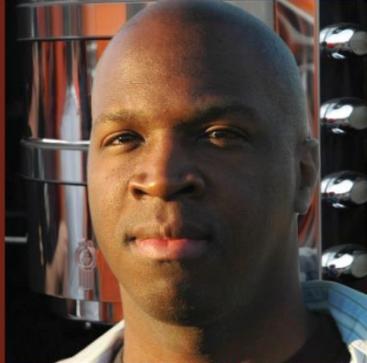


**Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association Foundation**  
*A subsidiary of Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association Inc.*



# 2019 Canadian Member Profile Survey



## Introduction

The trucking industry plays a significant role in Canada's economy, employing more than 180,000 tractor-trailer drivers and moving 66.5 million shipments over 323.5 billion tonne-kilometers, while collecting \$38.95 billion Canadian dollars (CAD) in revenue.<sup>1</sup> According to the Canadian Trucking Alliance, the trucking industry transports more than 90 percent of all consumer and foodstuffs being shipped by truck, either solely or in part.<sup>2</sup> Yet academia, lawmakers, and regulators frequently marginalize the industry, especially the small business owner-operators, despite their importance to the economy.

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA or Association), the largest not-for-profit international trade association representing the interests of over 160,000 small business owners and professional drivers, specifically represents the small business owner-operator and professional employee driver. The members of OOIDA, who operate in all 50 states and Canada, collectively operate more than 200,000 individual heavy-duty trucks.

While a majority of researchers do not have access to the owner-operator or the professional employee driver population with any significant numbers, the OOIDA Foundation (OOFI), the research and educational arm of the Association, has been able to both collect and to analyze information from this critical segment of the industry. OOFI conducted the first survey of the Association's membership in 1998 in order to communicate accurately the professional opinions of the owner-operators transporting freight across the country with federal, state, and local agencies. The data provided by the survey has not only helped to define the direction of the Foundation, but it also created a profile for the community of this large and often nebulous group.

Nevertheless, while OOFI has been conducting surveys of the Association's United States-based membership for over two decades, it has not focused on OOIDA's Canadian members. Although these Canadian members face similar issues, the trucking industry overall is very different across the two countries. Thus OOFI initiated its first Canadian member survey in 2019 in order form an accurate profile of the Association's Canada-based membership.

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<sup>1</sup> "Trucking Industry in Canada – Statistics & Facts," Statista (accessed Oct 29, 2019), [https://www.statista.com/topics/5047/trucking-industry-in-canada/#dossierSummary\\_chapter2](https://www.statista.com/topics/5047/trucking-industry-in-canada/#dossierSummary_chapter2)

<sup>2</sup> <http://cantruck.ca/freight-economy/>

## Profile of the Canadian Member

The typical Canadian member of OOIDA is 58 years old, standing 5 feet 10 inches tall and weighing 219 pounds, which results in a body mass index (BMI) of 31.4. This in comparison with the average U.S. based member, who is 53 years old with 32 BMI. Although BMI has several limitations, as it does not take into account a person's body composition, age, or gender, it is often the measurement of choice to determine overall health. According to the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), 26 percent of truck drivers are overweight (BMI 25.0-29.9) and 64 percent are obese (BMI >30.0).<sup>3</sup> It has long been demonstrated by medical studies that the sedentary lifestyle of a trucker can lead to many health issues, including weight gain, diabetes, and hypertension.

In the 2018 Owner-Operator Survey, which gathers data from only U.S.-based members, 43 percent of the respondents stated that they took maintenance type prescriptions. Of those drivers who took prescriptions, most indicated that they were for high blood pressure. The figures from the Canadian Survey were nearly identical. The subject of driver health, which affects both Canada and the United States, continues to remain an area of concern.

The majority of Canadian members enter into the industry from blue-collar occupations such as farming, construction, and the military. In fact, 20 percent of the respondents stated that they had served in the military at some point in their life. Most members indicated that they drive a truck either because they love or enjoy what they do, or because of the freedom and adventure that trucking allows.

The average member has been involved in the trucking business for more than 30 years, and has been driving for 25 years. During this time, the typical owner-operator has accumulated approximately 4.3 million kilometers (2.67 million miles) of driving, most of which was without a Department of Transportation reportable accident<sup>4</sup> resulting in 17.3 crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometers traveled (27.8 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled). In other words, the average Canadian member drives 5.8 million kilometers before having an accident (3.6 million miles).

The Canadian member generally contracts on to a motor carrier or operates as a professional employee driver (company driver) hauling general freight on a flatbed trailer within the truckload segment of the industry. Most Canadian members drive solo in long haul type operations and operate across the United States border. While in Canada, the average member operates chiefly in Ontario, Alberta, and Manitoba. However, when members cross the border, they primarily drive in the north central region of the U.S. (IL, IN, IA, KY, MI, MN, OH, WI). He or she drove over 136,000 loaded kilometers (84,500 miles) last year with nearly 24,000 deadhead kilometers (15,000 miles). These trips necessitated being away from home more than 200 nights per year.

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<sup>3</sup> W. Karl Sieber et al., *The National Survey of Long-Haul Truck Driver Health and Injury*, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (2014).

<sup>4</sup> A DOT reportable accident is a crash that resulted in either (1) a fatality, (2) an injury receiving treatment immediately away from the accident scene, or (3) disabling damage to any vehicle involved

The Canadian member is compensated either by the mile or by percentage of the load, earning \$1.23 per mile or 74.5 percent, respectively. Canadian members earn \$0.69 less per mile on average than the typical U.S.-based member. After figuring for all **loaded** miles traveled, the average member receives \$103,935 per year. Several respondents commented that one of the greatest issues facing the trucking industry in Canada today was the low freight rates, which is partially why 78 percent stated they would not encourage their children to become a truck driver.

Unlike in the U.S., there are certain parts of Canada that require the top speed of a truck to be governed via a speed limiter control. Thus, while a large percentage of U.S.-based owner-operators do not have speed limiters equipped on their truck, 63 percent of Canadian members do. The average setting is 105 kilometers per hour, or 65 miles per hour. Most members indicated that speed limiters either reduce safety, or have no effect whatsoever. Moreover, the Canadian member generally operates a 2012 model year truck with an 18 speed transmission and between 451 to 500 horsepower. The average truck earns 7.1 miles per gallon and has a variety of fuel efficient technologies, including anti-idling equipment, trailer skirting, and roof fairings.

For those members who indicated that they were an owner-operator, either contracted on, operating under their own authority, or a fleet owner, the average member became an owner-operator at 33 years old and have been an owner-operator for 22 years. The average Canadian owner-operator owns approximately one truck and one trailer, for which the regular price was approximately \$130,000 CAD (\$99,320 U.S.) and \$47,000 CAD (\$35,908 U.S.) respectively.

Finally, several members expressed that the top issues facing the trucking industry in Canada today are low freight rates, untrained foreign drivers, and overregulation. In particular, a number of members commented on the negative safety impacts of electronic logging devices and speed limiters, which create speed differentials, congestion, and frustration. Moreover, members stated that the new driver training standards were not good enough. Members also discussed detention time, limited truck parking, and poor infrastructure as additional concerns.

