceed them?
- What are the anticipated Gross Wages I can expect to earn weekly, monthly, annually?
- How will I be paid i.e., Hourly, Percentage, By Load, Cents-Per-Mile, etc.?
- What wage factors are included in the Gross Cents-Per-Mile (CPM)?
- How often will I get paid and when will I receive my first paycheck?



- What does the average driver make in gross wages per year?
- How does the projected Gross Wages compare against National Transportation Institute (NTI) national and regional averages?
- What is the “Home Time” policy?
 - Do home time expectations provide a balanced approach to my desired work/private life expectations?
 - How is “Home Time” earned, for example will I need to work a designated amount of days to earn a day of “Home Time”?
 - How is “Home Time” scheduled?
- What are the CSA Basic Scores for the company I am considering?
 - Out-Of-Service rate vs National Average
 - Unsafe Driving Basic vs DOT Threshold
 - Hours-Of Service (HOS) Basic vs DOT Threshold
 - Vehicle Maintenance Basic vs DOT Threshold
 - Drugs/Alcohol Basic vs DOT Threshold
 - Driver Fitness Basic vs DOT Threshold
- Do I have the experience level required/desired by the company I am considering, if not, do they provide paid training?
 - Can I review / obtain a copy of the Orientation & Training Program Curriculum
- Does the company offer a “Pet Program”?
 - What are the stipulations for approved pets i.e., size, species, etc.?
 - Is there a fiscal deposit required, if so, how much and what kind of payment options are available?
- Does the company offer a “Rider Program”?
 - Are there any limitations for riders pertaining to age, relationship, medical insurance, etc.?
 - Are there any fees related to the “Rider Program”?



- What type of trucks does the company operate and what is the average age?
 - What type(s) of Truck Transmissions are offered/available?
 - Are the trucks governed, if so at what speed?
- What CDL endorsements are required / desired?
- Can I discuss operational scenarios with a member of the operations team?
- Can I speak to a current driver?
- What Benefits are offered i.e., Medical, Dental, Vision, Life Insurance, Vacation, 401K, etc.?
 - Are there any employee related cost associated with Medical/Dental/Vision/Life Insurance? If so, how much?
 - What is the initial Vacation/PTO offering?
 - Will Vacation/PTO increase with tenure?
 - Does the company offer a match for 401K contributions? If so, how much?
- How do I get to Orientation?
 - Will I be paid during Orientation? If so, how much?
- Where will I stay during Orientation?
- What other accommodations are made during Orientation i.e., meals, transportation, etc.?
- How long will I be in training prior to solo release?
- What is the companies Workers Comp Experience Modifier Rating (aka MOD – Goal = 1)?
- What is the companies “Preventable Crash Frequency Per Million Miles”?
- Are Event Recorders installed on company trucks? If so, how many and what type?
- Based on ATA classification criteria, which fleet category does the company fall within e.g., Small (\$27M year or less in gross revenue) or Large (\$27M year or more in gross revenue)?
- What is the companies “Annual Turnover Rate” compared to the ATA National Averages for the applicable Small or Large fleet?



SUMMARY

Evaluating potential trucking companies can be nerve racking and stressful. However, key safety & retention data elements can tell you a lot about a potential employer, for example:

- CSA Scores
- Work Com MOD
- Preventable Crash Frequency Per Million Miles
- Turnover rate compared to ATA National Average
- Use or nonuse of On-board Event Recorders (aka cameras)
- Anticipated duration of Orientation & Training Program prior to solo release

We wish you the best in your employment search and encourage you to use this guide to enhance the effectiveness of your job search efforts. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our programs and suggest you contact us or visit the FAQ tab on our "driveleavitts.com" web site for further information.

Feel free to address Questions to the undersigned.

Best Wishes,

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