

Heavy and Tractor-trailer Truck Drivers

SOC: 53-3032 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$57,440

Median Salary

2,235,100

Employment

+4.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: Postsecondary

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 28.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

4.6/10 - Fair work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.6/10	Investigative	4.4/10
Artistic	3.4/10	Social	5.8/10
Enterprising	4.8/10	Conventional	7.4/10

■ Top Skills Required

Hand-eye coordination, Hearing ability, Physical health, Visual ability

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers are transportation professionals who operate **large commercial vehicles to move goods safely and efficiently** across local, regional, and long-distance routes. They are a critical link in the supply chain, ensuring that food, fuel, medical supplies, and consumer products reach businesses and communities on time. Their work combines vehicle operation, logistics awareness, and strict safety compliance.

This career is well suited for individuals who enjoy independence, driving, and playing a vital role in keeping the economy moving.

What Do Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers Do?

Truck drivers transport freight using tractor-trailers and other heavy vehicles while following transportation laws and safety procedures.

Common responsibilities include:

- Driving long distances to deliver goods to designated locations
- Inspecting vehicles before and after trips for safety issues
- Securing cargo to prevent damage or shifting during transit
- Following traffic laws, hours-of-service rules, and company policies
- Planning routes and adjusting for traffic or weather conditions
- Maintaining logs and delivery records
- Communicating with dispatchers and customers

Types of Truck Driving Jobs

Truck drivers may specialize based on route type or cargo:

- Long-Haul (Over-the-Road) Drivers: Transport goods across states or nationwide.
- Regional Drivers: Cover specific geographic regions with scheduled routes.
- Local Drivers: Make daily deliveries and return home each night.
- Dedicated Route Drivers: Serve specific customers or routes.
- Specialized Freight Drivers: Transport hazardous materials, oversized loads, or refrigerated goods.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Truck drivers combine driving expertise with responsibility and time management.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Licensing Pathway

Becoming a heavy or tractor-trailer truck driver requires specialized training and licensing:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent: Typical minimum requirement
- Commercial Driver's License (CDL): Required to operate heavy trucks
- Truck Driving School or Training Program: Classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction
- On-the-Job Training: Supervised driving with experienced drivers
- Endorsements (as needed): For hazardous materials, tankers, or doubles/triples

Licensing requirements vary by state and cargo type.

Where Do Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers Work?

Truck drivers are employed across nearly every industry:

- Freight and Logistics Companies
- Manufacturing and Distribution Firms

- Retail and Wholesale Operations
- Construction and Industrial Suppliers
- Agricultural and Food Transport Companies
- Self-Employed or Owner-Operator Businesses

Work environments are primarily on the road, with schedules varying by route type.

How Much Do Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers Earn?

Earnings vary based on experience, route type, and employer:

- Entry-Level Drivers: Typically earn steady starting wages
- Experienced or Long-Haul Drivers: Often earn higher pay with mileage or load incentives
- Owner-Operators: Income depends on contracts, expenses, and miles driven

Compensation may include bonuses, per-diem pay, or benefits.

Is This Career Difficult?

Truck driving can be physically and mentally demanding. Long hours, time away from home, traffic conditions, and weather challenges require focus and endurance. The difficulty lies in maintaining safety, compliance, and alertness while managing tight delivery schedules.

Who Should Consider Becoming a Truck Driver?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Enjoy driving and working independently
- Are comfortable with long or irregular hours
- Value job stability and consistent demand
- Can follow safety rules and regulations precisely
- Prefer practical, skill-based work

How to Prepare Early

- Develop safe driving habits and a clean driving record
- Learn basic vehicle mechanics and safety principles
- Practice time management and responsibility
- Research CDL requirements and training programs
- Explore different trucking routes and specialties

Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers keep the economy moving by delivering the goods that power daily life, connecting producers, businesses, and communities across the country mile by mile.