

## Long-haul truck drivers share views of safety on the road

From the food we eat to the clothes we buy and everything in between, long-haul truck drivers (LHTDs) are essential to transporting such goods across long distances, and in many cases across several states. On average, LHTDs work 60 hours per week and drive more than 107,000 miles per year. In 2012, more than 1.7 million people were employed as heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers in the United States, with the majority of them being LHTDs.

Due to limited information available on workplace injury and safety among LHTDs, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducted personal interviews with LHTDs in October through December 2010. Survey participants included 1,265 LHTDs at 32 truck stops across the United States. Questions asked during the interviews were based on feedback from representatives of the American Trucking Association, large trucking companies, the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, unions, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, academia, and other truck and roadway safety organizations, and covered: roadway safety, work-related injuries, work environments, safety culture, drivers' opinions on their training, driver behaviors, driver frustrations, and driver job satisfaction.



Findings from the survey showed that more than 1 in 3 LHTDs had at least one crash during their career. Seventy-three percent (73%) of LHTDs perceived their delivery deadlines as unrealistically tight, which may be an incentive for unsafe driving behaviors such as speeding (4.5% often and 26% sometimes), hours-of-service violations (10% often and 27% sometimes), and continuing to drive despite fatigue, bad weather, or heavy traffic (24% often and 47% sometimes). Beyond these unsafe driving behaviors, 14% of LHTDs shared that they sometimes or never wear a seatbelt, which is problematic since buckling up on every trip can prevent deaths. Also noteworthy, 38% of LHTDs reported receiving inadequate training at the beginning of their careers.

So, is there anything that can be done to ensure LHTD safety? Yes, the following are a few ideas from CDC's Vital Signs (<http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/truck-safety/>):

Employers, drivers, and shippers can work together to ensure that drivers do not need to violate hours-of-service rules to make on-time deliveries.

Employers and Federal/State agencies can educate drivers on seatbelt use, cargo securement and weight limits, safe driving, and ways to avoid drowsy or distracted driving. Employers, drivers, and Federal/State agencies can work together to ensure that entry-level truck driver training meets current needs. In 2015 the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has formed the Entry-Level Driver Training Advisory Committee working on revising the current entry-level driver training requirements.

The results of this first national survey of LHTDs highlight a number of critical safety issues that are worthy of future research and interventions to keep truckers and others on the road safe.

## **Publication**

[NIOSH national survey of long-haul truck drivers: Injury and safety.](#)

Chen GX, Sieber WK, Lincoln JE, Birdsey J, Hitchcock EM, Nakata A, Robinson CF, Collins JW, Sweeney MH

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