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# State of Trucking 2025:

## A Driver's Guide

2025 marks the 6th annual State of Trucking survey. Through these reports, we've documented the industry's resilience through unprecedented challenges—from pandemics and supply chain crises to inflation and economic fluctuations.

This year, our findings reveal how small shifts in the trucking industry are creating significant ripple effects for drivers and employers alike.

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# Small changes, big impact in the economy

When trucks move, America moves with it—and the small shifts we're seeing in trucking are promising indicators for the broader economy despite continued uncertainty. While the national economy and outlook may seem more bleak, with 60% of CFOs are predicting a recession and many business leaders continue to approach spending conservatively. Our survey results show that trucking employers are expecting growth in 2025. In fact, 84% of employers surveyed predict that tariffs will have either a positive impact or no impact on their business in the coming year.

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Of course, the new administration brings unknowns—from tariff policies to potential new regulations or the overturning of existing ones. These changes could bring both opportunities and challenges. More production potentially returning to the U.S. could positively impact economic growth and domestic transportation needs, but businesses must remain agile to navigate potential disruptions. While changes may ultimately prove positive or negative, companies that can adapt quickly will be best positioned to ensure business continuity regardless of how things unfold. Despite this continued uncertainty, America's trucks continue to move—and that's a positive sign for drivers and us all.

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## Small changes in the job market, big impact on your opportunities

The job market continues to shift in favor of qualified drivers. Our survey shows 89% of employers are having a hard time filling driver positions and driver retention is their number one concern.

What does this mean for you?

### **Opportunity.**

With the majority of employers experiencing upwards of 40% turnover and 1 in 3 reporting delays of a week or more due to driver shortages, companies are recognizing they need to step up their game to attract and retain qualified drivers like you. These shortages are having real consequences for businesses, including reduced service quality, decreased productivity and losing customers.

As a result, 87% of employers plan to increase their use of contingent drivers this year, creating even more opportunities for drivers looking for work.

# Small business shifts, big economic impact

92%

of drivers plan to take on more or the same number of jobs in 2025

Our survey revealed that 92% of drivers plan to take on more or the same number of jobs in 2025, showing a strong desire for work in the industry.

What matters most to drivers remains consistent: cash is still king. The majority of drivers rate competitive pay as the most important factor when selecting an employer, with no other attribute coming close. However, only a third feel that industry wages are actually competitive.

The data shows 64% of drivers prefer local routes, 25% short haul, and only 11% over the road (OTR), revealing a strong preference for work that allows more time at home.

64%

of drivers prefer local routes

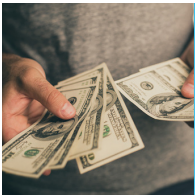
25%

of drivers prefer short haul

11%

of drivers prefer over the road

When it comes to driver benefits, the priorities are clear:



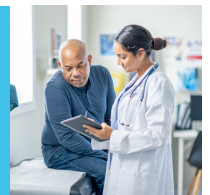
77% Competitive pay

68% Paid Vacation




68% Work-life balance

64% Medical Insurance



For recognition, drivers overwhelmingly prefer cash bonuses, followed by paid time off and growth opportunities.





# Shifting gears: What this means for your career

With more than a quarter of drivers looking to change jobs in 2025, mainly for better stability and better pay, it's important to know what employers are doing to attract and retain drivers like you.

Companies are responding to the shortage in several ways:

**79%** plan to increase driver wages

**89%** of those increasing pay are also offering bonuses  
(76% offering referral and/or sign-on bonuses)

**67%** are modifying hiring requirements,  
with 37% hiring less experienced drivers

**27%** are paying for training

This creates opportunities, especially if you're willing to be flexible. An impressive 73% of drivers say they would be willing to travel to a different city to work for a short time, opening up even more job possibilities. Most drivers prefer finding jobs through staffing companies or referrals, showing the value of professional connections in the industry.

**73%** of drivers say they would be willing to travel  
to a different city to work for a short time

# Safety on the road

Trucking remains a relatively safe profession, with more than 90% of drivers reporting they haven't been injured on the job. However, concerns remain about conditions on the road.

A majority see distracted driving as a big problem, as well as reckless driving of other drivers on the road.

Interestingly, 79% would not feel safe if autonomous trucks shared the road, showing strong skepticism about this emerging technology.

## 38%

of drivers reported zero injured on the job

## 79%

of drivers would not feel safe with autonomous trucks on the road



## Life behind the wheel

Drivers continue to appreciate the independence, pay and travel opportunities that come with trucking. These benefits align well with what many people seek in their careers, though industry veterans cite starting pay and work-life balance challenges as major reasons why younger people aren't entering the profession in sufficient numbers.



Our survey shows a health-conscious driver population, with a majority prioritizing healthy eating and making time to exercise on the road. Still, over have gained weight since becoming a driver and rely on fast food while traveling.



**Most drivers get 5-7 hours of sleep per night, with 31% getting a healthier 8-10 hours.**

And despite the stereotype of truckers running on caffeine, 68% stick to one caffeinated drink or less per day.



# Moving forward in 2025

Small shifts in business, the economy, and driver preferences are having big impacts on the trucking industry.

For drivers, this means:

## 1. More negotiating power:

With employers struggling to find and keep qualified drivers, you're in a position to ask for better pay and benefits.

## 2. More opportunities:

Companies are increasing their use of contingent workers and offering better incentives to attract talent.

## 3. More flexibility:

Whether you prefer local routes or are willing to travel for short-term opportunities, employers are becoming more accommodating to driver preferences.

## 4. More recognition:

Companies understand that retention is crucial and are implementing better recognition programs to keep their best drivers.

Through economic uncertainty, new regulations and changing industry dynamics—truck drivers remain the backbone of America's economy. Your priorities may evolve, but your essential role in keeping the country moving remains constant.



# A look in the rearview

Drivers shared their most memorable stories from the last year.  
Here are a few of their experiences:



"I delivered emergency supplies to a community cut off by severe flooding. The gratitude in people's eyes made every challenge worth it."



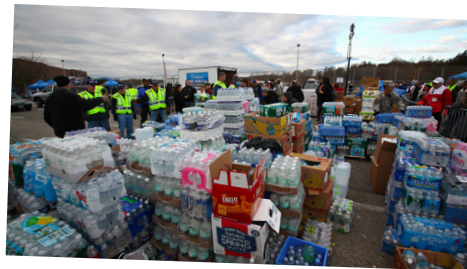
"My most memorable experience was transporting specialized medical equipment that was needed for a child's emergency surgery. Knowing I played a part in saving a life gives meaning to what I do every day."



"I helped a family stranded in a winter storm, giving them shelter in my cab until help arrived. They still send me holiday cards."



"Driving through the Rockies during a sunrise after a snowfall was like entering another world. In moments like that, I remember why I chose this life."



"I transported relief supplies after a hurricane hit the coast. Working alongside other drivers to help rebuild a community reminded me of the brotherhood we share in this industry."



"After 20 years on the road, I finally drove through all 48 continental states. Marked the last one off my bucket list this year."



# Centerline Drivers wants to help you find the perfect placement.

Centerline is your access point to limitless driving opportunities. Our job is to connect you with safe, rewarding work at top companies while maintaining your flexibility and work-life balance. We want to find you local routes with steady, reliable hours and competitive pay. Driving with Centerline means you still get to live your life.

Centerline has a team of dedicated, responsive recruiters who will work with you. With support every step of the way, Centerline makes it easy for you to find your perfect next position fast.

Interested in applying? **[View jobs now.](#)**

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## METHOD

This research was the result of a survey of more than 75 companies hiring truck drivers and over 100 truck drivers nationwide.