

Women in Motion

Find Your Lane—Why you should look at a career in the Trucking Industry

There are many reasons for women to consider the trucking industry for a career. While only 7.8% of truck drivers are women, that still translates to more than 262,392 female drivers in 2020. That number is growing, and women play a much larger role in other trucking-related jobs in the industry. Here are some of the best reasons women should look to the trucking industry for a career.

Trucking is an enormous industry that generates good jobs all over the U.S.

- In 2018, the trucking industry was an astounding \$796.7 billion industry. More than 80% of U.S. communities depend solely on trucking for delivery of their goods and commodities.
- There are 3.5 million truck drivers in the United States. Total industry employment is 7.8 million or one out of every 16 people working in the United States.
- Trucking employees are needed everywhere. Every one of the 50 states has more than 1,000 people working in trucking, even Hawaii, while big states like California and Texas have hundreds of thousands of trucking workers.

There is a massive demand for drivers in the U.S. right now

- “We will be short ... just over 80,000 drivers, and to be clear that is the difference between the number of drivers we have out hauling freight and the number that we ideally need to haul freight,” ATA Chief Economist Bob Costello.

Truck driving itself offers a good income, particularly for a job that does not require a college degree

- The average annual salary for over the road tractor-trailer drivers was \$43,680 as of May 2018, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Drivers making in the top 10 percent in earnings earn over \$65,260 annually with some making more than \$100,000.

Training to be a driver is low-cost and takes less than 2 months

- As a truck driver, you don't need higher education or even need a high school diploma. All you need to get on the road and start making money is a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). A driver must be 18 years of age to drive a commercial motor vehicle intrastate and 21 years of age to drive a commercial motor vehicle interstate.
- The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) explains that in order to get your CDL, you need to do is pass a skills test and pass a knowledge test. Most people go to a state certified CDL school to receive the training necessary to pass the tests and obtain a license. Training programs last 3-8 weeks and usually cost from \$1,500 to \$6,000. Drivers who can't afford to pay for training out of pocket can often receive a loan, a grant, or financing from the school by obtaining a pre-hire letter from a trucking company.

- Drivers with CDL licenses can work toward additional certifications that demand higher pay, including endorsements for, driving a truck with double or triple trailers, driving a truck with a tank, and driving a truck with hazardous materials (Hazmat).

A career in trucking can provide travel and adventure but it doesn't necessarily mean wedding yourself to long hours and weeks away from home

Depending upon the type of driving one chooses, driving can provide the flexibility to accommodate various lifestyles.

DRIVING TYPES

- **OTR:** The Over the Road (OTR) driver is the kind of driver most people associate with truck driving. An OTR truck driver is a truck driver that transports materials over the road at long distances, these are not local drivers that go home every night. An OTR truck driver will be operating a tractor trailer or also known as an 18-wheeler, and big rig. They will drive many miles on the interstates and they usually spend several weeks at a time on the road driving. An OTR truck driver will get to see the country while making a good wage.
- **REGIONAL:** Regional truck driving is when the truck driver is driving within a 1,000-mile radius. For example, the regional driving is broken up into different divisions such as the Midwest, Northeast, and Southern. The truck driver will be out on the road for a certain amount of days, then they are off a certain amount of days. Regional truck drivers are home more often than an OTR truck driver and most regional truck drivers have the weekends off. Regional truck drivers still have the same freedom of driving in different states while still having the ability to come home often.
- **LOCAL/PICKUP & DELIVERY:** Local truck driving is when a truck driver will be driving locally. Usually, the local route will be within 250-mile radius, and the truck driver can work from eight hours to ten hours each day. Being a local truck driver is great for a truck driver who has a family, because they will get to go home each day. Local truck drivers are usually home daily, and they are usually off on the weekends and holidays. Local truck drivers aren't behind the wheel as many hours as an OTR truck driver.
- **DEDICATED:** Dedicated routes can be any of the driving types above. Drivers run the same routes (or lanes) repeatedly – usually for the same customers.

In addition to SOLO drivers, trucker drivers can also work as a TEAM—working in shifts around the clock so the truck doesn't stop. This allows for expedited freight to be delivered on time.

The trucking industry also includes non-driver jobs that run the full gamut of positions and require people of all backgrounds and skill levels

Job categories in trucking include executives, managers, laborers, office and clerical workers, sales workers and other operatives, service workers and technicians, craft workers and other professionals. Women make up 21.8% of these workers and 23.5% of managers and executives.

(2018). And while fewer than 4 percent of diesel mechanics in the U.S. are women, that still amounts to nearly around 9,000 female diesel mechanics out there.