

Transportation Industry in Prince Edward Island: Trucking Sector

February 2011

INDUSTRY - SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

- According to the PEI Trucking Sector Council labour market demand study, there were about 250 truck transport employers in the province, comprised of 135 with employees and the remainder, individual owner-operators (i.e. for-hire drivers).
- Government imposes weight restrictions on all Island roads during the spring season-typically put in place around the third week in March and removed in the last week of April. Roads are very vulnerable to damage from heavy loads during the Spring thaw.
- Requirements for a Class 1 (tractor-trailer) licence in PEI include: successful completion of the graduated driver licensing (GDL) Program; minimum 19 years of age; medical certificate; must meet prescribed vision standards; pass written tests on air brake operation; and pass a road test in a Class 1 vehicle.

Requirements for a Class 3A (straight truck) license: minimum 18 years of age; must have a drivers license for a minimum of two years; medical and vision tests.

- The PEI Trucking Sector Council hosts information sessions biweekly for those interested in entering into careers as Class 1A Truck Drivers (i.e. to discuss impact on family life, salary expectations, training options and possible funding for training)

Did you know...???

...that it is normal for long-haul truck drivers to be on the road for 1-2 weeks at a time?

...most trucks nowadays are equipped with a sleeper, microwave oven, fridge and television?

...approximately one in two dollars spent by trucking companies was related to labour expenses.

...trucks move 90% of all consumer products and food products within Canada?

...there are a total of about 9,000 3A license holders and 5,000 1A license holders in the province.

INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS

GROUND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Trucking

General freight trucking
Local general freight trucking
Household/office movers
Bulk liquids trucking
Forest products trucking
Motor vehicle towing

Ground passenger

Taxi service
Limousine
Charter bus
Transit/ground passenger
Scenic/Sightseeing

Other Transportation

Postal services
Couriers
Support activities
Confederation Bridge
Snow removal services



INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

(The following summaries were derived from industry consultations)

“Long-haul” truck drivers in high demand At present, labour market pressures in trucking are heavily skewed toward “long-haul” as opposed to “short-haul” operations. The demand for Class 1A license holders willing to work in long-haul is quite high and much lower for short-haul drivers due to the excess supply of Class 1A license holders wishing work close to home every day.

Trucking sector greatly influenced by economic conditions The trucking sector is highly influenced by economic conditions in North America. The recent economic downturn has had dampening effects in long-haul operations as reduced manufacturing and processing activity resulted in fewer shipments and ultimately, fewer drivers due to layoffs. In periods of strong economic activity, demand for long-haul shipments rise which creates challenges for trucking companies in finding qualified and experienced drivers.

Impact of long-haul trucking on lifestyles A significant factor deterring people from entering or staying in the long-haul driving business is the impact on personal and family lifestyles. The younger generation of long-haul license holders do not want to be away from family for extended periods (i.e. two weeks at a time). This creates a challenge for employers who have to rely on a shallow pool of drivers for long-haul operations. During high trucking activity, companies struggle to find experienced drivers, and therefore often look to hire new drivers which can result in higher operating expenses (i.e. increased insurance premiums) and risk of error (accidents or omissions).

Demographic challenges: aging drivers in long-haul About 45% of truck drivers are over the age of 45, and a quarter of the workforce is over 55 years of age. In addition, demographic trends show that drivers are retiring earlier (i.e. at 55) whereas before, it was customary for drivers to keep working beyond 65. The industry also contends with “double retirements” whereby drivers would retire once, go back to work for a year, and then retire again.

Skills shortage of qualified and experienced long-haul truck drivers A significant challenge for the trucking sector is finding qualified or experienced drivers for long-haul operations. New graduates of long-haul training programs may experience difficulty in finding good employment opportunities due to the lack of driving experience, and may leave the sector altogether as a result. In addition, some may also turn down lower quality entry-level driving jobs in hopes of securing higher quality ones

INDUSTRY INITIATIVES

(The following summaries were derived from industry consultations)

Taking steps toward better educating people and creating awareness Measures have been taken by the industry to better educate people about the trucking sector. The Trucking Sector Council for example, will invite persons interested in driver training, along with their families, to help educate them about things such as options available after graduation, lifestyle expectations in long-haul, etc.). In addition, “Industry Assessments” for new drivers are now taking place prior to training. These assessments measure a driver’s essential skills and review industry documents such as a candidate’s driver abstract, criminal record and medical information to help determine their chances of finding employment after training.

Targeting demographics: women in the trucking sector The trucking sector is predominantly male-making up 96% of the labour force. The industry has formed focus groups aimed at getting more women involved in the industry. Personal/family lifestyle pressures is a typical concern for women considering long-haul trucking as a possible career choice so the industry has been

marketing short-haul opportunities to women which offers better hours and compensation. For long-haul, “team driving” arrangements (i.e. partnering female drivers with male drivers) have become increasingly popular among companies as it yields greater efficiencies for the company (i.e. 2 drivers equals double the daily mileage), but also better hours and pay for the drivers.

Technological advancement in sector Technological advancements over the past 5 years have significantly changed the way the trucking sector operates: ranging from more fuel efficient truck engines (as per higher environmental standards) to satellite tracking systems in trucks (which indicates to a company where a truck is at all times; speed at which the truck is travelling; quality of driving; how long the truck has been idling; and so on). Companies have adopted “anti-idling” initiatives to help save on fuel costs, and drivers now rely on “auxiliary air conditioning & heating” systems to keep things running throughout the night. Many Trucks are also equipped with a laptop which allows companies to notify drivers of new “pick-ups” on the fly, with all the coordinates sent in real time.

“Earning your Wheels” National training program

Employment opportunities for new graduates are relatively lower compared to experienced drivers which can result in high turnover within the trucking sector. Graduates may be forced to leave the province to seek work opportunities elsewhere or leave the industry altogether. Local training schools provide 6 weeks of driver training which the industry believes is too short. The industry would like to see more of an apprenticeship-type model to help move graduates into good careers faster. “Earning your Wheels” is a 12 week intensive training program consisting of classroom and driving instruction, followed by 4 more weeks of supervised driving experience (minimum of 100 hours) with a program partner trucking company. The benefit of this program is twofold: provides graduates with practical driving experience and gives companies something measurable when considering new candidates for job placement.

OCCUPATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Occupations in the Trucking Sector

<p>Truck Drivers (NOC 7411) <i>Operate heavy trucks to transport goods and materials over urban, interurban, provincial and international routes. They are employed by transportation companies, manufacturing and distribution companies, moving companies and employment service agencies, or they may be self-employed.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Example titles</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Bulk goods truck driver</td> <td>Sunt truck driver</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dump truck driver</td> <td>Tow truck driver</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flatbed truck driver</td> <td>Truck driver</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Logging truck driver</td> <td>Truck driver, heavy truck</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Moving van driver</td> <td>Truck driver, tractor-trailer</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Long haul truck driver</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Bulk goods truck driver	Sunt truck driver	Dump truck driver	Tow truck driver	Flatbed truck driver	Truck driver	Logging truck driver	Truck driver, heavy truck	Moving van driver	Truck driver, tractor-trailer	Long haul truck driver		<p><i>Employment Prospects to 2012 is Good.</i></p> <p>Average annual income: \$32,385 Employed (2006 Census): 1,400 Age composition: 15-24(4%); 25-54(73%); 55+(23%)</p>
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Long haul truck driver													

INDUSTRY PARTNERS AND COMPANIES

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