

The Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership Human Resource & Training Needs Assessment Report in Brief

What is the Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership?

- The Saskatchewan Trucking Sector Partnership is the co-operative effort of **carriers** and **associated trades** companies, associations, training providers, government agencies and departments, employees, and Aboriginal groups.
- Their goal is to develop a **pro-active, long-term plan** to address the human resource and training needs at the sector level.
- Working on behalf of the **Trucking Sector Partnership Steering Committee**, Trimension Training & Consulting Group conducted research to identify the human resource and training needs of the trucking sector in the province and develop strategies for human resource and training planning.

The Trucking Industry in Saskatchewan

- The trucking sector is made up of two main types of companies: carriers and associated trades. Carriers move the goods, and associated trades companies sell and repair the equipment.
- Best estimates put the number of trucking companies in Saskatchewan at **more than 900**.
- There are over **1,900 owner-operators and for-hire carriers** in the province.
- The industry employs more than **6,900**. Total employment in trucking is difficult to ascertain. Statistics Canada estimates indicate there were over 6,100 people directly employed in trucking in 1997 on average in any given month. However, this does not account for the approximately 1,755 in the transportation equipment industry or the 1,700 in the truck, bus body and trailer industry (Statistics Canada, 1998 data). Also, the 181 companies surveyed in this study employed 4,000 people.
- **Drivers** and **mechanics** are the two largest occupational groups. However, the sector is made up of more than just those occupations; there are also *dispatchers, managers, parts personnel, office staff, welders, trainers, accountants, sales and marketing positions and many more*.

Research Methodology

- Research was conducted to identify the human resource and training needs of the trucking sector.
- Once the needs were identified, further research was conducted to gather more in-depth information about the results.
- The Steering Committee then developed recommendations and strategies to address the issues and these recommendations were explored with industry in further research.
- The following outlines the research process:
 - **30 companies were surveyed** for the General Human Resource & Training Needs Assessment
 - **151 companies were surveyed** for the Human Resource & Training Needs Assessment of Drivers and Mechanics
 - **Personal interviews** were conducted to develop the **Aboriginal recruitment strategy** and the **youth promotional strategy**, as well as to assess the current state of mechanics and drivers training.
 - Discussions of the human resource and training needs assessments and strategies were conducted with the Steering Committee, **two focus groups and eight personal intercept interviews with truck drivers.**

Human Resource and Training Needs Assessments: Research Results

General Needs Assessment

- **30** companies were surveyed about their human resource and training needs.
- Respondents said that **driver training** and the **lack of driver experience** were the most important training issues facing the industry.
- Respondents said the **shortage of skilled and experienced drivers** was the most pressing human resource issue.
- They said they expect to see an average **job growth** rate of **15%** in the sector.
- Respondents were asked to indicate their job growth expectations. Some of the fastest growing occupations are: **drivers, mechanics, in-house trainers, parts personnel and dispatchers.**

Number of Employees in Companies Interviewed and 5 Year Projections

Occupation	Current Number Employed	Expected Number Employed in 5 Years	Percent Change
Parts employees (sales and service)	41	52	+27%
Trainers	4	18	+350%
Managers/Supervisors	162	174	+7%
Dispatchers	45	53	+18%

(Please note: n=30. Due to small sample size, the results should not be extrapolated to entire population.)

- Respondents said that the main barriers to training are **the lack of time and the cost**.
- Mechanics, drivers, managers, and dispatchers are the key occupations in the industry **most in need of training** in order to **keep pace with changing technology and growth in the industry**.

The Human Resource and Training Needs of Drivers and Mechanics

- Telephone interviews were conducted with **151 carriers and associated trades companies** to assess the human resource and training issues particular to drivers and mechanics.
- To gain an indication of growth potential in the occupations of drivers and mechanics, respondents were asked to estimate how many drivers and mechanics they would employ in five years. Over the next five years companies will need **26% more drivers and 30% more mechanics**. The results are summarized below.

Number of Mechanics and Drivers in Companies Interviewed and 5 Year Projections

	Current Number Employed	Predicted Number Employed in 5 Years	Percent Change
Mechanics (n=68)	368	478	+30%
Drivers (n=110)	2,108	2,661	+26%

- The average **turnover** rate **among drivers is 27%** and among **mechanics turnover is 18%**.
- While recruitment of drivers and mechanics is an important issue, retaining existing staff is equally important.
- Mechanics need training in **new technology, electronics and computers**. They also need the ability to learn continuously, work independently and anticipate and solve problems.

- Drivers need **safe driving skills** as well as **knowledge of mechanics, computers and regulations**. Training issues must be addressed during basic training, on-the-job and in skills upgrading.
- There **tends to be fewer people over 55 employed as drivers and mechanics** compared to provincial labour force averages. The age demographics of drivers and mechanics are summarized below.

Age Demographics of Mechanics and Drivers

	Under 24	25-34	35-44	45-54	Over 55
Mechanics	17%	39%	32%	10%	2%
Drivers	8%	39%	37%	12.5%	3.5%
Provincial Averages of Employed Labour Force	17%	27%	25%	16%	15%

(Please note: The Provincial Averages are from 1991 Statistics Canada Census data.)

- 151 respondents were asked about the earning potential of drivers and mechanics. The following two tables summarize the results.

Mechanics Earnings

Apprenticeship level	Average Hourly Wage	Average Yearly Salary*
First year apprentice (n=37)	\$10.93	\$22,734
Second year apprentice (n=36)	\$11.74	\$24,419
Third year apprentice (n=39)	\$13.50	\$28,080
Fourth year apprentice (n=29)	\$14.97	\$31,137
Journeyman (n=49)	\$18.70	\$38,896

(* Based on a 40 hour work week, 52 weeks per year. Due to small sample size, results should be interpreted with caution.)

Drivers Earnings

\$15,000 - 19,999	\$20,000 – 24,999	\$25,000 – 29,999	\$30,000 – 34,999	\$35,000 – 39,999	\$40,000 – 44,999	45,000 – 49,999	\$50,000+
6%	7%	7%	16%	20.5%	13%	14.5%	15%

- The average provincial full-time, full-year income is \$28,118. Including part-time workers, the average provincial income falls to \$21,632 (Statistics Canada, 1991)
- The **shortage of skilled and qualified drivers and mechanics** was identified as a pressing human resource issue.
- Research has shown that companies will be hiring 30% more mechanics in five years, yet the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) is able to train only a fraction of applicants to the truck and transport mechanics program at the Woodland Campus and the heavy duty mechanics program at the Kelsey Campus.

Recommendations

The Trucking Sector Partnership Steering Committee developed recommendations and strategies in response to the human resource and training needs assessment. They are divided into four key areas: recruitment, retention, training, and the Sector Partnership. The full recommendations and the accompanying strategies can be found in the final report.

Issue	Recommendations
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships between industry and training providers. • Promote a professional image of the trucking industry. • Promote careers to youth, women and Aboriginal people.
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work together to address issues of retention at the industry level. • Develop a promotional campaign that stresses the importance of training and career development. • Discuss methods of successfully integrating Aboriginal people into the workplace.
Basic Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a continuous industry training needs assessment and curriculum review process. • Incorporate internships into driver training programs. • Develop a curriculum for dispatcher training. • Explore strategies to increase the number of training spaces for mechanics. • Explore alternate methods of training delivery for mechanics. • Inform and educate high school educators on the role of the trucking industry and career opportunities.
On-the-Job Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train-the-trainer programs. • In-cab coach training for drivers. • Promote the importance of communication and professionalism within the industry. • Provide management training.
Skills Upgrading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress the importance of continuous skills upgrading. • Develop a skills profile for all occupations.
The Sector Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the Sector Partnership. • Developing long term strategies for updating labour market information. • Communicate the need for funding for training to appropriate funding agencies. • Communicate with the Department of Education.

Research completed on behalf of the Trucking Sector Partnership by Trimension Training & Consulting Group Inc. Funding Provided by Saskatchewan Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training. In co-operation with industry, training providers and other stakeholders.