

STATE OF TRUCKING 2026

Top Takeaways

This year, our findings reveal a trucking industry full of signals: steady demand, evolving driver expectations, hiring friction, safety pressure and uncertainty around technology.

Our annual State of Trucking survey asked drivers and transportation employers where the industry stands heading into 2026.



HERE ARE THE TOP FIVE TAKEAWAYS

27% of employers still report trouble filling driver roles

While most employers say hiring feels about normal, more than a quarter still report moderate or severe trouble filling truck driver positions. That means the market is not in freefall, but qualified drivers remain essential to keeping operations moving.



nearly 85% of drivers say better pay would make them stay longer

Drivers are largely staying put, with 80% saying they are not considering changing jobs in the next 12 months. But loyalty has conditions. Pay increase ranked as the top company change that would make drivers stay longer, followed by more predictable schedules, better equipment and improved communication.

DRIVERS WOULD ALSO STAY LONGER FOR:

-  MORE PREDICTABLE SCHEDULES
-  BETTER EQUIPMENT
-  IMPROVED COMMUNICATION



64% of employers say it takes at least 1–2 weeks to hire a qualified driver

Hiring is still moving, but it is not always moving fast enough. More than half of employers say it takes one to two weeks to hire a qualified truck driver.

Delays from screenings, paperwork, interviews and qualified applicant supply can quickly turn into missed routes, service issues and peak-season strain.



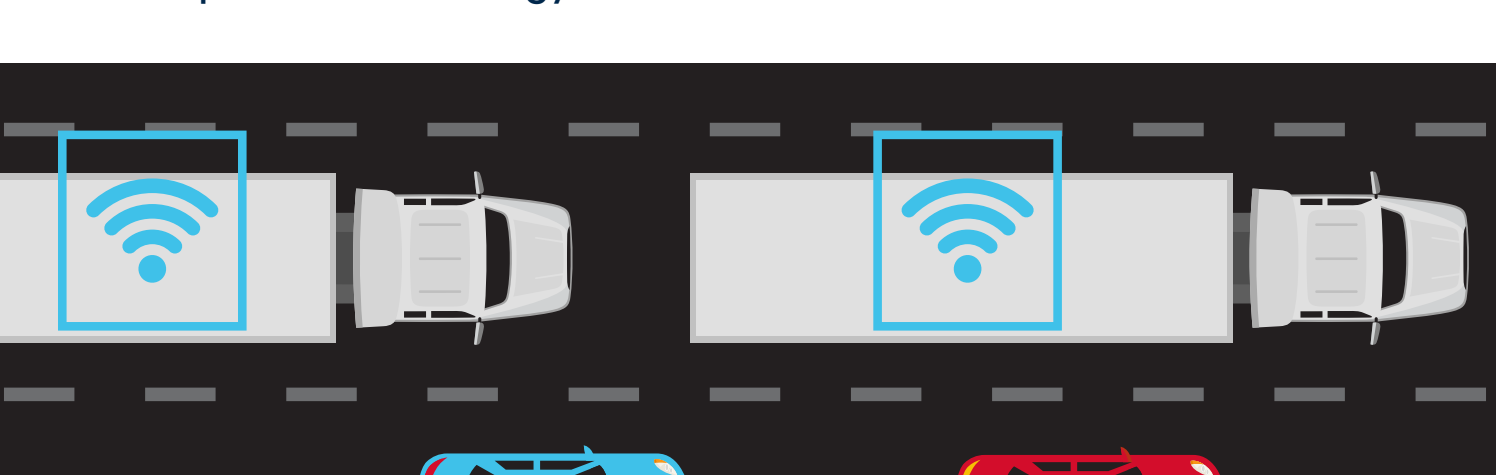
Driver shortages are still disrupting peak operations

During peak season, driver shortages caused missed delivery deadlines for 28% of employers, lower service quality or customer complaints for 20%, lost customers or contracts for 12% and revenue or profit declines for 12%. Hiring friction is no longer just a recruiting issue. It is an operational risk.



65% of drivers are concerned AI or automation could reduce driving jobs

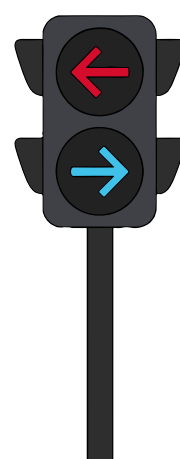
Technology is changing trucking, but trust matters. Drivers are cautious about autonomous trucks, AI and automation, while employers are still weighing investment, regulation and operational impact. The companies that succeed will be the ones that introduce technology as a support tool, not a replacement strategy.



ONE MORE SIGNAL TO WATCH

56% of drivers say they would be willing to mentor new drivers

Experienced drivers are not just part of today's workforce. They may be one of the keys to building tomorrow's.



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