

# Truck Drivers Shortage in USA

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**Abstract**— This research paper discusses the causes behind the shortage in truck drives in the U.S. as well as the possible solutions.

**Index Terms**— Freights, Logistics, Supply Chain, Trucking Industry.

We see them all the time when we are driving. Sitting on the bus, taking a walk, or riding a bike, we see those large trucks, often called eighteen wheelers, as well as other varieties pass by us. There seem to be so many trucks on the road today that many might not be aware that the industry is facing a crisis. Research finds that there is a trucker crisis as there is a shortage of people driving trucks, a shortage that can affect us all, and a shortage that needs to be addressed.

The United States, research finds is facing a shortage of truck drivers. According to Amos Maki, the American Trucking Associations industry group has stated that the industry is short an estimated thirty five thousand drivers. Moreover, the organization states that this number by 2020 could increase to over two hundred thousand drivers needed for the industry. The shortage has already had a negative impact, Maki states, as carriers are facing struggles in their effort to deliver loads. In addition, the cost of freight has also been increased, the author notes, as a result of the shortage.

This shortage can have a negative impact on many who are outside the trucking industry. For example, the higher freight rates that Maki mentions could be passed onto consumers. Moreover, customers might find that their favorite items are not available on store shelves or that some deliveries are not reaching them on time because of this shortage. Another concern, according to Maki, is that the real pain of this shortage may not have been experienced yet. Hence, it is important to find solutions to this problem of a trucker shortage.

To find a solution to the trucker shortage problem it is important to consider the actual causes of the problem. One of the issues, Maki reports is that "Federal rules governing how much time a driver can spend behind the wheel have made the career less attractive" (Maki). The rules appear to place focus on safety as they include reducing the time that drivers can be driving and they also require more periods of rest. An issue is that the drivers who are paid by mileage, Maki states, are spending more time driving. This suggests that a system should be created where drivers are paid differently. Instead of being paid by the mile, perhaps a higher average hourly rate that would include reasonable delivery timelines, would overcome this issue.

Another issue that is contributing to the trucker shortage is that the industry is facing challenges in gaining

young drivers. Maki states that according to one study on the industry "that there are more 65-year-old drivers in trucking compared to people aged 20 to 24, while those aged 25 to 34 make up only 15.6 percent of the workforce" (Maki). Moreover, the percentage of young people who are between twenty-five to thirty-four years of age has decreased significantly, almost by half in recent years. This age issue, Maki says, is a result of the focus being placed on young people earning college degrees.

It seems that one of the potential solutions to address this problem is simply to make the trucking industry a more attractive one. According to Mamta Badkar, one company that has faced challenges due to the crisis states that "it will now invest in drivers and that it will spend more on wages" (Badkar). Furthermore, the author notes that it will spend money on training as a means of attracting more truck drivers. However, it may take more than one company making changes. As Badkar reports, members of the industry have said that "the industry needs to adjust compensation levels to match the jobs at hand" (Badkar). Hence, the industry will have to start paying more money and offering overall better compensation to its employees. Efforts should also be made by the industry, the article suggests, to make young people see that truck driving can be a career option.

Furthermore, the research suggests that there needs to be an improvement in working conditions for the industry. According to the article "The Driver Shortage" one of the reasons for the shortage may be the poor working conditions. If this is the case, companies need to find ways that the conditions can be improved. Truck driving is not an easy job and even with regulations such as the long driving hours and individuals are often at a distance from their families. Companies might have to offer additional perks and incentives as a means of making the job more attractive and to overcome some of the negative aspects of the job, some of which such as distance from the family, that cannot be avoided.

The trucking industry will have to change and it appears that the changes are happening already. While some companies have made the choice to offer more pay and training for truck drivers, the industry as a whole will have to come together to make the job of truck driving more attractive in an industry where regulations and society seem to make the industry seem unattractive.

## REFERENCES

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