



Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers

SOC Code 53-3032 • Projected Growth (2020) 30 %

Description

What Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers Do

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers transport goods from one location to another. Most tractor-trailer drivers are long-haul drivers and operate trucks with a capacity of at least 26,001 pounds per gross vehicle weight (GVW). They deliver goods over intercity routes, sometimes spanning several states.

Duties

- Load and unload cargo
- Drive long distances
- Report to a dispatcher any incidents encountered on the road
- Follow all applicable traffic laws
- Inspect their trailer before and after the trip, and record any defects they find
- Keep a log of their activities
- Report serious mechanical problems to the appropriate personnel
- Keep their truck, and associated equipment, clean and in good working order

Training Opportunities Linked to Those Jobs

(Degree Types and Colleges/Universities)

How to Become

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers usually have a high school diploma and 2 years of related work experience. They must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

Education and Training

Some companies require their truck drivers to have a high school diploma or equivalent.

Licenses

All long-haul truck drivers must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Qualifications for obtaining a CDL vary by state but generally include passing both a knowledge and driving test. States have the right to refuse to issue a CDL to anyone who has had a CDL suspended by another state.

Drivers can get endorsements to their CDL that show their ability to drive a specialized type of vehicle. Truck drivers transporting hazardous materials (HAZMAT) must have a hazardous materials endorsement (H). Getting this endorsement requires an additional knowledge test and a background check.

Federal regulations require testing truck drivers for drug or alcohol abuse with random testing while on duty. In addition, truck drivers can have their CDL suspended if they are convicted of a felony involving the use of a motor vehicle or while driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Other actions can result in a suspension after multiple violations. The [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) website has a list of these violations. Additionally, some companies have higher standards than what federal regulations require.

Work Experience

Most trucking companies prefer their drivers to have at least 2 years of related experience. Many heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers work as delivery drivers or as motor coach drivers before joining this occupation. For more information, see the profiles on [delivery truck drivers and driver/sales workers](#) and [bus drivers](#).

Training

Some drivers attend professional driving schools, where they take training courses to learn how to maneuver large vehicles on highways or through crowded streets. During these classes, drivers also learn the federal laws and regulations governing interstate truck driving.

In the near future, the U.S. Department of Transportation may require all interstate truck drivers to take a truck-driving course.

The [Professional Truck Driver Institute \(PTDI\)](#) certifies a small percentage of driver-training courses at truck driver training schools that meet industry standards and the U.S. Department of Transportation guidelines for training tractor-trailer drivers.

Important Qualities

Hand-eye coordination. Drivers of heavy trucks and tractor-trailers must be able to coordinate their legs, hands, and eyes together well to always be aware of the situation around them and to drive such a heavy vehicle safely.

Hearing ability. Truck drivers need good hearing. Federal regulations require that a driver be able to hear a forced whisper in one ear at five feet (with or without the use of a hearing aid).

Physical health. Federal regulations do not allow people to become truck drivers if they have a medical condition, such as high blood pressure or epilepsy, that may interfere with their ability to operate a truck. The [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#) website has a full list of medical conditions that disqualify someone from driving a long-haul truck.

Visual ability. Truck drivers must be able to pass vision tests. Federal regulations require a driver to have at least 20/40 vision with a 70-degree field of vision in each eye and the ability to distinguish the colors on a traffic light.

Postsecondary Education

Texas Southmost College	South Texas College	Texas State Technical College	The University of Texas at Brownsville	The University of Texas - Pan American

Local Employers

A-Fast Delivery	Harlingen	South Shore Ice & Fuel	Port Isabel
Abf Freight System Inc	Brownsville	Southern Star Inc	Rio Hondo
Garza Trucking	Rio Hondo	Texas Meat Purveyors	Harlingen

Career Options

(Specific Job Types)

- Truck Driver
- Line Haul Driver
- Road Driver
- Feeder Driver
- Driver
- Delivery Driver
- Semi Truck Driver
- Over the Road Driver (OTR Driver)
- Owner Operator
- City Driver

Salary Ranges

Wages for **Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers**

Location	Pay Period	2012				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%

Location	Pay Period	2012				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$12.07	\$14.86	\$18.37	\$22.86	\$28.32
	Yearly	\$25,100	\$30,900	\$38,200	\$47,500	\$58,900
Texas	Hourly	\$11.04	\$13.65	\$17.31	\$22.12	\$28.05
	Yearly	\$23,000	\$28,400	\$36,000	\$46,000	\$58,300
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX MSA	Hourly	\$9.39	\$11.84	\$18.54	\$21.90	\$24.97
	Yearly	\$19,500	\$24,600	\$38,600	\$45,600	\$51,900

Professional Associations linked to the Careers

For more information about truck drivers, visit

[Professional Truck Driver Institute](#)

[The International Brotherhood of Teamsters](#)

[Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration](#)

Sources

The information provided in this document was collected from the following sources:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook (<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>)
- O*NET OnLine (<http://www.onetonline.org/>)
- Texas CARES (<http://www.texascaresonline.com/>)
- CareerOneStop (<http://www.careeronestop.org/>)



Course Overview: Focuses on careers in the planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail, and water, and related professional and technical support services.

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Career Goal (O*NET Code): (53-3032) - Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers transport goods from one location to another. Most tractor-trailer drivers are long-haul drivers and operate trucks with a capacity of at least 26,001 pounds per gross vehicle weight (GVW). They deliver goods over intercity routes, sometimes spanning several states.

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

SUGGESTED COURSEWORK

EXTENDED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Middle School	8th	HS Courses:	Exploring Careers			Curricular Experiences: Business Professionals of America Future Business Leaders of America SkillsUSA Technology Student Association	Extracurricular Experiences: Language Immersion Programs School Newspaper Student Government UIL Academic Competitions Yearbook
High School	9th	Core Courses*:	English I Algebra I or Geometry Biology	World Geography Foreign Language I Physical Education	Fine Arts		
		Career-Related Electives:	Principles of Transportation, Distribution and Logistics				
	10th	Core Courses:	English II Geometry or Algebra II Chemistry	World History Foreign Language II Elective			
		Career-Related Electives:	Energy, Power and Transportation Systems or Aircraft Technology				
	11th	Core Courses:	English III Algebra II Physics/Principles of Technology	United States History Foreign Language III** Professional Communications or Speech			
		Career-Related Electives:	Transportation Systems Management or Logistics, Planning and Management Systems or Advanced Aircraft Technology				
	12th	Core Courses:	English IV AP Calculus 4th Science	Government/Economics Fine Arts Elective			
		Career-Related Electives:	Advanced Aircraft Technology or Advanced Electronics or Practicum in Transportation, Distribution and Logistics				
How to Become a Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Driver Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers usually have a high school diploma and 2 years of related work experience. They must have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).					Career Options: • Truck Driver • Line Haul Driver • Road Driver • Feeder Driver • Driver • Delivery Driver • Semi Truck Driver • Over the Road Driver (OTR Driver) • City Driver • Owner Operator	Professional Associations: Professional Truck Driver Institute The International Brotherhood of Teamsters Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration	
Postsecondary		Texas Southmost College	South Texas College	Texas State Technical College			
		University of Texas at Brownsville	University of Texas - Pan American				

*Students must meet local & state graduation requirements. ** Required coursework for Distinguished Graduation Plan (In addition to other measures). *** Based on campus availability. Students may select other elective courses for personal enrichment purposes.

This plan of study serves as a guide, along with other career planning materials, for pursuing a career path and is based on the most recent information as of 2012. All plans meet high school graduation requirements as well as college entrance requirements.