

Driver Safety Letter

presented by



Driving a Truck is a Dangerous Job!

December 2017



When you think of dangerous jobs, what comes to your mind? Police officers, firefighters and construction workers might top the list for most people. Tractor-trailer drivers probably don't come to mind, but the Bureau of Labor Statistics' data shows that driving a truck is risky in ways you might not expect. For example:

- One out of every six American workers killed on the job is a tractor-trailer truck driver.
- In 2014 alone, 761 tractor-trailer truck drivers were killed while working, which also marks the fifth year in a row that the number of truck driver fatalities has increased.
- The vast majority of these deaths, 78 %, were caused by transportation incidents.

Tractor-trailer drivers also have the highest number of nonfatal injuries and illnesses that require days off from work across all occupations (a total of 55,710 in 2014). They rank 6th among the top occupations with highest incidence rates of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work, after police officers and sheriffs, firefighters, highway maintenance workers, correctional officers and nursing assistants. Another way to look at this statistic is that truck drivers had nearly one out of every 20 injury and illness cases nationwide that needed time off work to recover.

In fact, tractor-trailer truck drivers are three times more likely than the typical American worker to have an injury or illness that required days off from work. The injuries that are most likely to cause them to miss work result from slips, trips and falls, followed by overexertion. And just how do workers driving tractor-trailer trucks overexert themselves? Pushing and pulling containers; lifting heavy items while loading and unloading the truck; and getting in and out of such a large vehicle routinely are all ways that drivers can easily overdo it on the job.

Among all occupations, tractor-trailer drivers ranked No. 3 on the list of workers suffering from musculoskeletal disorders (injuries or disorders of the muscles, nerves, tendons, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs) that required days off from work in 2014. Overexertion, including repeatedly getting in and out of the truck and assisting with loading and unloading, and prolonged sitting are all causes.

And when truck drivers get hurt on the job it takes them longer to recover. Half of all truck drivers required at least 20 days away from work after an incident before returning, compared with all other occupations in which half of all workers returned to work within nine days. Among tractor-trailer truck drivers who had to take days off work due to being injured, 42% missed more than a month (31 or more days) of work.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration is charged with reducing the number and the severity of crashes involving large commercial trucks on our nation's highways and roads. In addition to its regulatory oversight of commercial motor carriers, FMCSA has online resources to help everyone share our roadways safely. FMCSA's safety education program for all vehicles is called "[Our Roads, Our Responsibility](#)."

More information about [preventing musculoskeletal disorders](#) in the workplace is available from our Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Data about work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses can be found on the [Bureau of Labor Statistics website](#).

We will cover some of these tips in our next safety letter. Until then, be aware of these statistics and don't become one!

The NPTC Monthly Driver Safety Letter, jointly sponsored by NPTC and [CPC Logistics, Inc.](#), is a Microsoft Word document that you can print out and post as is, if appropriate, or modify any way you wish to make it a better fit for your drivers, including adding your company logo. If you are already doing an in-house letter, you may find information here that you can cut and paste into your own letter. If you are interested in specific subjects, or have any comments/feedback, contact Tom Moore, CTP, at tmoore@nptc.org or (703)838-8898.