



# Today's Trucking

The Business Magazine of Canada's Trucking Industry

# TOP 100

Canada's largest for-hire carriers

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May 2026

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Number	Vendor	Date	Est. Total	Actual Total
75582199	Big Parts Vendor	7/15/2024	\$0.00	\$450.00
58697748	Autozone	7/16/2024	\$40.00	\$40.00
36782555	Napa	8/15/2024	\$0.00	\$56.85
46474457	All The Parts	8/21/2024	\$20.09	\$20.09
69875324	Napa	8/22/2024	\$28,950.00	\$30,900.00
54370.1	Napa	9/17/2024		\$90.00
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# Today's Trucking

The Business Magazine of Canada's Trucking Industry

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Member:



## Brake adjustment rules leave drivers in a bind

*Re: We need to adjust our thinking about air brakes*

Most drivers don't even carry tools, so how can they adjust things that are out of their control? We can be ticketed for adjusting brakes in some provinces, but if you are not near a repair facility, how do you get them fixed? And most new drivers wouldn't have a clue how to adjust them, even if they are mechanical.

I started when we only had manual slack adjusters, but now, not a chance would I crawl under a truck or trailer and even attempt this procedure. With disc brakes, this is not even an issue, as there are no adjustments. Why companies continue to use drum brakes is totally beyond my comprehension.

— Lavern John Forester

## Why do three-quarter-ton trucks need a CVOR?

*Re: The loopholes in Ontario's CVOR system are glaring and unacceptable*

The CVOR provision for three-quarter-ton trucks was not only stupid, but a money grab and nothing else. A three-quarter-ton truck has a maximum loaded gross weight of around 12,000 lb. Transports can weigh up to 140,000 lb., more than 10 times that.

I drive 10 miles to work and 10 miles home. Brush and wood are deposited a few miles from the jobsite, and then I return home. Why do I need a useless CVOR? The fools behind the CVOR calculated this silly rule only as a money grab.

— Edward Kennedy

## What driver shortage?

*Re: Canada's trucking employment dropped 4% in February: THRC*

As a Canadian with more than 10 years of experience, a clean driving record, no criminal record, the ability to enter the U.S., a U.S. TWIC card, and a FAST card, I can no longer even get an interview for a longhaul trucking job, even though I am willing to be on the road for up to three weeks at a time.

I think the problem is two-fold. First, the federal government provides wage subsidy programs for employers to hire foreign workers who are then exploited as cheap labor. Second, I do not speak Punjabi or Hindi, the first language of many truckers in Canada. If I cannot speak to my coworkers, it is a problem. With around 7% unemployment in Canada, there is no driver shortage; in fact, there probably never was.

— Ronald Sterling Tate

## Hydrogen trucking needs more range and infrastructure

*Re: Elemental Trucks completes development of 63.5-tonne hydrogen fuel cell Class 8 truck*

Hydrogen trucks need more range. Most drivers in Canada go 600-plus miles in one 13-hour day, and there needs to be a lot more hydrogen fuel stations in Northern Ontario, the Prairies, and British Columbia for this to work. That said, build the hydrogen filling stations and let's see what happens.

— Kent Rathgeber

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**James Menzies**

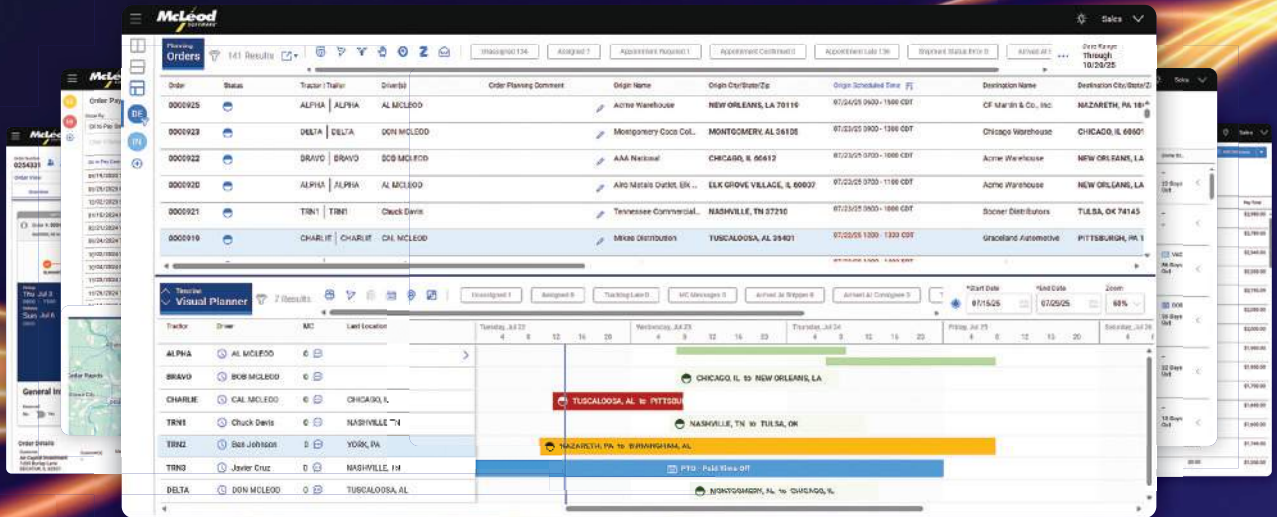
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By James Menzies



# Beneath the Surface

## The further freight gets from the shipper, the murkier it becomes

We've built a supply chain that's very good at one thing: creating distance. Distance between the shipper and the truck. Distance between the contract and the carrier actually hauling the load. Distance between responsibility and accountability.

And that's where the risk hides.

We spend a lot of time talking about bad actors – Driver Inc., non-compliant carriers, wheel separations, scale skipping and all other manner of egregious safety violations – but recent developments on both sides of the border point to a bigger issue: the deeper the subcontracting chain, the harder it is to know who's really moving the freight.

And who's responsible when something goes sideways.

In Canada, that came into focus during parliamentary hearings involving Canada Post. Executives were adamant: they don't use Driver Inc. in their supply chain.

But that wasn't the end of the discussion. MPs pushed back, citing reporting and testimony suggesting those practices can still exist further down the chain – beyond the direct carriers Canada Post contracts with.

That's the problem in a nutshell. On paper, everything can look clean. The primary carrier checks out. The contract is compliant. But once that freight starts moving through layers of subcontracting, visibility drops off quickly.

And with it, accountability. Look no further than many of the most outspoken critics of the Driver Inc. model who also act as the scheme's biggest enablers by assigning loads to such carriers through their brokerage divisions.

Driver Inc. may be a Canadian term, but accountability in trucking isn't just a Canadian issue. In the U.S., the trucking industry's seedy underbelly recently received prime-time attention. A recent 60 Minutes investigation looked at so-called "chameleon carriers" – companies that rack up safety violations, shut down, and then pop back up under a new name.

Different company on paper. Same operation on the road.

The report highlighted fleets like SuperEgo, where a network of related entities allegedly allowed trucks to keep running despite enforcement actions that should have shut them down.

It's not hard to see how that happens.

When freight is passed from one company to another – sometimes multiple times – it becomes very difficult to trace who is actually responsible for the move. And very easy for bad

actors to stay in the game. Not that long ago, SuperEgo was named carrier of the year by a massive international freight brokerage. For a long time, enforcement has focused on the carrier alone. But that's starting to change.

U.S. regulators, including the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, have begun signaling they're willing to look beyond the truck, at brokers, and increasingly, even at shippers themselves. The message is pretty simple: if you're tendering freight to companies that shouldn't be operating, you may share some responsibility.

And it's about time. None of these business models – not Driver Inc., not chameleon carriers, not layered subcontracting – work without freight. Someone is giving them loads.

It's easy for shippers to say they can't control what happens beyond their direct contract. That once they've hired a reputable carrier, the job is done. But in a world where freight can be re-brokered two or three times before it hits the road, that argument doesn't hold up.

Not when the rate is suspiciously low. Not when the same names keep showing up in enforcement actions. Not when regulators are starting to connect the dots. The reality is, we've built a system where accountability gets diluted at every hand-off. Everyone owns a piece of the move. No one owns the whole thing. That thinking needs to change.

Insurance costs are climbing. Litigation is getting more aggressive. Enforcement is tightening. And public scrutiny – especially after stories like the one on 60 Minutes – is only going to increase. The weak links in the chain aren't as hidden as they used to be. For smart shippers, this means asking harder questions before the freight ever moves.

Who is actually hauling this load? Is it being re-brokered? Do the economics make sense for a compliant operation? The further freight gets from the shipper, the murkier it becomes. And right now, there's a lot happening in that murk. **TT**

**"Accountability gets diluted at every handoff."**

James Menzies is the editorial director of *Today's Trucking*. You can reach him at 416-557-9014 or [james@newcom.ca](mailto:james@newcom.ca).

# Dispat

(Photo: iStock)



## Committee Clash

*Canada Post adamantly denies Driver Inc. links, faces pushback from MP committee*

*By James Menzies*

Canada Post's top executives repeatedly and unequivocally denied any connection to the controversial Driver Inc. model during a tense appearance before the House of Commons transport committee.

However, they faced sustained pushback from MPs citing a *La Presse* report suggesting otherwise when called before the committee March 23.

"Canada Post does not engage any contractors under the Driver Inc. model. Period," president and CEO Doug Ettinger told the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities. He undercame fire from MPs on the committee for declining previous invitations to address the committee before finally being summoned.

Ettinger reinforced his position

throughout the hearing, stating: "There is no engagement of Driver Inc. throughout Canada Post," and added the Crown corporation has "no evidence...nothing that I can point to" indicating the practice exists within its network.

### Media report drives scrutiny

Much of the questioning centred on a recent *La Presse* report that alleged up to 25 companies connected to Canada Post contracts may have used the Driver Inc. model.

The report raised questions about whether misclassification could be occurring deeper within the Crown corporation's supply chain – even if not among its directly contracted carriers.

Several of the companies cited had

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## RCMP blitz uncovers egregious violations

### Titanium taken private

faced regulatory scrutiny, including fines and findings related to undeclared wages and labor violations, according to MPs who referenced enforcement data during the hearing. Ettinger acknowledged he had reviewed the article and said it prompted internal follow-up.

“We have contacted all of the names of the companies [in the article],” he told the committee, but maintained: “We are not engaged in any activity around Driver Inc.”

Later, he added Canada Post determined none of the companies identified in the report are currently contractors in its network.

However, MPs remained unconvinced, with one calling his response “incoherent” and arguing that awarding contracts to companies linked to misclassification still amounts to participation in the model, even if those loads are subcontracted to Driver Inc. carriers.

Committee members pointed to enforcement actions against carriers allegedly tied to Canada Post work, including fines from Employment and Social Development Canada and provincial agencies related to undeclared wages and labor violations.

Those examples were used to challenge Canada Post’s assertion that its procurement and auditing systems are effectively screening out non-compliant operators.

Ettinger stood by those processes, highlighting supplier codes of conduct, contractual obligations and nearly 1,500 audits conducted last year.

MPs asked for assurances Canada Post carriers are not subcontracting loads



Doug Ettinger, Canada Post (Screen Capture)

from the Crown corporation to Driver Inc. carriers.

Ettinger acknowledged it is “not uncommon” for contractors to rely on subcontractors, while insisting primary contractors are responsible for ensuring compliance. That position drew criticism from MPs, who argued this structure creates a gap, allowing Driver Inc. practices to exist deeper in the supply chain while Canada Post maintains it does not “directly” engage in such activities.

MPs suggested subcontracting creates a scenario where Driver Inc. practices could persist beyond Canada Post’s immediate visibility, particularly if enforcement relies heavily on audits and documentation rather than continuous, on-the-ground verification.

Canada Post, however, maintained its auditing regime – including internal reviews and third-party validation – is designed to catch exactly those risks.

### CTA calls for accountability

Following the hearing, the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) said in a release that Canada Post’s assurances do not align with industry experience.

“While we welcome the commitment

to integrity we heard today from Canada Post, the real test will be what happens next,” said CTA president Stephen Laskowski.

CTA is calling on the federal government to ensure Canada Post: eliminates driver misclassification; enforces zero tolerance for forced labor; and prioritizes compliant carriers in procurement.

“Canada Post is one of the largest purchasers of transportation services in this country. With that scale comes massive responsibility,” said Laskowski. “The CEO of Canada Post said they are taking the lead in ensuring every contractor they hire complies with tax laws, safety regulations, and basic human rights. However, to date, these assurances do not match Canada Post’s reputation among our membership and other carriers. We have asked successive ministers responsible for procurement to address this matter, as well as the CEO of Canada Post himself. So far, there has been essentially no acknowledgement about the industry’s concerns.”

The alliance called on Joël Lightbound, minister of government transformation, public works and procurement, to ensure the Crown corporation follows through on its promises. It also asked the minister to convene a meeting with industry stakeholders and Canada Post to ensure follow-through.

“In the meantime, the Carney government seems to have taken the issue of Driver Inc. far more seriously than previous governments, and we hope this very positive trend continues and motivates Canada Post to engage with industry on these critical issues,” Laskowski said. 



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## Titanium taken private

Shareholders of Titanium Transportation Group have approved a plan to take the company private in a deal led by insiders and its largest shareholder.

At a special meeting held March 10, shareholders voted overwhelmingly in favor of the transaction, with 98.82% of votes cast supporting the arrangement and 95.51% approval from minority shareholders.

The deal will see TTNM Management Acquisition Limited acquire all outstanding Titanium shares for \$2.22 in cash per share, excluding shares held by rollover investors. Those investors – including Titanium’s largest shareholder Trunkeast Investments Canada Limited, its affiliates and members of senior management – will exchange their existing shares for an equal number of shares in the acquiring entity.

The transaction follows a lengthy attempt by Titanium to find an outside

buyer. According to the company’s management information circular, Titanium hired a U.S.-based investment bank in June 2024 to explore a sale to private equity firms. Over the following months, the bankers contacted 97 potential buyers, held preliminary calls with 54, follow-up calls with 15, and arranged management meetings with five, but the process failed to generate sufficient acquisition interest.

After that effort stalled, CEO Ted Daniel and the company’s largest shareholder began exploring an insider-led proposal to take the company private.

## RCMP blitz uncovers egregious violations

A commercial vehicle enforcement blitz in Burnaby, B.C., sidelined more than half of the trucks inspected, with officers uncovering a range of serious safety violations – including a fuel cap replaced with a sandwich bag secured by a phone



charging cable. The Feb. 25 inspection, led by the Lower Mainland Commercial Vehicle Enforcement group on Marine Way, resulted in 67 inspections, with 35 vehicles placed out of service. Officers identified 172 violations and issued 117 tickets.

Inspectors reported multiple critical defects, including a truck with a defective steering system, a trailer with inoperative emergency brakes, and axles bent from repeated overloading.

The operation involved 10 enforcement agencies, including municipal police commercial vehicle units and bylaw officers from across the Lower Mainland. **TT**



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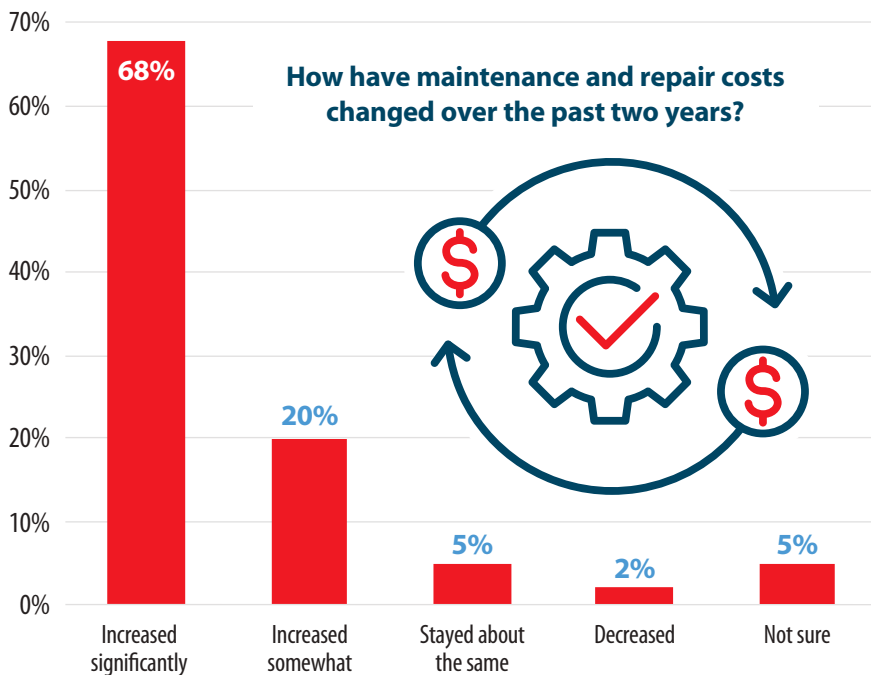
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# Pulse Reader Survey

## Share your thoughts on... **Maintenance**

Costs, parts availability, equipment complexity and other factors are shaping how the industry approaches maintenance and repairs. In this **Pulse Reader Survey**, we asked you to weigh in on strategies to keep your equipment on the road.



### Do you use telematics to support preventive or predictive maintenance?

Regularly	24%
Sometimes	32%
Never	34%
Not sure	10%

### Has the shortage of technicians in the past two years:

Worsened	77%
Improved	10%
What shortage?	13%

### How effective are telematics in managing maintenance or preventing breakdowns?

(Rate 1 to 5 from very to not at all)

1	25%
2	15%
3	35%
4	17%
5	8%

### How is maintenance primarily handled in your operations?

Entirely in-house	9%
Mostly in-house	26%
Mostly outsourced	25%
Mix of in-house and outsourced	40%

### What are the biggest factors affecting maintenance costs today? (Select all that apply)

Higher parts prices	85%
Labor costs	69%
Equipment complexity (electronics, emissions systems, EVs, etc)	60%
Parts delays	48%
Limited availability of qualified technicians	39%
Older equipment staying in service longer	35%

### What strategies do you use to manage maintenance costs? (Select all that apply)

Preventive maintenance programs	89%
Buying parts in bulk or through preferred supplier discounts	33%
Delaying non-critical repairs	25%
Using telematics to monitor vehicle health	24%
Buying parts online	23%
Short trade cycles	11%
Outsourcing more work	10%

(Illustrations: iStock)

Today's Trucking Pulse Surveys are conducted once per month, covering a variety of industry issues. Questions are distributed through email and social media channels. Responses rounded up to nearest percentage. Totals may not add up to 100%.

**322 Respondents**



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## 80-90 TON CO2 REDUCTION WITH ELECTRIC SHUNTS

**GLS Canada** is rolling out electric yard trucks at facilities in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg as part of its push to decarbonize operations. The parcel and freight carrier has deployed four HUSK-e terminal tractors from **Orange EV**. Each truck is expected to eliminate 80 to 90 tons of CO2 annually, while maintaining performance in yard operations. Orange EV said its electric yard trucks have logged more than 12 million key-on hours and more than 49.9 million km across North America, with uptime of about 97%. (Photo: Orange EV)



## 100 MORE EVS FOR PUROLATOR

**Purolator** has placed an order for 100 electric step vans from **Workhorse Group**, with deliveries scheduled throughout 2026. The order will double the number of Workhorse vehicles in Purolator's fleet and builds on a multi-year relationship between the companies. It marks Purolator's fourth order from the company and Motiv Power, which Workhorse acquired last year. (Photo: Purolator)



## \$9-BILLION CONSUMER BENEFIT FROM AUTONOMOUS TRUCKS

Autonomous trucking technology could deliver significant cost savings across the supply chain, putting an estimated \$9 billion annually back into U.S. consumers' pockets by 2035, according to a new study supported by **Aurora**. The analysis suggests widespread adoption of autonomous trucks could lower freight costs by improving efficiency, reducing labor expenses and optimizing asset utilization. Lower transportation costs would ultimately flow through to consumers in the form of reduced prices on goods, particularly in sectors heavily reliant on trucking, such as retail and food distribution. (Photo: Aurora)



## 20 KODIAK DRIVERLESS TRUCKS ON THE ROAD

**Kodiak AI** is scaling its driverless trucking ambitions, doubling its autonomous fleet while introducing a new capability it says could significantly boost freight productivity. The company reported it now has 20 fully driverless trucks in operation, all deployed with Atlas Energy Solutions, marking a 100% increase from the previous quarter. Kodiak says this represents the largest deployment of customer-owned driverless trucks in the industry. Kodiak also revealed it can now handle triple trailers with its autonomous trucking technology. (Photo: Kodiak AI)



## 50 YEARS AS PRIVATE FLEET VOICE

The **Private Motor Truck Council of Canada** is turning 50 this year, celebrating five decades of advocacy, collaboration and support for the country's private fleet sector. Founded on Dec. 23, 1976, by a group of six industry leaders, the organization was created to give private fleets a unified voice on regulatory issues, safety, and operational best practices. Over time, it has grown into a national network representing fleets, suppliers and industry partners across Canada.

# Trending on trucknews.com

## New Brunswick toll plan draws sharp trucking industry backlash

— By Leo Barros

The trucking industry is warning that New Brunswick’s plan to install a toll booth at the Nova Scotia border will raise supply chain costs, create new trade barriers, and ultimately drive up prices for consumers across Atlantic Canada.

“It’s not good for the industry, it’s not good for the consumer, and it’s not good for reducing trade barriers in our region,” Chris McKee, Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association’s (APTA) executive director, told *Today’s Trucking* after the province announced the toll plan.

In its budget tabled March 17, the provincial government said it plans to generate additional revenue by installing a toll booth near the Aulac district of Tantramar, with implementation targeted for 2028. The revenue is to be directed specifically toward road and bridge maintenance. Only vehicles not registered in New Brunswick would be required to pay the toll. “Investing in New Brunswickers means making difficult decisions,” Finance and

Treasury Board Minister René Legacy said in a news release. “We are committed to managing public finances responsibly so we can keep investing in the services people rely on today and for years to come.”

For the trucking sector, however, the proposal raises broader concerns about policy direction and its impact on regional trade.

McKee said the plan runs counter to efforts across Atlantic Canada to reduce transportation costs and improve the flow of goods within the region. Governments and agencies have taken steps in recent years to lower or eliminate tolls and fees tied to key transportation links.

The Ontario Trucking Association and Canadian Trucking Alliance have joined APTA in condemning the toll plan. “Targeting out-of-province carriers that must use the only land access point to Nova Scotia is not a constructive policy – and it’s likely unconstitutional,” CTA president and CEO Stephen Laskowski said in a news release. The CTA said the proposed toll may violate mobility rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by imposing recurring costs based solely on residency. **TT**



(Photo: iStock)



## YOUR GO-TO SOCIAL MEDIA SOURCES

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### HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF RECENT POSTS



March 29

A commercial vehicle enforcement blitz in Burnaby, B.C., sidelined more than half of the #trucks inspected, with officers uncovering a range of serious #safety violations – including a fuel cap replaced with a sandwich bag secured by a phone charging cable.



March 31

#NACFE has released the second report from its Run on Less – Messy Middle demonstration project, offering new insights into how different #truck #powertrains perform in real-world #freight operations.



April 2

An inquiry into a series of fatal collisions involving heavy #trucks has begun at the #Montreal courthouse, examining two crashes that claimed three lives and broader safety issues within Quebec’s #trucking industry.

## KEEP IN TOUCH



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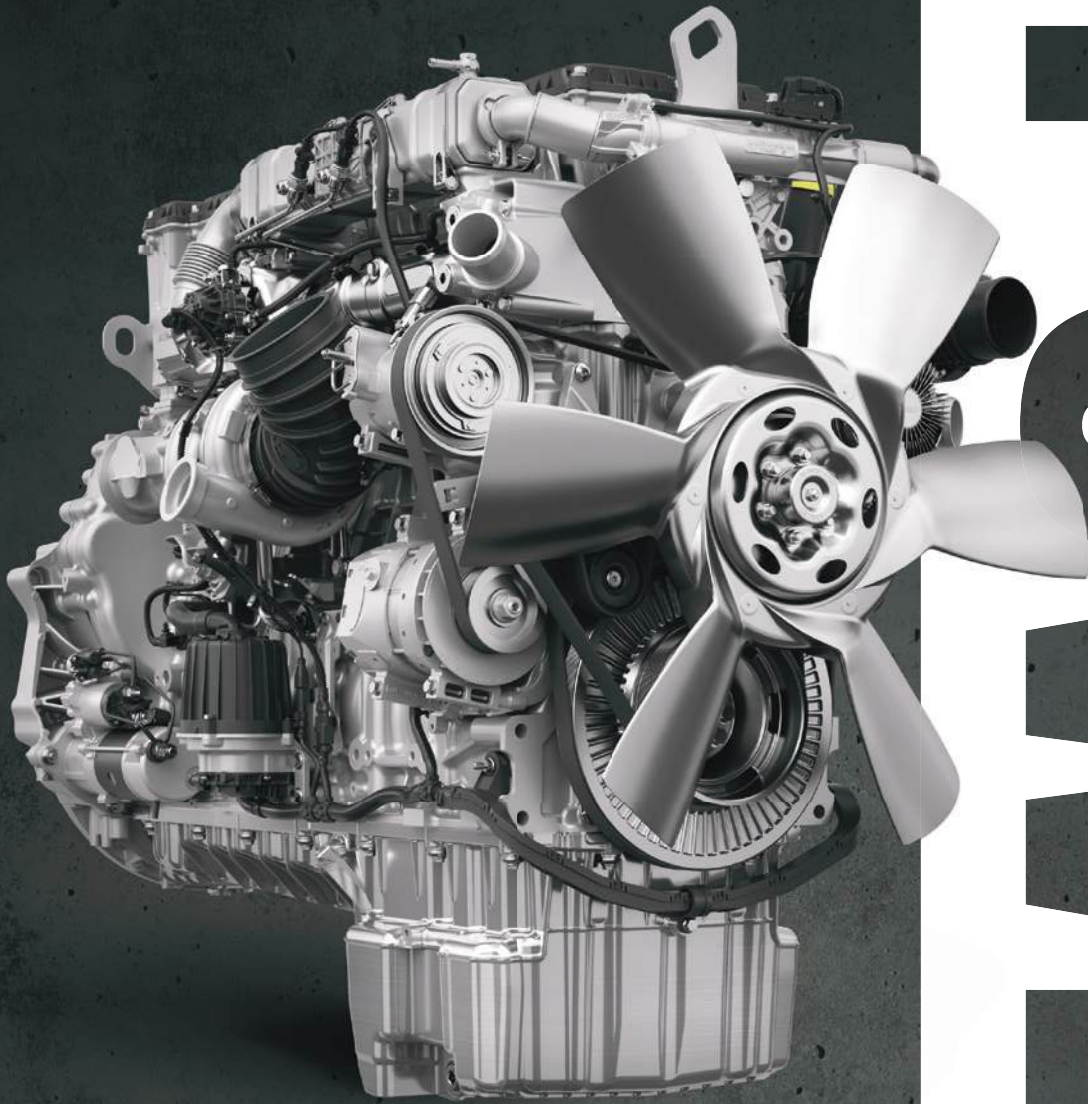
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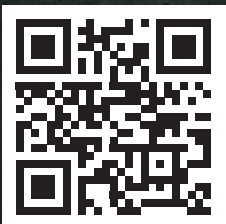


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# SIXTY YEARS WENT BY FAST



## 1960s

### Don Freeman, Box Cars and CP Partnership

1966 – Founding partners Donald Freeman and Sophie Weimert launch the company with six employees. CP needs to reposition boxcars back to Western Canada and Consolidated Fastfrate becomes their LTL partner.

## 1970s

### The Onset of Information Technology

Fastfrate takes its first step into information technology, introducing computer business machines. Manual typewritten bills and paper tracking shifts to a more structured, coded system. This transformed billing process gives the business clearer, more reliable revenue reporting.

## 1980s

### Acquisitions & Facility Growth

Fastfrate grows alongside partner CP Rail and expands operations by moving to the St. Clair location in Toronto. It means more track space, tripling operations and capacity. Over the road service was introduced with the acquisitions of McNiel Transport, McGrath Transport and Kingway Transport. LTL Box car expansion through the purchases of SSF and Howell Transport. Fastfrate opened in the Maritimes with the addition of Howell Transport.



## 1990s

### Ron Tepper & Intermodal Containers

1994 – Ron Tepper and partners purchase Fastfrate.

1998 – The business begins the transition from box cars to intermodal containers, reflecting global shipping trends. Containers are 20, 40 and 53 feet long.

1999 – Fastfrate launches Canada Drayage Inc. (CDI) since the shift to intermodal containers, they are now mounted on chassis and moved by truck.

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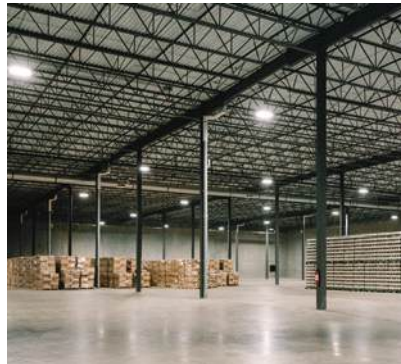
## 2000s

### Facilities for Intermodal, Drayage, Transloading and Port Business

The shift to intermodal is completed. Fastfrate expands into its own facilities across Canada. Many are built alongside CPKC rail lines. In Toronto and Montreal, operations are co-located with private gate access, allowing faster, more controlled freight moves. With CDI, rising port activity sees operations expand into drayage and transloading — starting in Vancouver, moving containers between port, rail, and customer facilities.

**2007** – Fastfrate Integrated Logistics launches, expanding offerings into full 3PL supply chain solutions.

**2007** – Fastfrate sells 75% of shares to private equity firm



## 2010s

### Warehousing and Cloud-Based Technology

**2010s** – Warehousing services are established in Calgary and Halifax. Operations shift to cloud-based technology — offering better visibility, faster access to data, and more connected operations across the network.

**2017** – Ron Tepper fully purchases all Fastfrate shares and owns 100%

## 2020s

### More Acquisitions and Expansions

A new Winnipeg facility is built at Centreport Canada, 60,000 square feet of warehousing space is added in Halifax, and a new container yard is built on 15 acres in Toronto.

### Several Acquisitions Expand the Network and Transportation Services

- Bestway Cartage Limited (2020) - strengthen cross-border trucking services between Ontario and the USA.
- ASL Distribution (2021) – increasing warehousing services.
- Precision Parcel & Package Deliveries (2021) – adding last mile courier services.
- United Transfer Ltd (2022) – adding Saskatchewan to the Western Canada network.
- Challenger Motor Freight (2023) – increasing full truckload and cross-border services.
- Omnitrans (2026) – adding international freight forwarding and an international customs brokerage.

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# Beat the Burn

*5 fuel-saving tips that will cost you nothing*

By Jim Park

It's never too late to jump aboard the fuel efficiency bandwagon. Even without throwing gobs of money at a solution right now, fleets can tame the impact of price hikes associated with the war in the Middle East.

At the time of this writing, March 27, the average Canadian retail diesel price is \$2.29 per liter.

That's a staggering \$8.66 per U.S. gallon. The U.S. national average price hit \$5.37 per gallon the same day, with California's average (the highest in the U.S.) topping \$6.87 per gallon. You don't want to know what that is in Canadian dollars.

For a bit of context, the average U.S. price is \$1.82 higher as of this writing than it was a year ago. Likewise, a liter of

diesel on the northern side of the border costs 80 cents more than it did at the beginning of April last year. That's gonna cut into your margins for sure.

If those terrifying numbers have you scouring the web for fuel-saving tips, here are five you can implement immediately, at almost zero cost.

## Eliminate idling

Reducing idling is a very effective way of reducing fuel consumption, but it's hard to convince drivers of the merits of freezing in the sleeper to save a few gallons of fuel. A big diesel burns about a gallon (four liters) of fuel per hour at idle. At current fuel prices, that's about \$60-\$70 per night.

There's a bit of money there to work



Eliminate idling. Shut off the engine and enjoy the milder spring nights. (Photo: Jim Park)

out some arrangement with drivers whereby they get a cut of the savings by not idling overnight. A couple of extra blankets will keep drivers plenty warm.

Start/stop idle reduction is a feature programmable in most ECMs. Drivers generally aren't fond of such systems because they can be disruptive while sleeping. Make sure you disable the low-air and low-oil pressure warning buzzers when activating the start/stop feature.

A lot of idling occurs during active duty. Review engine data to get a handle on total idle time; you'll likely be

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## Fuel Economy

surprised how often it occurs. Activating the idle shutdown time is one solution, so is imploring drivers to shut down the engine when it's not in use. You can also establish a contest and award drivers with the lowest monthly idle time. When asking drivers to give up something, they are more likely to respond positively if the fleet also has some skin in the game.

### Use cruise control

Many late-model trucks have cruise control systems with advanced technologies such as adaptive and predictive cruise features, neutral coasting, etc. Taking advantage of those features requires the driver to be driving in cruise mode.

Many fleets have had success encouraging drivers to use cruise control more

often by adding a couple of miles per hour while in cruise versus on the pedal. Your options here may be limited if the fleet is already running a speed-limited road speed setting 105 km/h (65 mph).

Fleets can also track time in cruise and issue reports to drivers who aren't complying. Or, build a fuel economy bonus program based on proper driving techniques rather than raw mpg scores.

### Top up those tires

The best analogy I have ever heard about running on underinflated tires came from Tim Miller, a former marketing and communications manager at Goodyear. He likened running on soft tires to walking barefoot on a beach.

"Walking in the hard wet sand down by the water's edge requires so much less effort than slogging through the deep, soft, dry sand further away from the water," he said. "Your foot glides across the hard wet sand, while it sinks into the soft dry sand. Pushing that sand aside with your feet requires effort."

It's the same with tires. Soft, underinflated tires flex and squirm as they roll through the contact patch. The energy required to flex all that rubber comes, of course, from the fuel tank.

Tire makers often say running 10 psi below your chosen inflation pressure (all tires) would yield a 1% reduction in fuel efficiency due to the increased rolling resistance of the softer tire.

They are usually referring to American trucks and their piddly 80,000-lb. weight limits. Factor in the weight-induced rolling resistance of a loaded Canadian truck, and the figure is likely to be closer to 2-3%.

That same 10 psi underinflation can also lead to a decrease in tread life of 5-10%. If you don't track tire wear and inflation pressure carefully, you might not notice the difference week to week, but it would surely appear on the balance sheet at year-end.

### Close that gap

The gap between a tractor and trailer is obviously unavoidable, but the gap is often larger than it needs to be.

Turning angles and jackknife backing have a bearing on how large the gap



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needs to be, as does weight distribution in some applications. The gap on most North American trucks is much larger than you typically see in Europe.

Testing done in 2015 by Transport Canada and the National Research Council Canada (NRC) at its wind tunnel near the Ottawa airport revealed that for every foot the gap between tractor and trailer is reduced, drag drops by 2.6%.

Corollary research suggests a 1% decrease in aerodynamic drag roughly equals a 0.5% decrease in fuel burn. Testing showed that a one-foot gap reduction can save up to 1,600 liters of fuel per year in a typical longhaul operation.

Trucks with sliders may be able to tighten up the gap a bit – if axle weights permit.

### Slow down

While there are many who believe it's probably not safe to drive at 90 km/h (55 mph) on some North American highways anymore, the fuel-saving potential from slowing down cannot be ignored.

According to American fuel economy guru, Joel Morrow, aerodynamic drag is responsible for about 65% of your fuel burn at 70-75 mph (110-120 km/h).

"Dropping from 70 mph to 60 mph often boosts mpg by 0.5-1 mpg," he claims. "On 100,000 miles/year, that's \$5,000-\$15,000 in diesel savings alone – at \$3-\$4/gallon."

With Canadian diesel at nearly \$8 a gallon, the calculus changes pretty fast.

A note of caution here: if dropping road speed a few mph means dropping the engine speed to a point where the transmissions constantly up- and down-shifts, you may be defeating the purpose.

Many of today's downsped powertrains are optimized to run at peak efficiency at a given road speed, i.e., 1,100 rpm at 65 mph (105 km/h). That engine operating range is narrow. Dropping out of that peak efficiency range (900 rpm at 55 mph or 90 km/h) may prompt downshifts to lower gears with a higher engine speed.

### Train those drivers

While automated powertrains now do most of the heavy lifting on fuel efficiency,

the driver still controls the throttle pedal. How aggressively they drive has a huge impact on fuel efficiency. Some estimate the drivers' impact on fuel economy can be as high as 30%.

Drivers should be encouraged to avoid hard acceleration and to coast as often as possible. Every time the brakes are applied, the energy needed to make up

that lost momentum comes from the fuel tank. This applies particularly to local and city drivers, whose performance in traffic determines how much your fuel bill will total.

Who knows how long the current fuel crisis will last? You can't affect diesel pricing, but you can change a few habits and burn less of the stuff. **TT**

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# ZERO IN

News and Trends in Sustainable Trucking



## Powertrain Prowess

*NACFE report compares powertrains, with diesel coming out on top*

The North American Council for Freight Efficiency (NACFE) has released the second report from its Run on Less – Messy Middle demonstration project, offering new insights into how different truck powertrains perform in real-world freight operations.

The report, *Terrain, Technology, and Telematics: The Messy Middle Operations Report*, analyzes operational data from 14 Class 8 tractors operated by 13 fleets using four energy pathways: diesel and renewable diesel, compressed natural gas/renewable natural gas (CNG/RNG), battery-electric, and hydrogen fuel cell.

Collectively, the trucks logged more than 117,482 km hauling revenue freight, with telematics devices collecting performance data throughout the Run.

The findings reinforce what NACFE describes as the “messy middle” of trucking’s energy transition – a period where multiple technologies will coexist rather than a single dominant solution emerging quickly.

“Transparency is the antidote to uncertainty,” said Dean Bushey, NACFE’s

director of programs and the report’s lead author.

“By putting real-world data behind these emerging fuel types, we’re giving the industry the roadmap it needs to navigate the most complex transition in trucking history.”

### Diesel still sets the benchmark

The report found diesel remains the operational benchmark for longhaul trucking, with participating fleets achieving fuel efficiency of up to 11.8 mpg while covering 804-1,287 km per day across varied terrain.

Renewable diesel offers an immediate emissions-reduction pathway using existing vehicles and fueling infrastructure.

Natural gas powertrains also demonstrated strong performance in certain applications. Trucks powered by the Cummins X15N natural gas engine handled demanding freight operations, including tanker and heavy-haul configurations, particularly where fueling infrastructure was readily available.

### Electric trucks expanding capabilities

Battery-electric trucks demonstrated growing capability beyond short-haul applications.

Tractors equipped with 565- to 705-kWh battery packs achieved daily operations of 563-804 km and recorded a validated single-day maximum of 1,408 km under favorable conditions.

However, NACFE found electric trucks remain sensitive to terrain and dependent on charging infrastructure, meaning corridor-specific planning is critical.

Hydrogen fuel-cell-electric trucks also showed promising operational characteristics, including quick refueling and weight advantages compared with battery-electric trucks. But limited fueling infrastructure and high fuel costs remain significant barriers to widespread adoption.

### Terrain and operations

One key finding was the outsized impact of terrain on truck efficiency. Diesel trucks experienced about a 30% efficiency swing between flat routes and mountainous terrain, while battery-electric trucks saw efficiency variations of 50-70% in comparable conditions.

The report also emphasized that real-world performance depends heavily on operational factors such as payload, driver behavior, maintenance practices and dispatch strategy.

“By looking at how these pioneering fleets are working, we can then project what the future might be for the entire industry,” said NACFE CEO Mike Roeth.

NACFE concluded that most fleets will likely operate multiple powertrain technologies in the coming years, matching each technology to applications where it performs best.

Infrastructure availability, daily mileage requirements and organizational readiness will all influence which technologies fleets deploy. **TT**

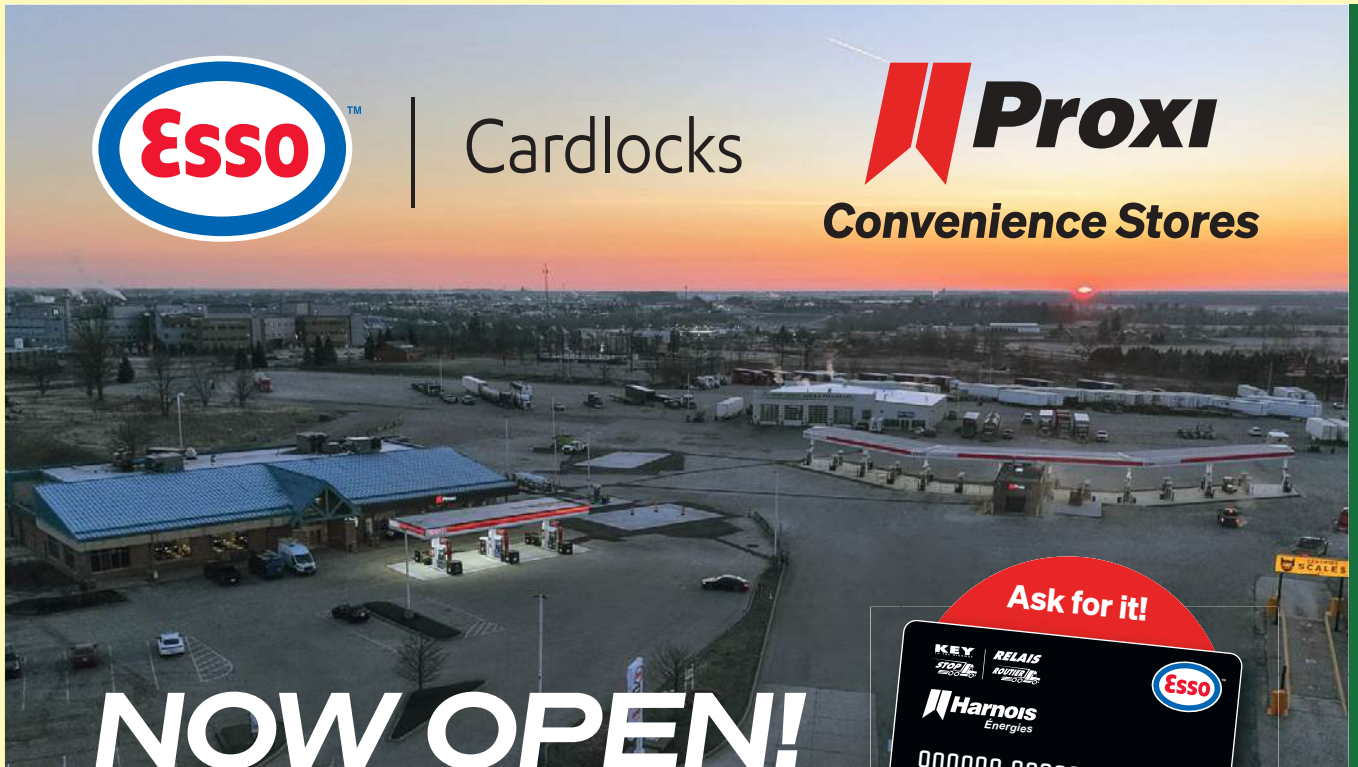
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2014 CASCADIA, DD15 AUTOMATIC TRANS, 12/40 AXLES, STK# Y23072



2003 PAYSTAR MIXER, CUMMINS ISM 9LL, 12.5 MCNEILUS MIXER, STK# Y24404



2023 INT LT DAY CAB, CUMMINS ISX, 13 SPD MANUAL, 14.6/46 AXLES, 4 WHL LOCKS, STK# Y26061



2011 MACK CAB & CHASSIS, 12/40 AXLES, STRETCHED EX CHRYSLER UNIT. STK# Y25193



2012 MACK T/A DAY CAB, MP8, 415 HP, M-DRIVE AUTO, 12/40 AXLES, RGN WET-KIT, HEADBOARD, 567,143 ORIG. KMS. STK# Y25110



2021 INT LT, CUMMINS ISX 13 SPD, 14.6/46 AXLES, 3.91 RATIO, SMALL SLEEPER, STK# Y26059



2016/2018 WESTERN STAR 5700, DD15, DT12, AUTO TRANS, SINGLE OWNER, STK# Y25107



2014 MACK, MP8 13 SPD, 12/40 AXLES, DOUBLE BUNK, STK# Y26021



CERTIFIED

2017 HINO 195, 17 FT REEFER, 210 HP AUTO, STK# Y25139



2017 4400 N9, 330 HP ALLSION AUTO, 14/40 AXLES, 28 FT REEFER, STK# Y25161



2014 M2, CUMMINS AUTO TRANS, 14.6/40 AXLES, GOOD DOUBLE FRAME! STK# Y25198



2015 MACK CHU613, MP8, 505HP, 18 SPEED MANUAL, 14.6 FRONT, 46 MACK REARS ON AIR RIDE, STK # Y25252



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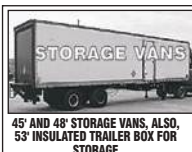
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By Leo Barros



# Rolling Risk

## Name and shame the wheel-less wonders

Ontario has been seeing its share of wheel-less wonders on its roads over the recent past. A rash of wheel separation incidents has put the road safety spotlight squarely on truck drivers and carriers.

There were two cases on the same morning up in Northern Ontario. In another instance, a smoking tire led police to the culprit.

A typical commercial truck or semi-trailer tire weighs between 45 and 54 kg (about 100 to 120 lb.)

When combined with a standard steel or aluminum wheel, the total weight for a wheel assembly usually ranges from 56 to 79 kg (125 to 175 lb.)

An approximately 80-kg wheel separating at highway speed carries roughly 31 kilojoules of energy. That's enough to smash through a windshield, collapse a roofline, or cause catastrophic front-end damage to a passenger vehicle.

On a secondary or tertiary road, a slower-moving truck's loose wheel could still end up killing a pedestrian or two who are minding their own business on a sidewalk.

In some instances, eagle-eyed police officers have pulled drivers over, while in others, vigilant members of the public have reported these dangerous vehicles to the authorities.

### Pay attention to the vehicle

Wheel separations are rare, but when they do occur, the damage can be catastrophic.

Truck driving trainers and experienced professional drivers keep telling students and rookies that they must learn to feel their vehicle. Pay attention to the signs traveling through your fingers as you hold the steering wheel. Listen to the sounds of your rig. Keep your head on a swivel and watch your trailer in your mirrors. The more in tune you are with your vehicle, the safer you are on the road.

And most truck drivers do this. As a professional, you learn how your big rig behaves and when things are not normal.

### Bad choices

What bewilders me is when a wheel separation occurs and a driver chooses to carry on down the road.

Did they not feel, hear, or see it become detached? Were they on the phone or have the radio playing too loudly?

What was going on in their mind? Is it that 17 wheels or less will still help them make it to the next truck stop or rest area, or worse, to their destination?

Or could it be a dispatcher badgering them to keep moving, telling them to get it fixed later, in order to make a tight delivery window? Under such pressure, a driver must learn to say no, but sometimes they don't.

### Driving a compromised rig

No one would want to experience a commercial vehicle wheel flying at them, not even the drivers themselves. Parking the rig by the side of the road and waiting for the police would be the way to go. But choosing to carry on with a major defect is plain stupid. They are now driving a compromised rig weighing thousands of pounds. Additional wheels can come off, or the tractor-trailer could swerve into the path of other vehicles.

Law enforcement agencies issue news releases after such incidents. They usually provide the age, hometown, company location, and charges laid against the truck driver and carrier.

### Put them out of business

Now, if a driver takes off after losing a wheel or two, I sure would like to know who they are. Those drivers should be on a no-drive list. Also, if the company is charged, make its name public too. Customers are not likely to do business with them. The trucking community is pretty close-knit and word gets around quickly.

Protecting privacy is important, but sometimes the public interest is greater. We should not be mollicoddling folks who don't care about the safety of other road users.

I propose naming and shaming them. Put them out of business. Good riddance! **TT**

---

**Leo Barros** is the Associate Editor of *trucknews.com* and *Today's Trucking*. The award-winning writer holds a CDL and has been a journalist for the past three decades. Reach him at [leo@newcom.ca](mailto:leo@newcom.ca).

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## Best Fleets



## Calm Before the Churn

*Drivers could head to the exits as disconnect with carriers widens*

By Krystyna Shchedrina

Drivers may not be leaving today, but declining trust, dissatisfaction with pay structures, and rising stress levels suggest many might be preparing to move when the market improves.

That was the warning from Jane Jazrawy, CEO of CarriersEdge, who pointed to shifting sentiment in Best Fleets to Drive For survey data during a conference in Charlotte, N.C.

While many fleets have avoided large-scale turnover through the current downturn, Jazrawy cautioned that the stability may be temporary. “As soon as the economy starts showing signs of any sort of life at all, drivers are going to be going,” Jazrawy warned. “It’s going to be a little crazy.”

The latest evaluation results build on last year’s findings of a growing disconnect between drivers and carriers, particularly around compensation, communication and workplace culture. At the time, Jazrawy said many drivers were feeling unheard or disconnected from company decisions. This year’s data suggests this might have evolved into declining trust and increased readiness to leave.

### Trust eroding

After receiving 108 nominations, the Best Fleets data is based on 56 corporate interviews and 4,493 driver surveys – a dataset Jazrawy says is broad enough to reveal meaningful changes in driver sentiment. Several key indicators declined between 2024 and 2026, pointing to a gradual but significant shift.

Trust in the company dropped by roughly 4%. “That is huge in Best Fleets, I don’t see this from year to year,” Jazrawy said.

Meanwhile, perceptions that carriers communicate honestly declined by about 2.5%, with 2.8% of drivers strongly disagreeing with the statement. At the same time, the likelihood that drivers would recommend their employer fell by more than 3%, an indicator it might be harder for carriers to recruit in the future. More drivers indicated they do not plan to stay with their employer for the rest of their careers, compared to two years ago.

“Trust is the thing that is really the tie that binds,” Jazrawy said. “The pay goes away, trust starts kind of going away too.”

### ‘Pay-adjacent’ issues

While declining pay and miles are a clear driver of dissatisfaction, Jazrawy emphasized that frustration is increasingly tied to how work is structured – what she described as “pay-adjacent” issues.

Satisfaction with pay has dropped sharply – with 4.5% more drivers saying they are not happy with how the current pay model works for them – while perceptions of fairness continue to erode. When asked if compensated fairly, 3.3% said they strongly disagree in 2026. In 2024 this figure was at 2.2%.

Routing seems to be another pain point for drivers, with about 4% of drivers in 2026 saying routing is not fair, compared to roughly 2.8% in 2024 – a noticeable shift in Best Fleets data, Jazrawy said.

The issue extends beyond dissatisfaction to a lack of transparency. Jazrawy broke it down, saying that only about 31% of drivers are satisfied with how routing works, while another 17% say they simply go where they are told and do not question the system. At the same time, roughly 27% of drivers say they have no understanding of how routing decisions are made at all.

A smaller but significant share (11%) explicitly cited favoritism, Jazrawy noted, adding that drivers had to use that specific term for it to be included in her analysis.

That lack of clarity is feeding mistrust, because routing directly affects miles and

pay. When drivers do not understand how decisions are made, they are more likely to assume bias or inconsistency.

### Unpaid work

Additional responsibilities are also becoming a source of friction. Drivers say satisfaction with whether additional work is fairly compensated declined by

about 4.1%, reflecting growing concern over unpaid or underpaid tasks such as training, waiting time, and administrative tasks.

Mentorship, for example, is a role that has become more formalized over the past five to six years, and fleets have different visions of what it involves. Some have structured programs, while



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## Best Fleets

others define it as something as informal as picking up a phone call from another driver.

About 10% of surveyed fleets do not pay mentors at all, while another 13% offer only minimal compensation or non-monetary rewards. Roughly 27% pay less than \$100 per day, while 31% pay \$100 or more. Meanwhile, 19% of fleets pay around \$150 per day – or cover costs associated with the role, like a cell phone allowance so drivers are not using their personal devices and data to support other drivers.

“If you think driver mentors are providing a valuable service and you’re not paying them for it, your drivers will eventually start to resent it because they don’t want to work for free,” Jazrawy said. “This industry has a habit of getting drivers to do work for free and this is one of the places where I think [carriers] are starting to take advantage.”

Jazrawy also cited driver feedback indi-

cating that some training is now being completed informally and without compensation.

### Are you listening to your drivers?

Drivers also keep flagging that they are not being consulted about decisions that directly affect their work. In 2024, about 4.63% of drivers strongly disagreed that they were consulted about technology decisions, alongside 5.3% who somewhat disagreed. By 2026, the share of drivers who strongly disagreed rose to 6.03%, while those somewhat disagreeing stood at 4.27%.

Another concern that emerged in questionnaires was performance management, reinforced by how fleets structure feedback and performance conversations. About 25% of fleets only speak with drivers on an intervention basis – typically when something goes wrong. Another 38% rely primarily on annual reviews or

scorecards, while a similar share conducts more frequent reviews combined with broader feedback.

Communication channels are also not always aligned with driver preferences, Jazrawy said. Fleets rely heavily on social media but nearly half of the surveyed drivers say they do not follow company communications.

The share of those who say they actively follow company communications declined from 63% in 2024 to 54% in 2026, meaning those who do not follow rose from 37% two years ago to 46%.

Jazrawy noted that drivers are increasingly disengaging from traditional, broadcast-style communication, which is often seen as repetitive or focused on office priorities. Alternative formats of communication like recorded safety meetings, driver-focused podcasts and on-demand content are better received, as they allow drivers to engage on their own schedule. **TT**

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# Future Fluids

*PC-12 oils promise gains in wear protection, oxidation control*

By James Menzies



Buyers should look for these donuts when seeking oils for their EPA27 engines. (Images: API)



A new heavy-duty engine oil specification designed to support next-generation diesel engines is nearing completion and expected to be licensed beginning Jan. 1, 2027, according to experts speaking during a Shell press conference at the Technology & Maintenance Council Annual Meeting & Transportation Technology Exhibition. The upcoming PC-12 oil category will introduce improved performance standards for heavy-duty engine oils, including better oxidation control, enhanced wear protection, and additional material compatibility requirements, panelists said.

The panel included: Karin Haumann, OEM technical services manager with Shell Lubricants; Bill O’Ryan, director of the engine oil licensing and certification system at the American Petroleum Institute (API); and Heather DeBaun, vehicle fluids technical specialist with Traton R&D.

O’Ryan explained that the development of a new engine oil category begins when engine manufacturers determine existing standards no longer meet evolving technical requirements. Such was the case with the introduction of lower-NOx-producing EPA27 engines, required to meet EPA emissions standards beginning in 2027.

The request is typically submitted through the Engine Manufacturers Association, triggering a multi-stage evaluation process coordinated through API and industry committees. If the need for a new category is confirmed, a New Category Development Team is formed to establish performance targets and testing protocols.

“This is a consensus-based process involving OEMs, oil marketers, additive companies and testing labs,” O’Ryan said.

Haumann, who leads the development team for PC-12, said the group has spent several years balancing competing per-

formance requirements while ensuring test procedures and engine hardware will remain available for decades.

“We have to determine what the performance limits and targets should be and make sure they meet the needs expressed by the engine manufacturers,” she explained.

The new category is expected to remain viable through about 2040, requiring the development of new test methods to replace engines and components that may become obsolete.

Despite potential regulatory shifts, panelists emphasized that the devel-

opment of PC-12 is driven primarily by engineering requirements rather than government mandates.

“The development of PC-12 is a technical exercise,” Haumann said. “We’re improving the oil standard so engine manufacturers and customers get better performance.”

DeBaun said the category will remain relevant regardless of regulatory changes because it addresses fundamental needs of modern engines. EPA27 is still under review, but the 0.035 g/hp/hr NOx limits are not expected to be modified between now and January. [TT](#)

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# Shop Squeeze

*Technician shortage proves stubborn as training gaps persist*

By Neil Abt

The word *shortage* has become controversial in trucking, at least when discussing drivers. When it comes to technicians, there is more agreement that a shortage actually exists.

“What we’re looking at is an ongoing, persistent, long-running struggle to get enough qualified techs capable of filling positions,” said Dan Murray, senior vice-president with the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI).

Unlike drivers, who are more often hopping from fleet to fleet, research indicates 10,000 technicians are retiring, and 15,000 are leaving the trucking sector every year.

A recent ATRI study found that almost two-thirds (65.5%) of all trucking maintenance shops are understaffed, with an overall vacancy rate of 19.3%. Speaking as part of a panel discussion at the 2026 Technology & Maintenance Council’s annual meeting, Murray noted that technician turnover is about 16.5%, a far lower churn rate than that of truckload drivers.

“That tells us it’s not just a matter of a tech spending two months at a shop and it’s awful,” Murray said. “It’s not just that the conditions are bad.”

Between 2014 and 2024, the number of truck drivers increased 30%, but the

number of technicians rose only 23%. The reasons for this difference go beyond financial compensation, with technician salaries rising by almost 40% over this 10-year span to more than \$57,000 per year. While higher pay was the top reason technicians entered the trucking industry, it received the second-lowest satisfaction rating once on the job, based on the ATRI survey. Favorable work schedules and a greater variety of interesting work were frequently cited as important factors for remaining in the industry.

Conversely, dissatisfaction with pay and a lack of interesting work were indicators that technicians would look for new employment opportunities. ATRI’s survey found that 44% of technicians were considering leaving trucking for other professions, such as agriculture and automotive.

“A big takeaway is trucking has been increasing pay pretty significantly,” Murray said. “But so is everyone else. It’s been such a competitive job market,



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While many factors may play a role in a technician choosing to stay with a fleet, “pay is the baseline for the respect of technicians,” said Ian Matje, a senior diesel instructor and lead technician based in Colorado.

“Even if you have a great culture, if you don’t have the pay, eventually they are going to leave,” Matje said.

With such a competitive market, Yvonne Valdez and Wayne Skinner of Summit School Services recommended making the first offer to a prospect the best offer. Valdez said she has seen some candidates accept a small decrease in starting pay because of a strong sense of a better long-term fit.

### Lack of formal training

ATRI’s survey found that 61.8% enter the industry without formal training, requiring an average of 357 training hours and \$8,200 in trainee wages to properly



Research indicates 10,000 technicians are retiring, and 15,000 are leaving the trucking sector every year. (Photo: iStock)

prep them. In addition, more than 30% of training program graduates were not fully qualified in many core skills.

The most common barrier reported by technicians at the outset of their careers was the cost of acquiring their own tools (29%). Many technicians must supply their own tools, which can cost as much as \$10,000, according to the ATRI report.

Speakers at TMC said they believed there are several ways to help address this

problem. For example, Benjamin Phillips, director of maintenance and IT with Yarbrough Transfer, said one way to get technicians in the door was to offer a rent-to-own tool program. Fleets can deduct a small amount per paycheck until the tools are paid off. Should the technician depart the company before the tools are paid, the tools remain with the company.

Amanda Schuier, a past TMC chairman and strategic maintenance director with Jetco Delivery said the fleet has developed a “bare bones list” of tools that technicians need to initially get into the door as a way to lower the burden for prospects.

She also cited a growing number of programs with manufacturers and vendors that provide entry-level technicians with discounted tools to help them get started. Other barriers for technicians were a lack of prior technical knowledge, insufficient starting pay, and a lack of shop mentoring. Murray spoke of some new technicians expressing concerns that

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## Technician Shortage

it felt like “veterans versus the new guys,” rather than one team.

“Opportunities for mentorship and supplemental training can be the difference between a strong start and a derailed start to a tech’s career, regardless of whether they already possess formal training,” ATRI’s report said.

### Voluntary certification programs

During another panel discussion at TMC, the focus was on how assisting technicians with voluntary certification programs can aid retention.

Robert Braswell, TMC’s executive director, said he views the certification programs offered by TMC and other industry groups as a “roadmap of growth” for young technicians, which can instill in them greater confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

Bob Cornwell, a senior director at Automotive Service Excellence (ASE),

said these programs are becoming more necessary as the complexity of vehicle maintenance projects grows.

He shared statistics showing that ASE certifications have contributed to 40% higher shop productivity and 60% fewer comebacks, indicating more work is being properly completed the first time.

Additionally, turnover among ASE-certified technicians was 30% lower, and they have a significantly higher earnings potential.

For technicians seeking even greater career opportunities, there is the North American Transportation Management Institute (NATMI).

Simply being a quality technician does not automatically translate into being a good supervisor, said NATMI Director Jeff Arnold. That’s why NATMI offers programs designed to help technicians develop supervisory and people-management skills.


Publix Supermarkets is one company

benefiting from its technicians’ obtaining these certifications. Joe Young, Publix’s fleet maintenance operations manager, said these programs have allowed the company to “stretch our assets longer.”

“We believe training has allowed us to do that while still reducing downtime,” Young said.

About 27% of Publix’s technicians are ASE-certified, with 10% holding the Master Technician designation. The return on investment from these certification programs also comes from fewer roadside breakdowns and less cost for labor and replacement parts for Publix’s 900 trucks and 4,000 trailers.

There are important legal ramifications as well, Young said.

Plaintiff attorneys are likely to seek maintenance records in litigation following a truck-involved accident. Having the highest-quality, certified technicians can make a big difference in these cases, he said. 



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\*The International® LT® with S13® Integrated Powertrain was tested head-to-head using TMC Type IV testing methodology against competitive on-highway aero models with comparable specifications: *Freightliner Cascadia AeroX DD15*, *Kenworth T680 MX13*, *Volvo VNL760 D13*. Testing proved the International LT with S13 Integrated Powertrain to be at least 5% more fuel efficient than these models. The International LT with the S13 Integrated Powertrain uses up to 3.5% more DEF per gallon of fuel compared to comparable on-highway aerodynamic models. © 2026 International Motors, LLC (d/b/a International Motors USA LLC in Illinois and Ohio). All rights are trademarks of their respective owners.



(Photo: iStock)

# Canada's TOP 100

Trimac climbs into top 5;  
12 new fleets added to 2026 list

By Krystyna Shchedrina

*Today's Trucking's* 2026 list of Canada's Top 100 largest carriers shows stability in rankings but not in capacity, as several carriers reported smaller equipment counts while others grew through acquisitions and expansion.

TFI International, Mullen Group, Day & Ross, and Bison Transport continue to headline the list. Trimac climbed four positions to rank fifth this year, driven by an increase in equipment counts – likely linked to its acquisitions in 2025 – expanding its fleet from 6,294 units last year to 8,904 in 2026.

Canada Cartage moved up to sixth place after adding nearly 1,000 pieces of equipment, while Manitoulin Transport climbed four spots to rank 10th, growing its fleet by 1,874 assets.

One of the additions near the top of the list is Winnipeg-based TransX, which ranked #13 with 3,945 units. While technically a new entrant, TransX is part of CN Rail, which chose to withdraw from the rankings in 2025.

Two more new entrants landed in the top 25.

Ontario-based Harman Group ranked 20th, while Manitoba's Reimer Group – which consolidates fleets including Apex Motor Express, Western Canada Express, CCT Canada, Overland West Freight Lines, Rogue Transportation, and Comox Pacific Express – ranked 21st.

## New entrants

In total, 12 new fleets appeared in the 2026 ranking. These include Stryder Motorfreight (44), Joseph Transportation Group (54), Shoreland Transport (57), Trans Expert (60), car hauler L. Hansen's Forwarding (62), Walgre Transport (68), Primeline Logistics (81), J. E. Culp Transport (85), and RR Plett Trucking (98). Walgre Transport's inclusion follows its emergence from restructuring under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act on Jan. 30.

## Ontario, Quebec fleets dominate

Ontario companies continue to dominate the Top 100, with 45 fleets headquartered in the province, yet no Ontario-based carrier appears in the Top 5. Quebec follows with 26 carriers. Western Canada accounts for 23 fleets, while six Top 100 fleets are based in Atlantic Canada, including four in New Brunswick and two in Nova Scotia.

Among Ontario-based carriers, Canada Cartage, Purolator, Consolidated Fastfrate, Manitoulin Transport, and GFL Environmental are the highest-ranked fleets.

In Quebec, the five largest fleets – beyond the national Top 5 – are CAT, Groupe Robert, GLS Canada, Simard Transport, and Groupe Guilbault.

Atlantic Canada has a smaller presence on the list, led by Ayr Motor Express, Shoreland Transport, and Eassons Transport.

In Western Canada, Manitoba's leading fleets include TransX, Reimer Group, and Arnold Bros. Transport. Alberta is led by KAG Canada, The Freight North Group, and Sokil Transportation Group, while British Columbia's top carriers include Arrow Transportation Systems, Chambers Transportation Group, and Stryder Motorfreight.

## Industry shifts reflected in the rankings

Similar to previous years, the list reflects broader industry dynamics, including economic conditions, mergers and acquisitions, and even bankruptcies. Alberta's Light Speed Logistics was liquidated earlier this year after ranking 37th the previous year with 330 tractors and 850 trailers. And several carriers expanded and diversified through acquisitions and strategic investments.

Kriska Transportation Group, ranked 19th this year, acquired Cambridge, Ont.-based Sharp Transportation Systems in April 2026, adding temperature-controlled expertise and strengthening its cross-border capabilities. Sharp specializes in hauling temperature-sensitive freight, including medical supplies and furniture, offering cross-border and domestic truckload and partial-load services with a focus on the U.S. Midwest and Northeast.

Montreal-based Andy Transport (52) expanded its Ontario footprint in March 2026 through the acquisition of JDW International and JMS Warehousing, adding more than 60 trucks and 200,000 sq.-ft. of warehouse space.

Meanwhile, Manitoulin Group of Companies acquired Martin Roy Transport in July 2025, strengthening its operations across Northern Quebec and Ontario.

KAG Canada (12) also expanded its presence in Atlantic Canada through the acquisition of Fisher Transport, a major milk hauler based in Nova Scotia that hauls more than 200 million liters of raw milk annually with a fleet of 60 tractors and 70 specialized trailers. **TT**

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	2026 Rank	2025 Rank	Head Office	Province	Customer Line	Website
<b>TFI International</b>	1	1	St. Laurent	QC	514-331-4000	www.tfiintl.com
<b>Mullen Group</b>	2	2	Okotoks	AB	866-995-7711	www.mullen-group.com
<b>Day &amp; Ross</b>	3	3	Hartland	NB	877-726-3329	www.dayross.com
<b>Bison Transport</b>	4	4	Winnipeg	MB	800-363-0003	www.bisontransport.com
<b>Trimac</b>	5	9	Calgary	AB	403-298-5100	www.trimac.com
<b>Canada Cartage</b>	6	8	Mississauga	ON	800-268-2228	www.canadacartage.com
<b>Purolator</b>	7	7	Mississauga	ON	888-744-7123	www.purolator.com
<b>Consolidated FastFrate</b>	8	5	Woodbridge	ON	800-268-1564	www.fastfrate.com
<b>CAT</b>	9	6	Coteau-du-Lac	QC	800-363-5313	www.cat.ca
<b>Manitoulin Transport</b>	10	14	Gore Bay	ON	800-265-1485	www.manitoulintransport.com
<b>GFL Environmental</b>	11	10	Vaughan	ON	866-417-2797	www.gflenv.com
<b>KAG Canada</b>	12	11	Edmonton	AB	780-472-6633	www.kagcanada.ca
<b>TransX</b>	13	NR	Winnipeg	MB	204- 632-6694	www.transx.com
<b>M-O Freightworks*</b>	14	12	Brampton	ON	905-792-6100	www.m-o.com
<b>UPS Canada</b>	15	13	Mississauga	ON	800-742-5877	www.ups.com/ca
<b>Charger Logistics</b>	16	17	Brampton	ON	905-793-3525	www.chargerlogistics.com
<b>Groupe Robert</b>	17	15	Boucherville	QC	800-361-8281	www.robert.ca
<b>Titanium Transportation Group</b>	18	16	Bolton	ON	905-266-3010	www.ttgi.com
<b>Kriska Transportation Group</b>	19	18	Prescott	ON	800-461-8000	www.kriskagroup.com
<b>The Harman Group</b>	20	NR	Caledon	ON	905-840-4300	www.harmandgroup.ca
<b>Reimer Group</b>	21	NR	Winnipeg	MB	905-789-5000	www.reimer-group.com
<b>GLS Canada</b>	22	19	Dorval	QC	888-463-4266	www.gls-canada.com
<b>Highlight Motor Group</b>	23	20	Concord	ON	905-761-1400	www.highlightmotor.com
<b>XTL Transport</b>	24	21	Etobicoke	ON	800-665-9318	www.xtl.com
<b>Simard Transport</b>	25	30	Lachine	QC	514-636-9411	www.simard.ca
<b>Arrow Transportation Systems</b>	26	25	Kamloops	BC	250-374-3831	www.arrow.ca
<b>Groupe Guilbault</b>	27	31	Québec	QC	888-880-3801	www.groupeguilbault.com
<b>The Freight North Group</b>	28	27	Edmonton	AB	780-467-8880	www.freightnorth.com
<b>Rosedale Group</b>	29	28	Mississauga	ON	877-588-0057	www.rosedalegroup.com
<b>Penske Logistics</b>	30	26	Kitchener	ON	844-847-9579	www.PenskeLogistics.com
<b>Groupe Nadeau</b>	31	33	Sainte-Mélanie	QC	800-363-2757	www.groupenadeau.com
<b>Caravan Group of Companies</b>	32	24	Oakville	ON	905-338-5885	www.caravangroup.com
<b>Groupe Morneau</b>	33	22	Saint-Arsène	QC	844-884-2727	www.groupemorneau.com
<b>SSP Group of Companies</b>	34	35	Milton	ON	519-968-3632	www.sspgroup.com
<b>The Erb Group</b>	35	29	New Hamburg	ON	800-665-2653	www.erbgroup.com
<b>Pride Group Logistics</b>	36	32	Mississauga	ON	905-564-7458	www.shipwithpride.com
<b>Arnold Bros. Transport</b>	37	36	Winnipeg	MB	800-665-8085	www.arnoldbros.com
<b>Trans 99</b>	38	39	Guelph	ON	519-265-5161	www.trans99.net
<b>Transport Bourassa</b>	39	34	Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu	QC	800-363-9254	www.bourassa.ca
<b>Prince Logistics</b>	40	42	Lachine	QC	514-367-0000	www.princelogisticservices.com
<b>Thomson Group*</b>	41	38	Etobicoke	ON	800-771-7487	www.thomsongroup.com
<b>AYR Motor Express</b>	42	40	Woodstock	NB	800-668-0099	www.ayrmotor.com
<b>Chambers Transportation Group</b>	43	43	Vernon	BC	800-575-2355	www.chambersgroup.co
<b>Stryder Motorfreight</b>	44	NR	Richmond	BC	604-270-9118	www.go-stryder.com
<b>HAP Transportation Group</b>	45	58	Delta	BC	604-952-0952	www.hapgroup.com
<b>Greenway Carriers*</b>	46	45	Brampton	ON	905-461-3748	www.greenwaycarriers.net
<b>Falcon Express Transportation Group</b>	47	46	Caledon	ON	905-951-4500	www.falconxpress.ca
<b>Harbour Link Container Services</b>	48	47	Delta	BC	604-940-5522	www.harbour-link.com
<b>Musket Transport</b>	49	41	Mississauga	ON	905-823-7800	www.musket.ca
<b>Express Mondor</b>	50	49	Lavaltrie	QC	450-586-6662	www.expressmondor.net

↳ (NR) = not ranked in 2025

\* Numbers not updated since 2025

	<b>Straight Trucks</b>	<b>Tractors</b>	<b>Trailers</b>	<b>Owner-operators</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Terminals/Yards</b>	<b>Equipment Total</b>	<b>TL</b>	<b>LTL</b>	<b>Dedicated</b>	<b>Expedited</b>	<b>Intermodal</b>	<b>Temp. Control</b>	<b>Bulk</b>	<b>Tanker</b>	<b>Warehousing</b>
0	19,602	42,060	7,042	26,092	623	61,662	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1,002	4,419	9,349	1,473	6,686	351	14,770	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
652	4,821	9,053	2,924	5,078	172	14,526	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	1,945	10,227	774	2,662	14	12,172	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
4	2,600	5,200	1,000	4,000	150	7,804	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
479	2,767	4,493	1,271	4,540	59	7,739	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
4,669	553	2,157	NA	14,300	181	7,379	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
185	2,500	4,500	1,200	2,500	45	7,185	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	1,481	5,249	400	1,900	28	6,730	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
290	1,342	3,773	258	N/A	85	5,405	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
3,183	307	903	156	9,251	148	4,393	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
10	1,300	2,700	185	1,600	44	4,010	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
5	840	3,100	670	800	9	3,945	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
56	562	3,255	443	N/A	21	3,873	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
3,233	251	196	0	13,500	67	3,680	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	800	2,400	N/A	N/A	7	3,200	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
15	620	2,400	275	2,300	35	3,035	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
4	700	2,300	300	540	6	3,004	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
2	772	2,115	213	830	10	2,889	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	885	2,000	50	1,500	6	2,885	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
80	686	2,037	561	1,094	64	2,803	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
200	700	1,512	520	2,270	65	2,412	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
5	637	1,439	20	1,207	3	2,081	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1	466	1,336	40	959	17	1,803	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
117	487	1,112	324	1,075	11	1,716	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	512	1,195	143	1,248	34	1,707	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
41	361	1,265	8	1,035	13	1,667	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	257	1,355	85	335	6	1,612	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
45	391	1,156	84	546	16	1,592	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	204	1,371	0	786	3	1,575	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
20	230	1,300	NA	495	4	1,550	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
3	345	1,185	207	420	10	1,533	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
54	356	1,101	39	1,195	24	1,511	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
7	395	1,055	174	287	5	1,457	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
121	409	879	64	1,263	10	1,409	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
8	249	1,094	112	205	4	1,351	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	350	950	190	350	4	1,300	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
2	365	920	65	470	7	1,287	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
9	275	1,000	3	630	1	1,284	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	441	734	0	520	4	1,175	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1	175	959	3	400	18	1,135	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	248	865	90	530	3	1,113	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1	335	771	197	345	9	1,107	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	350	750	100	700	4	1,100	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	225	745	82	260	12	970	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
3	312	641	29	400	5	956	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	300	650	20	500	2	950	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	138	808	99	285	3	946	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
5	315	600	42	400	6	920	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
40	237	586	45	244	5	863	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

(N/A) = not available

• = Yes    Blank = No

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	2026 Rank	2025 Rank	Head Office	Province	Customer Line	Website
Aheer Group	51	50	Delta	BC	604-940-9511	www.aheer.com
Andy Transport	52	44	Montreal	QC	514-667-8500	www.andytransport.com
TEAMS Transport	53	53	Winnipeg	MB	800-748-3267	www.teamstransport.com
Joseph Transportation Group	54	NR	Stoney Creek	ON	905-643-0637	www.josephgroup.ca
Sokil Transportation Group*	55	55	Edmonton	AB	800-661-9923	www.sokil.com
Tandet Transport Group	56	54	Oakville	ON	888-826-3388	www.tandet.com
Shoreland Transport	57	NR	St. George	NB	506-755-1424	www.shorelandtransport.com
Eassons Transport	58	56	Kentville	NS	902-679-1153	www.eassons.com
Trans-West	59	60	Lachine, QC	QC	514-345-1090	www.groupetranswest.com
Trans Expert	60	NR	Milton	ON	905-864-6443	www.transexpert.ca
Haulage North America Inc.	61	48	Orangeville	ON	289-999-9000	www.haulagenorthamerica.com
L. Hansen's Forwarding	62	NR	Scarborough	ON	416-293-9135	www.lhf.com
VTL Express	63	63	Levis	QC	418-835-3222	www.vtlexpress.com
Transport Bourret	64	62	Drummondville	QC	800-567-1470	www.bourret.ca
JD Smith	65	65	Vaughan	ON	905-669-8980	www.jdsmith.com
Groupe Bellemare	66	66	Trois-Rivieres	QC	800-567-8654	www.groupebellemare.com
Transport Gilmyr	67	67	Montmagny	QC	418-248-3030	www.gilmyr.com
Walgre Transport	68	NR	Mississauga	ON	905-848-1077	www.walgretransport.com
Fluke Transportation *	69	70	Hamilton	ON	800-263-4843	www.fluke.ca
Wellington Group of Companies	70	57	Guelph	ON	877-549-6344	www.wellingtongoc.com
Landtran Systems	70	72	Edmonton	AB	780-468-4300	www.landtran.com
Travelers Transportation Services	72	69	Brampton	ON	800-265-8789	www.travelers.ca
VA Inc.	73	77	Boucherville	QC	450-641-0082	www.vatransport.com
4 Tracks	74	81	Winnipeg	MB	204-633-5444	www.4tracks.ca
Transport Grayson	75	76	Danville	QC	855-901-1168	www.transportgrayson.com
J.B. Transport	76	82	Brampton	ON	905-792-5100	www.jbtransport.ca
Petrogas Logistics Partnership	77	89	Calgary	AB	403-638-4500	www.enerchem.com/transportation/
Trappers Transport	78	78	Sunnyside	MB	204-697-7647	www.trapperstransport.com
Transport Jocelyn Bourdeau	79	80	St-Chrysosotme	QC	450-826-1129	www.tjbi.ca
Groupe TYT	80	73	Drummondville	QC	855-898-4768	www.groupetyt.ca
Primeline Logistics	81	NR	Puslinch	ON	519-835-1820	www.primelinelogistics.com
TVM Logistics	82	71	Cottam	ON	877-272-6266	www.tvmltd.ca
Verspeeten Cartage	83	74	Ingersoll	ON	519-425-7881	www.verspeeten.com
Jardine Transport Group	84	75	Fredericton	NB	800-561-0206	www.jardinetransport.ca
J. E. Culp Transport	85	NR	Lincoln	ON	905-563-5055	www.jeculptransport.com
Groupe Transport Bernieres	86	85	Quebec	QC	418-684-2421	www.bernieres.ca
Le Groupe Aubin	86	85	Sainte-Catherine	QC	450-638-0654	www.expressdumidi.com
J&R Hall Transport Inc.	86	91	Ayr	ON	519-632-7429	www.jrhall.ca
King Freight Lines*	89	87	Pictou	NS	902-485-8077	www.kingfreight.com
Système Danfreight Inc.*	90	88	Joilette	QC	800-730-6190	www.danfright.com
Tristar Transport	91	98	Abbotsford	BC	604-504-5858	www.tristartransport.ca
Total Logistics Group	92	79	Vaudreuil	QC	888-827-8521	www.totallogistics.com
Lineage Logistics	93	83	Milton	ON	800-678-7271	www.linealogistics.com
Loadstar 1963	94	93	Edmonton	AB	780-466-1188	www.loadstar.ca
W.S. Bell Cartage	95	90	Kitchener	ON	800-263-3597	www.bellcartage.com
Polaris Transportation Group	96	96	Mississauga	ON	800-409-2269	www.polaristransport.com
Groupe Matte	97	95	Donnacona	QC	418-285-0777	www.transportmatte.com
RR Plett Trucking	98	NR	Langley	BC	604-513-9920	www.rrplett.ca
Transport Vitesse*	99	97	Lachine	QC	514-631-2777	www.vitessetransport.com
Keypoint Carriers*	100	99	Woodstock	ON	866-569-7964	www.keypointcarriers.com

↳ (NR) = not ranked in 2025

\* Numbers not updated since 2025

	<i>Straight Trucks</i>	<i>Tractors</i>	<i>Trailers</i>	<i>Owner-operators</i>	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Terminals/Yards</i>	<i>Equipment Total</i>	TL	LTL	Dedicated	Expedited	Intermodal	Temp. Control	Bulk	Tanker	Warehousing
5	130	718	104	170	3	853	•		•			•	•			•
0	250	600	10	450	6	850	•		•			•				•
12	245	585	170	210	10	842	•	•	•	•		•				•
6	306	498	102	206	5	810	•		•				•	•		
70	165	570	8	205	3	805	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•
23	290	488	158	312	16	801	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•
0	232	530	23	397	6	762	•				•	•			•	
1	279	480	20	475	8	760	•	•	•	•		•				
0	300	450	75	525	4	750	•		•	•	•	•				•
0	235	500	115	275	3	735	•		•	•		•				
0	198	521	16	254	8	719	•	•	•	•		•			•	•
1	331	343	242	175	10	675	•	•	•	•						
0	154	505	7	180	7	659	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•
23	191	441	30	580	8	655	•	•								•
18	138	491	36	333	9	647	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	122	494	6	211	2	616	•	•	•				•			•
2	140	460	4	216	7	602	•	•	•			•	•			•
0	150	450	2	180	1	600	•	•	•	•		•				
12	105	450	60	90	2	567	•	•	•	•		•				•
10	187	337	24	358	7	534	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
21	153	360	124	175	10	534	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•
0	120	400	5	125	4	520	•		•			•				•
1	106	409	0	260	8	516	•	•	•							•
5	375	123	80	600	3	503	•		•		•	•				•
0	135	350	21	175	3	485	•	•				•				•
0	200	280	0	100	4	480	•	•	•	•		•				•
5	139	333	68	100	4	477	•								•	
5	170	290	35	175	8	465	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
0	127	332	0	180	8	459	•	•			•					
0	100	350	2	270	8	450	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
37	85	324	25	132	3	446	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
0	137	300	98	43	2	437	•	•	•	•						
0	176	260	106	125	2	436	•		•							
0	190	245	155	85	7	435	•									
5	145	280	60	90	3	430	•		•			•	•	•	•	
70	80	250	0	350	3	400	•	•	•	•	•	•				
4	115	281	3	145	NA	400	•		•				•			•
6	104	290	0	270	6	400	•	•	•	•		•				•
0	96	300	0	130	2	396	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	
0	153	242	0	379	NA	395	•				•					•
2	122	264	98	51	3	388	•	•	•	•	•					•
4	90	290	55	140	8	384	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
35	119	228	131	245	10	382	•	•	•	•	•	•				•
0	80	300	0	80	3	380	•	•	•							•
14	60	300	27	50	1	374	•	•	•	•		•	•			•
32	91	250	102	229	2	373	•	•		•						•
1	157	213	5	200	2	371	•						•			
0	120	245	50	210	2	365	•	•	•	•		•				•
1	65	275	30	160	3	341	•	•	•	•		•				•
0	100	210	62	42	1	310	•	•	•	•						

(N/A) = not available

• = Yes    Blank = No

# Holding Ground

*Vocational truck segment shows stability*

By Leo Barros

Manufacturers are expecting the vocational truck market to remain stable through the rest of 2026, supported by demand from construction, utility and municipal customers, even as economic conditions, regulatory uncertainty and rising costs influence fleet purchasing decisions.

Aaron Scates, vice-president of vocational and medium-duty market development at Daimler Truck North America, told *Today's Trucking* at the Work Truck Show that the segment has faced headwinds tied to weak construction spending earlier in the year. However, he said improving homebuilder sentiment could support residential con-

struction activity heading into 2026.

At the same time, emerging demand tied to power generation and data infrastructure is creating new opportunities for vocational trucks, he added. Growth in AI-driven facilities, including power supply systems and data warehouses, is contributing to demand for specialized applications and helping offset softness in other construction segments.

Jonathan Randall, president of Mack Trucks North America, said, "In general, the vocational market remains solid but is cooling from recent peak levels. Construction spending and the housing market saw downturns in 2025, contributing to a softer near-term vocational

market. Continued manufacturing investment and improved housing activity in 2026 will help drive demand."

Tim Wrinkle, Mack vice-president of vocational and medium-duty added, "Vocational customers expect durability, strong performance, driver comfort, safety, and maximum uptime, and those demands are only growing."

Fleets are also closely monitoring regulatory developments, particularly emissions standards expected to take effect in 2027, which are widely anticipated to increase vehicle costs.

Brian Tabel, assistant vice-president of marketing at Isuzu Commercial Truck of America, said uncertainty around final emissions requirements remains a key factor in planning.

He said if the regulations proceed as expected, higher engine and technology costs could lead to a pre-buy cycle, with fleets accelerating purchases ahead of the 2027 implementation timeline.



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To prepare for that possibility, Isuzu has increased dealer inventory levels and positioned additional trucks at port facilities. Tabel said the company is aiming to ensure availability if demand strengthens following regulatory announcements, while maintaining flexibility to continue production into early 2027.

Jim Nebergall, executive director of market strategy at Cummins, said the medium-duty market is expected to remain active in the near term, with 2026 potentially seeing elevated demand as fleets respond to anticipated cost increases.

He added rising technology costs tied to emissions compliance are expected across the industry, particularly in higher-displacement engine segments. At the same time, broader uncertainty, including tariffs and economic conditions, is influencing fleet behavior. Some customers are moving ahead with purchases to avoid future cost increases, while others



Mark Brakeall (Photo: Leo Barros)

are delaying decisions amid uncertainty, he said, creating mixed demand signals across the market.

Nebergall added that emissions regulations themselves are not expected to change significantly, although some adjustments related to emissions warranty requirements may be considered.


Engine manufacturers continue to move forward with product development plans, including new platforms expected

to be introduced over the next several years.


Mark Brakeall, director of marketing, dealer operations and market intelligence at Hino Trucks, said customers are taking a cautious approach to purchasing decisions, weighing factors such as interest rates, operating costs, tariffs and regulatory timelines.

Despite those considerations, he said the vocational segment remains more resilient than other areas of the truck market because the vehicles are tied to essential work, including construction, utilities and municipal services.

That underlying demand continues even when freight conditions soften, supporting relative stability in the segment. Brakeall added that some fleets delayed purchases over the past several years, contributing to replacement demand that is now building. He said uptime remains the top priority for customers, as trucks are critical tools for daily operations. **TT**




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(Photo: James Menzies)

## Urban Upgrade

*Volvo VNR redefines regional haul expectations*

*By James Menzies*

Regional haul tractors were never meant to be the most luxurious trucks on the road. Why bother with high-end styling when they're going to get banged up anyways? And it's not like the driver will be living in the cab, so we can forgo many of the driver amenities demanded by linehaul fleets.

But with its new VNR regional haul tractor, Volvo has turned that thinking on its head. In the VNR, it offers all the safety technologies, amenities and comforts of its on-highway VNL model within a tighter package designed to deliver the nimbleness and agility required of city driving.

The new VNR, which was made available to trucking editors for inaugural drives at Volvo's Customer Center March 31, proved to be a truck that blended cabover-type agility with highway truck comfort.

The turning radius is exceptionally tight – almost shockingly so for a conventional. On a makeshift city course at the Customer Center, the VNR carved through tight corners like it had no business being that nimble.

Volvo engineered the VNR around the demands of regional haul, combining a short bumper-to-back-of-cab dimension with

a 50-degree wheel cut and a front-end layout designed to thrive in tight spaces.

The result is a truck that can execute tight 180-degree turns with ease – exactly the kind of capability required in urban delivery, tanker work, and crowded job sites.

“That's the big difference,” said Volvo product marketing manager Duane Tegels from the passenger seat as I weaved through the course. “The turning radius and the view out over the front – that's what really sets this apart.”

That impression is reinforced by the visibility. The sloped hood and aerodynamic shaping don't just improve fuel efficiency – they also improve sightlines. You have to make an effort to see the hood.

What's more surprising is how refined the experience is once you're behind the wheel.

This is a regional hauler, but it's better appointed from a technology and driver comfort standpoint than you might expect. In fact, it's every bit as comfortable to drive as Volvo's VNL highway truck.

“It's got all the luxuries of the VNL, just in a tighter package,” Tegels said.

Volvo Dynamic Steering plays a big role in that.

With the system disengaged, the truck behaves as expected – stable and predictable, with a familiar level of steering effort. Engage it, and the difference is immediate. Road shocks are filtered out, steering effort drops significantly, and low-speed maneuvering becomes almost effortless.

On a section of rumble strips designed to highlight the system, the steering wheel barely moved – even with hands off. In tighter maneuvers, it was possible to turn the wheel with a single finger.

“Over the course of a day, that reduction in effort really adds up,” Tegels said.

He's right. In a regional application where drivers are constantly turning, backing, and working in tight environments, that reduction in fatigue isn't just about comfort, it's about



The digital dash brings familiarity from the VNL. (Photo: James Menzies)

(Photo: James Menzies)



productivity, and it impacts driver alertness over the course of a driving shift.

The VNR also includes features designed specifically for that kind of work. Low-speed creep functionality allows the truck to move smoothly without throttle input, letting drivers focus on positioning and surroundings rather than modulating the pedal while in stop-and-go traffic.

Out on the highway loop, the VNR continued to deliver.

The powertrain is no slouch. In a tanker configuration grossing more than 80,000 lb., the truck handled a 6% grade on the test track without breaking a sweat. Power delivery was smooth and consistent.

On the highway track, Volvo senior product manager John Moore walked through some of the systems that support that performance.

Drivers can toggle between fuel-focused and performance-oriented drive modes, with the truck adjusting shift points accordingly. It's subtle in steady-state driving, but under load the difference becomes more apparent. Refinements to the I-Shift transmission allow 30% quicker shifting for improved efficiency.

More impactful is how the truck manages speed on descents.

A downhill cruise control feature allows the driver to set a target speed while descending a grade, with the truck automatically selecting gears and applying engine braking to maintain it.

"You hit the button at your current speed, and then you can adjust from there," Moore explained. "It'll pick the right gear and manage the braking for you."

Combined with a strong engine brake, the system takes much of the workload off the driver on long descents. Set your speed, steer, and let the truck handle the rest.

The technology suite will feel familiar to anyone who has spent time in a VNL. Many of the same systems carry over, including lane departure warning, road sign recognition, and optional camera monitor systems.

The VNR doesn't match the VNL for sheer interior volume. Its shorter bumper-to-back-of-cab layout and more compact sleeper options are designed for regional applications where maneuverability and frequent stops take priority over longhaul living space. Just as a tight turning radius and visibility take priority

over maximizing fuel efficiency.

The VNR's sleeper configurations top out at 62 inches, compared to the larger options available in Volvo's highway tractor lineup. But from the driver's seat, you'd be hard-pressed to tell.

The layout, materials, and overall ergonomics are unmistakably Volvo. The dash design, seating position, and controls mirror what drivers experience in the VNL, creating a familiar and premium environment, albeit in a slightly tighter footprint.

For years, regional haul trucks have been positioned as more basic, more utilitarian – built for durability, but often lacking the refinement of their longhaul counterparts. Volvo has taken a different approach.

The VNR doesn't feel like a stripped-down highway truck. It feels like a fully realized premium product that's been optimized for a different job. This added versatility is what Volvo execs think will give the truck maker inroads into new segments and a bigger piece of the overall regional haul market.

You get the maneuverability and visibility needed for urban and regional work, without giving up the comfort, technology, and driving experience drivers have come to expect from a flagship highway tractor.

It's a different kind of regional truck; one that feels purpose-built for the city, without giving up what drivers value most on the highway. **TT**

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## SAFETY

### Fleetworthy adds Accident Tracking



**Fleetworthy** is expanding its safety and compliance platform with a new Accident Tracking capability designed to give fleets deeper visibility into risk and incident trends.

The company announced the new feature centralizes both DOT-reportable and non-reportable accidents into a single system, allowing fleets to standardize how incidents are documented, analyzed and managed.

Fleetworthy said the tool addresses a common gap in fleet safety programs, where non-DOT incidents often go untracked or inconsistently recorded.

The Accident Tracking capability links each incident to specific drivers, vehicles and compliance records, while storing supporting documentation – including photos and reports – in a searchable, audit-ready format.

[www.fleetworthy.com](http://www.fleetworthy.com)

## TRACKING

### Road Ready tracker for trailers, containers

**Road Ready** has introduced TrackRR Lite, a compact, battery-powered asset tracking device designed to provide visibility into non-powered and infrequently used equipment.

The system targets assets such as trail-

ers, containers and specialized equipment that often lack telematics due to cost or installation complexity.

TrackRR Lite installs without wiring and delivers GPS-based location updates over LTE-M cellular connectivity. The device integrates with Road Ready's Fusion platform, allowing fleets to monitor both powered and non-powered assets in a single interface.

The unit features a rugged, weather-sealed housing and multi-year battery life, with configurable reporting intervals that allow fleets to balance update frequency with battery consumption.

[www.roadready.com](http://www.roadready.com)

## WHEELS

### Aluminum wheel corrosion protection

**Accuride Corporation** has introduced a new aluminum wheel surface technology designed to combat corrosion and extend wheel life.

The patent-pending coating, called ProShield XGT, was developed to address filiform corrosion – a threadlike form of corrosion that forms beneath coatings and can spread across aluminum wheels once the protective surface is compromised.

Filiform corrosion often begins when a wheel's surface coating is breached by scratches or pits, such as those caused by striking a curb. Once the base metal is exposed, corrosion can spread beneath the coating. The problem has become more pronounced in recent years as snow and ice-control chemicals used on



winter roads have become increasingly aggressive.

Accuride said ProShield XGT also features a chip-resistant surface, maintains gloss at temperatures up to 400°F, and resists chemicals including acids, bases, oils, fuels, brake fluid, and road salts. The coating also incorporates a hydrophobic finish that repels water, oil, and contaminants, allowing fleets to clean wheels using only soap and water.

ProShield XGT wheels will be available beginning in the second quarter of 2026.

[www accuridecorp.com](http://www accuridecorp.com)

## DRIVELINES

### New lightweight Cummins driveline



**Cummins** has unveiled the new RPL35+, its lightest-ever driveline for Class 8 applications in the 21,500 lb.-ft. torque range. The driveline will be available in the fourth quarter.

It offers an enhanced design that offers up to 28 lb. of weight reduction compared to the current RPL35. There are also simplified connection points compared to traditional flange designs, reducing system complexity.

The design provides a durable driveline engineered to support the adoption of super-fast axle ratios. Cummins also said fleets will not see any change to maintenance practices, driveline performance, or functionality, ensuring a seamless transition from the existing RPL35.

[www.cummins.com](http://www.cummins.com)

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By Mike McCarron



# Broken Backstop

## Rip up the insurance safety net

If it were up to Markel Insurance, I would have lost my job. Apparently, I was the worst driver in the MSM fleet. Every time they sent a rookie safety auditor, our general manager got the same rant: “You’ve gotta get rid of this McCarron driver with the 13 demerit points.”

“We can’t. He’s the owner.”

Insurance companies used to be the de facto goalies of our industry. The last line of defense against risky operators.

Bad drivers like me weren’t allowed behind the wheel. Green drivers stayed in the city, cutting their teeth.

When the losses started piling up, your business felt the pain. Premiums went up. You had to raise your prices or drop high-risk work to protect your insurance profile. Customers complained. Phones stopped ringing.

And if you didn’t clean up your act? You lost your insurance. That meant no operating authority and a one-way ticket out of the league, wondering why you ignored safety.

But things changed in the mid-2000s. That’s when the insurance industry shifted from risk prevention to premium generation.

### Premium priorities

I’ll admit it, insurance was never my bag. I left it to the safety team and moved on. I thought a “facility” was a building.

But I’m doing a lot of insurance head-scratching lately, wondering how these jaloopies, held together by duct tape and barreling down the highway, get insured.

The head-scratching turned to disbelief when I recently moderated an insurance panel for PTTAC (the Professional Truck Training Alliance of Canada).

I learned that Facility Association insurance is the industry’s last-chance saloon. A non-profit pool that enables every carrier to get insurance. Translation: if your CVOR is brutal or you’re a brand-new entrant with no track record, this is home.

Whether they like it or not, every insurer in Canada is required to participate.

By forcing every insurer to participate, facility insurance spreads inevitable losses across the entire market.

### Shared risk sounds fair. It’s not.

Those costs don’t disappear. They come roaring back as higher premiums for everyone, including the safe fleets doing things

right. Good operators pay more, while bad operators barely feel it. They crash, file claims, and carry on their merry frigg’in’ way. As long as they keep paying those premiums, they keep their plates.

Insurers used to be bouncers. Now they’re toll collectors. The notion of subsidizing competitors so they can cut your rates is absurd. Try explaining that to pals in other industries.

That was never the plan. Facility insurance was meant to be a penalty box. A short, sharp wake-up call. Fix your safety, clean up your act, and earn your way back to the real market.

Instead, carriers can sit there for years with zero pressure to improve.

Because even though facility insurance is brutally expensive, it’s still cheaper than fixing the problem. Building real safety systems. Investing in maintenance. Training drivers properly.

When survival only requires a cheque, not change, guess what happens? Nothing.

Facility insurance is an enabler, not an incentive for unsafe operators to improve.

### One pool, a dozen rulebooks

Facility insurance is centralized, with risk shared across the country. Losses in one province don’t stay there. They ripple nationwide.

But enforcement? That’s provincial. Different rules. Different pricing. So, what do bad carriers do? They move. Leave Alberta, pop up somewhere softer. New address, same habits. The ghost fleet whack-a-mole game lives on.

Loose provinces become landing zones. Risk doesn’t disappear. It just relocates. In a recent press release, the Ontario Trucking Association nailed what needs to be done to clean this up. This isn’t an insurance problem, it’s a consequence problem.

Let the market do its job.

Otherwise, we’re left with the Toronto Maple Leafs’ approach to risk management: if your conference is too tough, switch to a new one. Because bad operators don’t fix their problems. They just find softer places to play.

You can’t make this crap up. **TT**

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**Mike McCarron** is president of *Rite Route Supply Chain Solutions* and a partner in *Left Lane Associates*. You can reach Mike at [mike@riteroute.ca](mailto:mike@riteroute.ca).



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