

QA 17930

BECKER DRIVER TRAINING FACILITY
Route 5 Box 10-F, Albert Lea, Minnesota 56007
Telephone: 507-373-8513

FHWA-97-2199-4

July 6, 1993

RECEIVED
JUL 11 1993
FBI 50

Comments: Industry Training Standards, Truck Driver Training
Federal Highway Administration
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

REFERENCE NUMBER: •*50
Docket # MC-a-12,

Gentlemen:

We are a truck driver training school with many answers, dealing with our particular field. We have attempted to bring teaching methods to the attention of those in the position to change the system. The educational system, is NOT equipped to teach students in our unique field; which is that of a heavy-duty, long-distance, truck driver training.

One of the reasons the educational school systems is not equipped to teach our unique course, is the systems inability to incorporate the "HANDS ON" training needed. The school systems, CAN NOT provide the body building stamina that must be conditioned into students. This body building stamina, is equated to jet lag in travelers. Our school trains it's students under direct instructor supervision to a 32 state area, during the last 400 hours of our 1200 hour course. The school systems, can not teach the proper handling of freight, the various types of commodities, or the procedures involved.

Proper documentation is essential to prevent claims levied against the student's (prospective) employer's carrier, for lost product; due to improperly signed delivery receipts. This can amount to a substantial financial loss. One reason, employers DEMAND 3 years work experience.

The school systems can not show students the procedures, for the proper stacking of cargo, and weight distribution, to prevent overweight fines; or truck tip-overs, due to 'CARGO SHIFT'. The school systems can not provide proper telephone communications procedures, to prevent fines against (prospective) employer carriers, for late deliveries, or the communications/safety procedures, to prevent damage to equipment/cargo.

The school systems are not equipped to teach the techniques needed to handle a tractor-trailer on all types of road-ways. Students in a familiar surroundings are not properly prepared to handle the stress related factors of being in various cities across the nation. The educational system has not, to a degree, failed the students, the system simply has not dealt with the transportation industry, and it does not know the pitfalls, or the industry requirements/standards; in order to adequately prepare, and teach the industry techniques.

The success of our school, depends largely from the fact that our instructors have done the maintenance, practical; and have the experience of all facets of the industry, from mechanical, dispatching, driving, teaching, etc. through our own ongoing operations as a trucking company. The separate company, Becker HI-Way Frate, began training it's own employees, when skilled drivers could not be found to meet the demand for positions available.

Our separate driver training school, has been through the intense requirements of the Department of Public Safety. The standards set by this

government department (for the State of Minnesota), are extremely stringent, and a CREDIT to promoting national, as well as state highway safety.

Our school was required to have it's programs approved BEFORE those programs could be taught. Our instructors were approved by the **commissioner** BEFORE licensure, with REVIEWS, on a yearly basis, BEFORE renewal of those licenses. Our school has to **be** approved, and is REVIEWED YEARLY.

The State of Minnesota, Department of Public Safety, has an EXCELLENT standard of licensing. It far surpasses the Department of Education's own standards, pertaining to the truck driver training courses. The American Trucking Association, Alexandria, Virginia, and the National Private Truck Council, respectively, are trying to incorporate training, and certification programs. These programs, CAN NOT equal our programs. We have built our school, and the reputation, and experiences of building our own truck line, training our own employees, and establishing a separate training school; based on the experiences we encountered over the past 40 years. Our school was built on standards of working in all aspects of the industry, from mechanical, to dispatching, safety, to proper documentation of cargo, etc.

These programs were developed by the ACTUAL doing of the duties required. The programs weren't developed by personnel who never did mechanical work, never cared for temperature sensitive cargo, never handled hazardous cargo. Our personnel developed the programs, from ACTTJAL shipments, and INVOLVEMENTS with the shipping public, not from READING requirements, from a study manual.

There is clearly a difference. Most seem to encourage less hours, and less "hands on" training to facilitate in keeping costs down. This practice of teaching, leads to under trained personnel operating, for example, a 80,000 pound, 65 foot long vehicle in our cities, and on our nations highway. This is apparent to anyone trying to fill the truck driver shortage that exists throughout our nation.

Our school teaches a 6 month, 1200 hour course, which is 75% "hands on" training. This enables the beginner to become a highly skilled long distance truck driver, at a cost of only \$ 6200.00. For drivers with some previous **ex-perience, written** and "**hands on**" tests, are given. This evaluation process credits the passing grades, and the training concentrates on any needed areas. The federally mandated Commercial Driver's License, is only a slight improvement to an already flawed system. After a few hours of instruction, most students can pass the driving test, with an unloaded trailer, hooked to the semi tractor, in a CONTROLLED circumstance, such as that of a road test. That same individual in a job situation, near the end of an exhaustive trip in perhaps a crowded Washington, D.C. traffic setting, driving on ice/snow covered roadway is another.

This driver is not only unskilled for the circumstances described, but being new to the industry, has probably not had prior experience driving in this locality.

The factors should focus upon the educational systems demanding minimum programs with "hands on training" under the guidance of a veteran driver instructor. This statement should NOT be misconstrued by the assumption that EVERY veteran driver can be, or is of instructor constitution. The qualities of a good driver becoming an instructor, takes training in addition to time. I base these conclusions from my personal, professional, business, and educational experiences. I have driven the 18-wheel heavy duty rigs for over 45 years, on a continuous basis.

1993, is the 40th anniversary of my own trucking company, which began in 1953. Becker HI-Way Frate, a general **commodity common** and contract carrier operates in a 32 state area. My company has been safety rated by the Department of Transportation, receiving SAFETY RATING NUMBER 91080. This rating, I can proudly say, is the Highest Rating given today. In addition to my experience in the transportation field, I have had the pleasure to be associated very closely in the educational field. I have drawn on my mechanical aptitude, to help evaluate post-secondary schools, in the State of Minnesota.

- * Past Chairman of the Board of diesel mechanics - for the Albert Lea Technical College.
- * Member of the Albert Lea Area Quality Control Council
- * Present Advisory Board - Albert Lea/Mankato Technical College (member past 15 years).
- * ASE - Certificate for Freon Recovery & Recycling
- * Present and Past Program Evaluator, in the diesel mechanics course, for the State of Minnesota, in post-secondary education.
- * I hold a license issued by the Minnesota State Highway Patrol, as a vehicle safety inspector, number 90111-1.
- * The Department of Education, has issued me a truck driver instructor license, in post-secondary education.
- * I hold an instructor license for truck driver training issued by the State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety.
- * I hold a training school license, issued also by the State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety.
- * C.R. special certificate of **completion** for installation, maintenance, and trouble detection of air brakes, air dryers, and shaft seals.

Our instructors, and faculty staff, have from 20 to 45 years practical experience in their individual field. It is my firm conviction that NO instructor of less than 10 years experience should **be** licensed; and ONLY after instructor training.

Our staff teaches much more than just basic truck driving techniques. To become a SKILLED over-the-road truck driver; many other deciding factors must be addressed. We find very few students can **accomplish** the following NECESSARY criteria without instruction.

- * Map reading and trip planning (routes must be in strict adherence, in the event of a hazardous material, cargo carried). Hours of Service, and preparation of the daily log, with vehicle safety inspections.
- * Understanding the Bill of Lading instructions-as well as properly executed freight bills.
- * Building the personal stamina, proper diet, and how to help the body adjust to the different wake/sleep, work hour patterns.
- * High degree of mechanical aptitude (toward equipment) is taught.

We have a low student to instructor ratio. Our school in it's "hands on" training never have over 2 students to 1 instructor, on the (over the road), portion of the training.

Again, may I reiterate, after a few hours of instruction, most students can pass the driving test, in a CONTROLLED circumstance. Unless MINIMUM programs with "HANDS ON" training, under DIRECT guidance of a VETERAN 10 YEAR licensed instructor are established, unskilled heavy duty operators will continue to operate on the highways.

The standards set by the State of Minnesota, Department of Public Safety are a CREDIT to national highway safety. I have had the opportunity to view first hand, both the Department of Education's, and the Department of Public Safety's answer, to the needs of the transportation industry. I opt for the more Stringent requirements, of the Department of Public Safety.

I feel that Industry Standards of Excellence are not ~~really~~.very well taught in most schools. My observations is that far too many people in high ~~positions~~ simply do not possess the actual experience necessary to set good truck driver training standards. Any person who is capable of passing the ~~commercial~~ drivers license is a very poor comparison to the knowledge, and skill required by a professional over the road driver.

I have witnessed good dedicated experienced fleet drivers, who lacked the ability to ~~communicate~~ proper procedure to the student. The above reason, plus the shortage of "hands on" training hours of most programs leave many student drivers; with a very serious safety deficiency.

In closing, we simply must put an end to training programs that are built by inexperienced people. The same type programs being taught by instructors who very well may lack actual years of necessary experience themselves.

A former student, (of 30 years ago), said, "Every day is school day". He was very correct in making this statement, as I myself, after 40 years, am still in the process of learning something new day every day. My staff, and I offer our services in any way possible to get our driver status back again, to the "Knights of the Road", position that we in the industry once enjoyed.

Sincerely;



Joseph Becker
Director
Becker Driver Training Facility
Route 5 Box 10-F
Albert Lea, Minnesota 56007
507-373-9515

President
Becker HI-Way Frate
Route 5 Box 10-B
Albert Lea, Minnesota 56007
507-373- 8513

Enclosures:



1100 W 29TH STREET . P D BOX 277 . SOUTH SIOUX CITY NE 68776 • 402-494-2411

Post-It™ brand fax transmittal memo 7671		# of pages • 1
To: JOE BECKER	From: JOHN FORSYTHE	
Co: BECKER HI-WAY FRAME	Co: GWCC	
Dept: FIRST BANK - SUE	Phone #: 402-494-2411	
Fax #: 507-373-4719	Fax #	

Date: March 1, 1993

Subject: Becker Driver Training

To: Whom it May Concern

I have been associated with **Joe Becker** for the last three **years**. **I've** experienced many of the programs that he has implemented into the Becker Driver Training Program. Without hesitation, this is a premiere driver training program,

I am a Safety and Loss Prevention Representative for Great West Casualty and have the opportunity to view many driver training programs. Most programs are six to eight weeks in length and teach the student only the basics. The Becker Driver Training Program is six months in length and not only teaches the basics but also finishes the driver in all phases of the trucking industry.

The safety record of his program is accident free. Since I have *been* associated with Joe, no driver *in* his program has had a chargeable accident. Joe has many years in the industry and has many talents to pass along to his students.

The industry needs solid programs such as the Becker Driver Training Program. We need good qualified drivers operating the tractors and trailers using the nations highway and not just numbers as some of the other training programs provide. Qualified **drivers** that come from the Becker Driver Training Program will help keep our nations highway safe.

Sincerely,

John G. Forsythe
 Safety and **Loss** Prevention Representative

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ALL-STATES QUALITY FOODS, INC.

P.O. BOX 365
CHARLESCITY, IOWA 50616

March 2, 1993

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

*School's Note: Actual "Hands On"
training under direct instructors
supervision.*

All-States Quality Foods, Inc. has been associated with Becker Hi-Way Frate for several years now. During this time they have used their student drivers quite often, to move our product. We have never had any problems arise when a student was driving. Their appointments have been kept and the product is in good condition upon delivery. These students are always on the dock when the truck is being loaded and all seem to be responsible drivers.

We are very pleased with Beckers performance in the delivery of our product and plan to continue our association with them for a long time to come.

Sincerely,



/s/John F. Walter
Procurement Officer

PAT PIPER

Senator
District 27

Joseph Becker
Becker Hi-Way Frate
Route 5, Box 10B
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Senate

State of Minnesota

Dear Mr. Becker,

Thank you for your letter and information about our workers' compensation laws. The documents you sent were helpful and I've shared them with our staff whose expertise is in that area. We all learn from the experience of individuals.

I do know that rates vary widely based on a history of injuries and trucking is a high injury area. Safety is a big help in reducing injuries but your industry is unique. The jostling is very hard on the body. You must be doing something wise to reduce injuries. Since you are doing well I'm guessing you are seeking insurance from one of the mutual funds. You should be able to reduce your rates by 8 to 10%. And I understand that shopping for insurance is a smart way to go.

We've had task force hearings and studies as well as committee hearings on the Workers Compensation Court of Appeals and the preponderance of evidence proves its value. Dealing with those specialized cases in the criminal and civil courts would increase costs and cause further delays. Did you know we have another specialized **court**, the Tax Court?

There are no major workers' compensation bills before us this session but there is some discussion on a few adjustments. You may remember that a major effort was agreed to last year.

However, I expect easy passage of the proposal to return the excess earnings of \$404 million in the Workers Compensation **Reinsurance** Association fund to the employers. Both bills are on General Orders on the Senate floor. It is an interesting disagreement between insurers and employers. Employers should receive their monies.

I'm glad you shared.

Best wishes,



Senator Pat Piper

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May 6, 1993

PP:ja





U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Highway
Administration

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

MAY 12, 1993

IN REPLY REFER TO:
YOUR USDOT NO.: 125639
REVIEW NO.: 00149712/SR

JOSEPH A. BECKER
BECKER HI-WAY FRATE
R T 5 BOX 10B
ALBERT LEA, MN 56007

GENTLEMEN:

THE MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY RATING FOR YOUR COMPANY IS:

SATISFACTORY

THIS SATISFACTORY RATING IS THE RESULT OF A MAR 30, 1993, REVIEW AND EVALUATION. A SATISFACTORY RATING INDICATES THAT YOUR COMPANY HAS ADEQUATE SAFETY MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO EFFECT SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE WITH THE FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY AND/OR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS REGULATIONS.

PLEASE ASSURE YOURSELF THAT ANY SPECIFIC DEFICIENCIES IDENTIFIED IN THE REVIEW REPORT HAVE BEEN CORRECTED. WE APPRECIATE YOUR EFFORTS TOWARD PROMOTING MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY THROUGHOUT YOUR COMPANY. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE SAFETY SPECIALIST WHO CONDUCTED THE REVIEW.

RONALD G. ASHBY
CHIEF, FEDERAL PROGRAMS DIVISION

- SEE MESSAGE ON BACK -

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**** NOTE ****

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1991, AS REQUIRED BY THE MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ACT OF 1990 (PUBLIC LAW 101-500), THOSE MOTOR CARRIERS RECEIVING AN "UNSATISFACTORY" SAFETY RATING, ISSUED BY THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, ARE PROHIBITED FROM TRANSPORTING PLACARDABLE QUANTITIES OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, OR FOR HIRE TRANSPORTATION OF MORE THAN 15 PASSENGERS, INCLUDING THE DRIVER, IN INTERSTATE COMMERCE. THIS PROHIBITION WILL BEGIN 45 DAYS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF AN "UNSATISFACTORY" SAFETY RATING, OR RECEIPT OF THE "UNSATISFACTORY" SAFETY RATING LETTER, WHICHEVER IS LATER.

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Minnesota
Department of Labor and Industry

443 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
(612) 296-6107

Telecommunication Device
for the Deaf (612) 297-4198

FAX (612) 297-1329

May 3, 1993

Joseph Becker
Becker HI-Way Frate
Route 5, Box 10B
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Dear Mr. Becker:

Governor **Carlson** has asked me to respond to your letter of April 9, 1993 concerning further workers' compensation reform.

Your experience with workers' compensation is a good illustration of a system gone awry. Workers' compensation was intended as a protection against the liability of workplace injuries. However, in your case, the cost of the protection far outweighs the liability itself. This is a good example of a system in need of reform.

Roth the Governor and I viewed the legislation that passed last year as only a first step to reforming the system. There are several elements of the current workers' compensation system that need to be changed before true reform can be attained. The 1992 legislation made a strong commitment to controlling medical costs and brought some of the wage loss benefits in line with other states. However, as your letter pointed out, there are other benefits that still need to be examined and the judicial system **needs** to be overhauled.

Both the Governor and I are very supportive of further reform legislation. I anticipate that the Governor will shortly convey this unequivocal position to all legislators. My legislative liaison is tracking the legislation and is keeping me abreast of its chances for passage.

Yours truly,

John B. Lennes, Jr.
Commissioner

JBL/nmh

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BECKER DRIVER TRAINING FACILITY is approved and licensed by the State of Minnesota. At present time, we have the distinction of being the only commercial licensed truck driver training school in the state.

To give students the best possible education, we offer two courses. Our Interstate training includes more "Hands On" training, than other truck driver training schools. The last 400 hours of training, involve actual driving, and hauling of Interstate freight.

Students are taught under the guidance of instructors, with 20 to 40 years of prior experience, in the trucking industry.

Class size, and students to instructor ratio are kept to a minimum, in order to better prepare the students. We offer both an **INTERSTATE**, and **INTRASTATE** - (In state only) course.

Interstate Course: (Course for long distance drivers).

25 weeks/1200 hours

338 hours in the classroom

366 hours in the yard, and on the range

100 hours of observation, and road driving this includes student preparation for the Federally required Commercial Drivers License.

400 hours of observation and commercial type driving, and hauling of cargo (under direct guidance of instructors).

*These hours will improve driving skills and build personal body stamina. Stamina is a necessity that is neglected by many other driving schools.

Intrastate Course: (In state driving only)

20 weeks/900 hour course

338 hours in the classroom

366 hours in the yard, and on the range

100 hours of observation, and road driving this includes student preparation for the Federally required Commercial Drivers License.

100 hours of **INTRASTATE** hauling

A certificate is issued upon successful completion of the program.

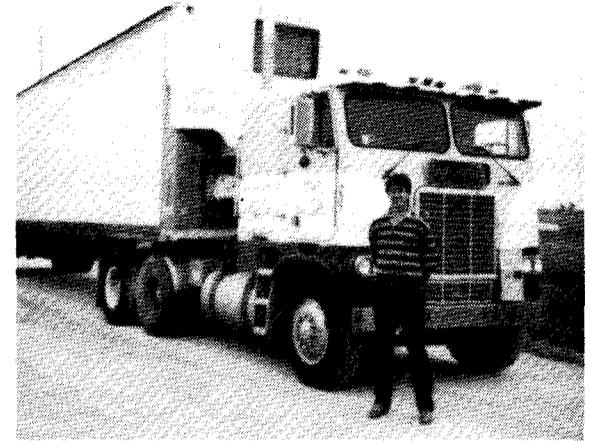
A large percentage of our former students during the last 25 years are today successful owner-operators. Others have become successful owners of large trucking firms. This is due, in part, to our **copyright Efficiency and Equipment Longevity training.**

Becker Driver Training Facility is eligible to participate in **State Grants**, and is **Approved for Veterans Educational Benefits.**

Applicant Requirements:

- Should be at least 18 years of age, and possess a Class C license and Class A Learners Permit.
- Possess a current Department of Transportation physical.
- Possess a current DRUG screen test, results being negative drug usage.
- Have a current Motor Vehicle Record with good driving record.
- Submit a current Resume for the past 10 years.
- High School Diploma or Equivalent

Becker Driver Training Facility reserves the right to change curriculum, program cost, or training procedures, as need be, at any time without recourse, or prior notice.



Gregory VanderSchaaf

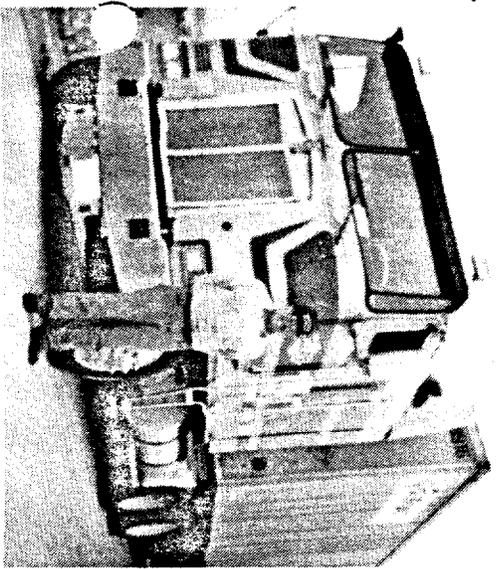
"Liked the actual road experience gained **besides** a veteran driver, plus additional mechanical aptitude that has helped along the way." Trained: 1987



Terry Larsen

"I felt that a betterplace to learn can't be found." Trained: 1989

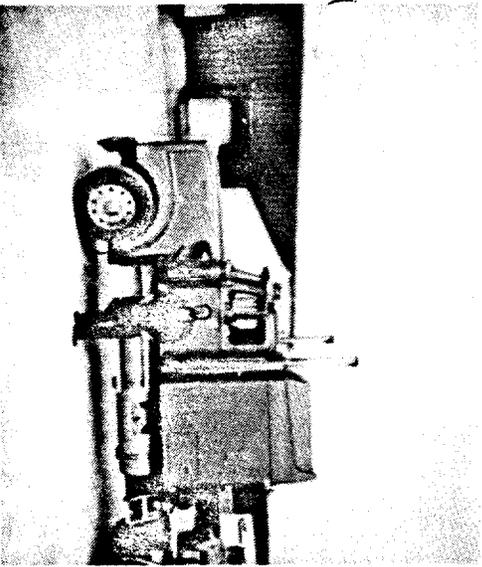
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Milton Olson

"Over the years Becker's expertise in driving, safety, and maintenance, have helped me in the business skills of trucking." Trained: 1964

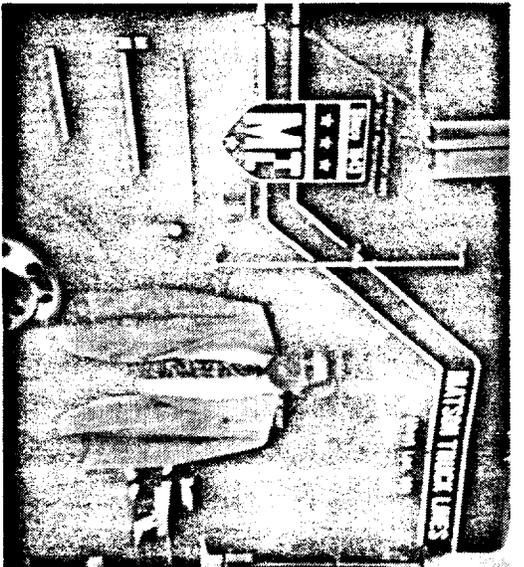
Milton Olson



Jeffery Schlichte

"The training and experience I received from Becker has helped me maintain my truck, and business for the last six years." Trained: 1984

Jeffery Schlichte



Leonard K. Sackson

"The training and experience I received from Becker helped me achieve my present success." Mason Truck Lines, owner. Trained: 1971

Leonard K. Sackson

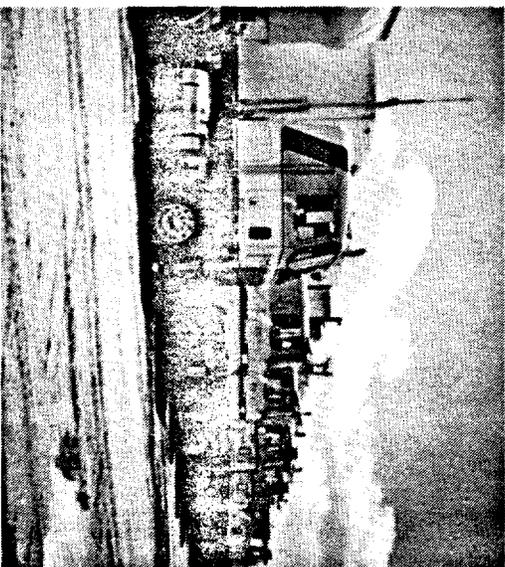


Steve Wallis

Driver, Dispatcher, Safety, Sales, and currently working as a commissioned employee, running a truck brokerage. "Thanks largely to Becker, and his methods of operation." Trained: 1980

Steve Wallis

**To Be Your Best
Requires
Specialized Training**



**BECKER
Driver Training
Facility**

R.R. #5, BOX 10-F
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