



Truck Driver Shortage: A Myth or Reality?

The American Trucking Association (ATA) has claimed in its press releases that there is currently a shortage of 35,000 truck drivers, which is forecasted to grow to around 200,000 by 2020 and reach as many as 240,000 by 2024. While for-hire motor carriers continue to list driver shortage as one of their top concerns, data from ATA has demonstrated an increase in driver turnover among large truckload fleets. According to data published in April 2016, the annualized turnover rate was at 102% for these carriers in the fourth quarter of 2015.¹ When examining turnover for the whole year, it is not unusual for large carriers to experience a turnover rate well over 100%. This statistic alone would indicate that there is in fact no shortage of drivers, as these companies must hire 100%+ on an annual basis in order to operate.

While it is very difficult to generate any accurate or realistic number of exactly how many long haul drivers will be needed in the future, the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association Foundation (OOIFI) researched the number of new commercial driver licenses (CDLs) that are obtained each year for interstate trucking. In 2016, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration released a notice of proposed rulemaking concerning entry-level driver training and a subsequent regulatory impact analysis which estimated that there are 449,000 new entry level CDL holders and 98,000 reinstatements annually.² Utilizing this figure, OOIFI calculated that there were to be 4,490,000 new entry-level drivers, approximately 70% of which would be Class A CDL holders, and 980,000 reinstatements over the next ten years, which far exceeds the 240,000 new drivers required by ATA.

Table 1: Comparison of Drivers Needed/ Projected over 10 Years

Organization	ATA	FM CSA
Year	2014-2024	2014-2024
Drivers Needed/ Projected	240,000	4,490,000†

†New entry CDL holders plus reinstatements

¹ James Jaillet, “Indicators: Driver turnover at large fleets surges above 100%,” *Commercial Carrier Journal* (2016), http://www.ccjdigital.com/indicators-driver-turnover-at-large-fleets-surges-above-100/?utm_source=daily&utm_medium=email&utm_content=04-26-2016&utm_campaign=Commercial%20Carrier%20Journal&ust_id=2fc1ef3c55c1a824e23febba2fafae65#sthash.MC6C6DS.dpuf

² FM CSA, *Regulatory Evaluation of Entry-Level Driver Training Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (2016), pg. 37

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