

QA-18018

AMERICAN ACADEMIC SERVICES  
PO Box 1  
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(614) 892-3292  
"PROFESSIONAL TRUCK DRIVING MANUAL"  
VOLUME ONE & VOLUME TWO  
AND OTHER DRIVER TRAINING MATERIAL

FHWA-97-2199-48

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LEGS. REGS. DIV.

August 18, 1993

Mr. Jerry L. Robin  
Driver Standards Division  
Federal Highway Administration  
Docket No. MC-93-12, Room 4232, HCC-10  
400 Seventh Street SW.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr Robin & others:

Having been involved in the trucking industry all my life, working in the driver training industry for several year, helping set up several truck driver training centers, and recently authoring the enclosed books (Professional Truck Driving Manual, Volume One & Two), I feel I can offer some helpful comments and suggestions concerning the problems with truck drivers and the training of truck drivers today.

As a former truck driver I have always been disgusted with the way some drivers perform on the highway. As an employer, educator and interested observer I still don't know that I have all the answers. Some of the following suggestions I have seen work (at least part of the **time**), some are gut feeling suggestions, some are from my own personal experiences, and some are from talking to new and older drivers on the highway. Please consider the following three areas:

⇒ 1. **Training the Drivers**

(a) **Selecting new drivers.** The first problem I see with the training of new drivers is the selection of new drivers to be trained. Even though the FMCSR 398.4, (b) (2) says every driver must be able to: read and speak **the English language sufficiently** to converse with the general public, to understand highway traffic signs and signals in the **English language**, to respond to official inquiries, and to make

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for Booklets +  
Training School Curricm

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entries on reports and **records.** -It is common to see new drivers with serious problems in this area.

(b) **Attitude Problems.** The selection of new drivers should also concern the past practices of that individual in their private life. This should also including high school behavior.

*It should be remembered that an individual that tends to be abusive with others in their private life will tend to do the same when driving a truck. With the truck driving situations of today we must have Professional Individuals behind the wheels of our nations trucks. I also see an attitude problem with some of the older drivers. More on this later.*

(c) **Better and stricter screening of criminal activities.** Those that have been involved in criminal activities in their past generally do not have the self control needed to safely drive a large truck in today's environment. Past criminal activity is a tip off that the person possibly has hidden problems that may surface under stressful situations. The art of driving a truck under today's conditions is definitely stressful.

(d) **Training of new drivers.** Their are numerous problems in this area with no concrete answers. Their are however some changes that I believe would be a positive improvement.

While traveling around and visiting the various schools and talking with the administrators and instructors connected with the training of students, I have found them to be very concerned and sincere about how the students are trained. These educators are without question dedicated to their job with a high interest in giving the student the best possible training. However, they are often hindered because of the following problems:

(1) **Text Books.** One of the biggest problems I have seen in the Truck Driver Training Centers is lack of classroom training material. Numerous training centers do not have any (or very little) printed material for the instructors to use and none (other than tests) for the students. That is the reason I authored the enclosed "Professional Truck Driving Manual. "

(2) **Curriculum.** Another item that is missing in many of the training centers is a well thought out curriculum for the instructors to follow. This, in my opinion is a necessity that no training center should be without. The "Model Curriculum for Training Tractor-Trailer Drivers" produced by the FHWA is designed as a minimum standard and if & when used is not, in my opinion enough for today's high-tech drivers. I am currently working on a curriculum that I believe will be a big help. (Partial copy enclosed.)

(3) **Visuals in the classroom.** There has been much improvement in action-video material in the past few years. These have a tremendous influence on new drivers and should be a mandatory part of every training program. Quality overhead visuals appear to be in short supply. Good quality and up to date overhead visuals should also be a part of every training program.

(4) **Lab equipment.** It has been my experience that students that can actually see a "material object" in operation, will learn and never forget lessons that other wise are

almost a waste of time. "C-I Professional Training Center," Indianapolis, IN. has the best lab I have seen. It is worth stopping and viewing if you are in the area.

**(5) Time spent in training.** Two week training courses are OK for a select few students that have had past related training. It is not enough for most students even when they are coupled with driver trainers out on the highway. Having worked with and helped **further** train new drivers (that had little former training) I often felt that I was riding with a ticking time bomb. I feel strongly about this even there are those that will say this is not so.. This brings up another serious problem in the training industry.

**(6) Money needed for training.** It cost money to train truck drivers and that money is in short supply. That is why some are training drivers for two weeks or less and putting them on the highway with driver trainers.

*Almost all new drivers need more than two weeks of training before being put out on the highway in today's stressful traffic situations.*

**(7) Additional mandatory training.** One suggestion that I feel would help is additional mandatory training of all drivers. New drivers that have not had adequate training because of financial situations would benefit from this as well as older drivers. This will not be a popular decision, nor will I be highly thought of for suggesting it. But we all have a tendency to become lazy in our driving habits. Even older drivers that have worked on their driving skills for years often become pre-occupied with life's problems and develop bad habits that need to be pointed out to them.

School teachers and other Professionals are often required to take additional training to maintain their good standing in their chosen field. Truck drivers of today should also be considered as Professionals and treated as such.

## ⇒ 2. Deterrent Pressure on the Drivers

(a) **Attitude improvement training.** As mentioned earlier, older drivers as well as new drivers often have attitude problems. Some of these attitudes are not acceptable in the truck driving field. There needs to be a screening procedure placed within the industry to identify these drivers and do additional training with them or take them out of the truck driving industry if they cannot be reformed.

(b) **Safety patrols.** Fear is a great motivator and goes a long way in helping individuals change their ways. Knowing that there may be an unmarked vehicle taking pictures when not behaving will generally make the worst person behave. These same safety patrols can also send good reports that help motivate and encourage those that are doing a good job.

Safety patrols were a part of many trucking companies in the sixties and I can remember good results from it. Another factor in the sixties that proved to be a good motivator was well marked government vehicle driving around truck lots marking down license numbers. Drivers knew that their log books had better match the proper time and place when this was done.

(c) **Stronger disciplinary action.** It is a well known fact among drivers what areas levy the highest penalties and where the hot spots are. You do not see many drivers misbehaving in these areas. Fair and properly enforced laws can help drivers have a better attitude while driving. I have heard, seen, and experienced some very unfair disciplinary

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actions toward truck drivers. It is not only the drivers but also the trucking companies that have some laws levied at them that leave drivers with a bad attitude toward laws and regulations.

(d) **Criminal activity.** Drugs and prostitution seems to be declining around the truck stops. Keep up the strong pressure on these activities. As we all know, nothing good comes from these activities.

Alcohol and drug testing of drivers in my opinion should be continued with caution. Even the experts agree that once in a great while a person may be unfairly tested. This can result in a very good persons life being ruined. That is not acceptable.

### ⇒ 3. Industry improvements for the drivers

(a) **Better treatment of the drivers.** It is well recognized by many that there is not a truck driver shortage. There is a shortage of drivers willing to work in the environment that most drivers have to put up with. Changing the driver's environment will attract better drivers and keep them in the industry longer. The biggest and most important changes needed are listed below:

- (1) Time spent away from home.
- (2) Wages and hours worked per week.
- (3) Equipment.
- (4) Co-drivers.
- (5) Attitude of management toward drivers.
- (6) Poor delivery schedules.
- (7) Loading & unloading requirements.

If I can assist you please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

*Ted N. Tudor*

Ted N. Tudor

enclosures: Professional Truck Driving Manual, Volume One  
Professional Truck Driving Manual, Volume Two  
Truck Driver Training Curriculum, (partial)