

US Trucking Industry Needs to Hire Nearly 1 Million New Tractor-Trailer Drivers over the Next 10 Years

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Truck driving is a profession that is in very high demand across the country, and it is an excellent opportunity for someone to earn a good wage with many benefits. Today, there are roughly 30,000 truck driving jobs available.¹

With more than 400,000 employers and 3 million truck drivers,² the trucking industry, and thus truck drivers, is an essential part of the economy hauling nearly 70% of all freight tonnage moved in the US.³



On average over the next 10 years, the trucking industry must attract nearly 97,000 qualified people annually to become drivers.⁴ This need comes from current drivers leaving the industry for retirements and companies adding trucks to their fleets as the economy grows. One of the challenges for the industry is that truck drivers tend to be older than the general workforce. In 2011, the median age of a driver was 47 years old.⁵ At many fleets, the average age is over 50. Due to the older workforce, about 100 drivers retire every day.

Because of this high demand, students enrolled in truck driver training schools are all but guaranteed employment upon graduation.⁶

There are many types of truck driver jobs available today. Some of those are for local or regional driving while others are long-haul. As a result, starting pay depends on a number of factors, including type of freight hauled, but a new tractor-trailer driver should expect to make an annual starting pay of between \$38,000 and \$43,000. The median pay for a driver in the industry is nearly \$50,000 today.⁷ Most companies offer a number of monetary incentives to reward good drivers, including safety and fuel economy bonuses.

Additionally, because truck driving is an occupation in high demand, the employee benefits are very good. A majority of the motor carriers offer drivers company sponsored healthcare and retirement plans (e.g., 401k).⁸

The need for truck drivers will remain robust well into the future. According to IHS Global Insight, by 2024, total truck tonnage will increase nearly 25% with the industry's market share rising to 71% from 69% today.⁹

Conclusion: Over the next 10 years, the trucking industry needs to hire nearly 1 million new, well-trained truck drivers to meet a growing demand for freight hauling and to replace retiring workers. Those who choose to become drivers will find a demanding, yet rewarding job that is vital to the US economy. New drivers earn up to \$43,000 annually and quickly elevate to near \$50,000. It is also a profession with many benefits; because drivers are in such high demand, companies provide healthcare and retirement plans as well.

¹ American Trucking Associations' Truck Driver Shortage Analysis 2012

² *American Trucking Trends 2013*

³ *US Freight Transportation Forecast to 2024*

⁴ American Trucking Associations' Truck Driver Shortage Analysis 2012

⁵ American Trucking Associations' *Driver Compensation Study 2011*

⁶ This assumes that the new driver does not have a criminal record and can pass a drug test.

⁷ American Trucking Associations' *Driver Compensation Study 2011*

⁸ American Trucking Associations' *Driver Compensation Study 2011*

⁹ *US Freight Transportation Forecast to 2024*