

Profile: Women in Trucking

The story of four strong women with decades of experience of driving large vehicles and the statistics, struggles, advantages and dangers that go with it.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Since its earliest days, the trucking industry has been dominated by men – viewed as the only ones suitable for the “rough and tough” lifestyle, lifting heavy loads and long hours on the road.

This stereotype is becoming a relic as a growing number of women work as professional truck drivers in the United States. In fact, one out of every 10 over-the-road drivers is a woman, according to the 2019 [Freight Waves & Women in Trucking Association survey](#). The American Trucking Association says that over the past 10 years, the number of women truck drivers increased by 68%.

Women are drawn to trucking more and more for the same reason men are – it can be a lucrative and challenging job where you can set your own hours, travel, and avoid a typical 9 to 5 desk job.

At the same time, companies are recruiting more women – not just because they are great workers, but they are also extra-dedicated when it comes to safety. This is especially critical since civilian drivers are becoming more dangerous. Distracted driving – mainly the use of cellphones while behind the wheel – has become so commonplace that it was responsible for the loss of 2,841 lives in 2018 alone.

There’s a personal reason why Carrie Huffman, a truck driver from Washington, is deeply dedicated and passionate about the subject: She lost her son in a car accident involving a semi-tractor-trailer in 2018. Though the loss profoundly affected her life, it hasn’t stopped Huffman from loving her job as a trucker. But it has made her a vocal advocate for safe driving.

“In any accident, it takes 1.5 seconds to react. If you pull out in front of a truck, it takes that truck driver 1.5 seconds to even put on his brakes or to do anything,” Huffman noted. “If they don't have that second and a half, that's when you have horrible accidents like the one that happened with my son.”



Carrie Huffman

Almost 37 million trucks are registered and used for business purposes in the U.S., traveling almost 305 billion miles per year, according to the [Trade Association Trucking](#). One of the unfortunate results of all this activity is almost 500,000 trucking accidents that occur in America each year.

“Driving big trucks makes you a lot more self-aware,” said Huffman. “I know that becoming a woman truck driver has made me a better driver. The most rewarding thing in my life is that I can get into any vehicle and drive it and feel confident that I will drive it safely.”

Huffman says it’s important that the commitment to safety comes from the top. She drives for [Suddath](#), a global moving and logistics company based out of Jacksonville, and said, “I just can’t say enough about how wonderful Suddath is. They maintain a safe environment for all employees and have continued to be proactive when it comes to taking safety measures and having emergency protocols in place.”

Women have noted other benefits to working as a professional truck driver, including that trucking is one of the few occupations with wage parity. Starting salaries are higher than many other entry-level industries, and women earn the same wages as their male counterparts – all drivers are paid the same way: by the mile, hourly, or sometimes by the load.

Another major benefit is the flexibility trucking allows in a driver’s schedule. Jennifer Fuller, a moving truck driver from Texas, prefers the flexibility of trucking because it allows her to finish school while working.

“I’m a full-time contractor, but I also am a full-time college student,” Fuller said. “There are some days where I’ll work six hours a day, and then the next day I’ll work a 14-hour day. I’ve always done really well with time management, and this is one of those fields where it’s helpful, especially since you don’t have set hours.”

But women truck drivers also face their own set of challenges.

Chief among them are things male drivers are much less likely to encounter or even think about — like crass sexism, sexual harassment, and personal safety dangers at truck stops. Tamela Barner, a driver from Georgia, said she is sometimes the only woman in the room and feels intimidated.

Marina Posoa, a driver from Florida, agreed, noting that even a decade into her trucking career, customers are still surprised to see a woman in charge. “That’s probably still one of the difficult things I deal with 10 years later,” she said. “They expect a big strong man, not a woman running the move.”

While many women drivers enjoy the flexibility that trucking offers, but they also recognize the

difficulty of trying to maintain a balance between work and life. In an effort to establish that balance, Posoa chooses to spend half her time in the field and half at home.

Barner struggles to be there for her teenage daughter, who sometimes gets upset when Barner can't come home. During summers, when her daughter is off from school, Barner is occupied as summertime is the busiest season for moving.

Despite their presence in a male-dominated field, these women truck drivers have found their occupations empowering, with deep rewards. For Fuller, "girl power" has its own rewards.

Many women bring a "try harder" factor to traditionally male jobs, in everything from caring for their equipment to customer relations. Posoa, the Florida-based trucker, said she feels she must always give 110% because she is a woman.

"Professionalism is everything to me," said Posoa, who manages a team of 15 movers as a moving truck driver.

All four women love their chosen field and highly recommend it.

"I can say to any woman who wants to be in the trucking industry that it is a wonderful career," said Huffman, who is certified to drive box trucks, vans, and anything with a DOT logo on it. "And it's fun. If you're over the road, you're seeing the country for free and getting paid for it."Pr

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