

CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY – 2025



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Critical Issues in the Trucking Industry – 2025

Now three years into a historic freight recession, freight rates and tonnage have remained stagnant across the trucking industry at the same time that per-mile costs increased considerably faster than inflation – a perfect storm that is squeezing fleet operating margins and necessitating extensive cost-cutting measures.¹ Total trucking employment and driver employment specifically continued to fall year-over-year amid layoffs, market exits and bankruptcies. Unfortunately, the challenging economic conditions keep these freight capacity reductions from translating into improved rates.²

Meanwhile, conditions in the broader American economy became markedly more uncertain in 2025. Manufacturing production surpassed 2024 levels but not 2022 levels, and housing starts continued to falter, primarily due to higher mortgage rates.³ The labor market cooled over the year, with unemployment reaching 4.3 percent in August for the first time since 2021.⁴ Monthly inflation rates remained under 3 percent in 2025 despite trending upward since April, but disposable personal income growth decelerated.⁵ Retail sales, after a flat first half of 2025, rose over the summer months; in August, however, the rate of retail sales growth surpassed that of disposable income, mostly driven by record-high consumer debt levels, with the consequence possibly being limited retail sales going forward.⁶ These economic headwinds also underscore truck drivers' growing concerns over compensation.

In this adverse operating environment, the rising cost of risk loomed large. Insurance premiums rose by an additional 3.0 percent per mile in 2024, consolidating the previous year's 12.5 percent increase, and additional data suggests that renewals in the first half of 2025 rose by nearly 10 percent.⁷ Despite preliminary data suggesting a fourth-straight annual decrease in large truck crashes, insurers continued to experience unprofitability in the commercial auto segment due to rising loss severity, increasing

¹ DAT Freight & Analytics, "DAT Trendlines: National Van Rates" (accessed on October 16, 2025), <https://www.dat.com/trendlines/van/national-rates>; ATA, "ATA Truck Tonnage Index Rose 0.9% in August" (September 23, 2025), <https://www.trucking.org/news-insights/ata-truck-tonnage-index-rose-09-august>; Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, *An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update* (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/an-analysis-of-the-operational-costs-of-trucking-2025-update/>.

² David Taube, "Trucking market exist outweigh entrants in Q3, suggesting possible tightening," *Trucking Dive* (October 9, 2025), <https://www.truckingdive.com/news/fmcsa-q3-2025-capacity-data-operating-authority/801876/>; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation – August 2025" (September 5, 2025), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, "Monthly New Residential Construction" (August 2023), <https://www.census.gov/construction/nrc/pdf/newresconst.pdf>; U.S. Federal Reserve, "Industrial Production and Capacity Utilization" (September 17, 2024), <https://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/g17/current/>.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The Employment Situation – August 2025" (September 5, 2025), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>.

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Consumer Price Index Summary" (September 11, 2024), <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Personal Income and Outlays, August 2024" (September 26, 2025), <https://www.bea.gov/news/2025/personal-income-and-outlays-august-2025>.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Advance Monthly Sales for Retail and Food Services" (September 16, 2025), https://www.census.gov/retail/marts/www/marts_current.pdf

⁷ Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, *An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update* (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/an-analysis-of-the-operational-costs-of-trucking-2025-update/>; The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers, "Commercial Property/Casualty Market Index Q2/2025" (August 13, 2025), <https://www.ciab.com/resources/q2-2025-p-c-market-survey/>.

claims costs, and social inflation's impact on litigation.⁸ In response, litigation reformers notched victories in nine states thus far this year – including damages caps, eliminating phantom damages, and third-party litigation funding disclosures – but still face counter-reform headwinds from the plaintiff bar.⁹

Federal policy changes generated new uncertainties and opportunities for trucking as well. Tariffs and ambiguity over their implementation could contribute to inflation and influence consumer demand over the coming year.¹⁰ Truck-tractor import tariffs of 25 percent, currently scheduled for November 1, are poised to significantly increase motor carriers' equipment costs – a line-item that rose by over 50 percent in the last 5 years.¹¹ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acted to rescind various vehicle emission rules pertaining to NOx, electric vehicle mandates, and the EPA's authority to regulate emissions altogether.¹² Amid a flurry of its own regulatory activity, the U.S. Department of Transportation set new English language requirement guidelines for truck drivers that have already had a measurable enforcement impact.¹³

The trucking industry faced severe challenges and upheavals in 2025, and it faces still more in the year to come. Responding to these challenges will require the collective efforts of motor carriers, state and federal associations, governmental agencies, and industry suppliers. The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) Top Industry Issues report has facilitated this vital collaboration for over 20 years by making the voice of the trucking industry heard – from drivers to executives and everyone in between – and by helping to identify pathways forward.

Methodology

ATRI's 2025 Top Industry Issues (TII) report relied on a robust data collection initiative. A comprehensive list of issues and related counterstrategies were initially identified in collaboration with multiple freight stakeholder groups. Several issues on the 2025 survey were added based on the preponderance of write-in responses in the 2024 survey. Additionally, issues in the 2024 survey that received a limited number of votes were removed from the 2025 survey.

⁸ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, "A&I Crash Statistics" (accessed on October 16, 2025), <https://ai.fmcsa.dot.gov/CrashStatistics>; AM Best, "Stuck In Reverse: Commercial Auto Losses Keep Mounting" (September 22, 2025), <https://news.ambest.com/pr/PressContent.aspx?refnum=36511&altsrc=2>.

⁹ ATA, "Lawsuit Abuse Resource Hub" (accessed on June 13, 2025), <https://www.trucking.org/lawsuitabuse>.

¹⁰ Bart Hobijn and Fernanda Nechio, "The Effects of Tariffs on Inflation and Production Costs," Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco (May 19, 2025), <https://www.frbsf.org/research-and-insights/publications/economic-letter/2025/05/effects-of-tariffs-on-inflation-and-production-costs/>.

¹¹ Stephanie Brinley and Andrej Divis, "US plans for new truck tariffs on commercial vehicles," *S&P Global* (October 7, 2025), <https://www.spglobal.com/automotive-insights/en/rapid-impact-analysis/us-plans-new-truck-tariffs-commercial-vehicles>; Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, *An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update* (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/an-analysis-of-the-operational-costs-of-trucking-2025-update/>.

¹² Jason Cannon, "EPA set to unravel 'disastrous' federal trucking emissions regulations," *Commercial Carrier Journal* (July 29, 2025), <https://www.ccjdigital.com/regulations/emissions/article/15751712/trump-epa-set-to-unravel-federal-trucking-emissions-regulations>.

¹³ Eric Miller, "DOT Moves to Slash Dozens of Trucking Regulations," *Transport Topics* (May 30, 2025), <https://www.ttnews.com/articles/dot-trucking-deregulation>; Rachel Hatzipanagos, "New English exam sidelines 6,000 truckers, testing U.S. supply chain," *Washington Post* (October 16, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2025/10/16/commercial-trucker-drivers-english-proficiency-trump/>.

ATRI then conducted a large-scale survey distribution using its own contact database (40,000+ contacts), major trucking industry trade press, truck driver groups and through the 50 State Trucking Associations. This year's survey launched September 2, 2025, and remained open for responses through October 10, 2025.

The online survey asked respondents to select their top three choices from a list of 27 critical industry issues and subsequently rank their top three preferred strategies that correspond to each selected issue. Write-in responses were allowed for both the top issues and the strategies.

The Top 10 list was developed using a formula that assigned weighted values to respondents' rankings of issues facing the industry. An issue ranked by a respondent as most important received three points, while an issue ranked second received two points and an issue ranked third received one point.

The sum total of points for each issue generated the prioritized list of top industry concerns. For example, the number one issue was the one receiving the highest number of points. Additionally, the analysis utilized an Industry Concern Index (ICI) to illustrate the relative level of concern from one issue to the next. The top-ranked issue received an ICI of 100 against which all other issues were indexed. Therefore, an issue with an ICI of 50 has half the level of concern as the top issue, based on points received.

Each respondent could rank three strategies, either write-ins or pre-identified by the freight stakeholder collaboration previously mentioned, that best address each of their top three issues. The percentage of respondents selecting each strategy as their number one choice generated the strategy ranking.

Over 4,200 industry stakeholders across North America weighed in with their opinions on the most important issues affecting the trucking industry and the broader supply chain.

The 2025 TII respondents represented motor carrier executives and personnel (46.7%), professional truck drivers (29.8%) and other industry stakeholders (23.4%), including industry suppliers, driver trainers, and law enforcement. In addition to providing an overall ranking, this report includes separate Top 10 lists for both commercial driver and motor carrier respondents. It also includes a breakout of the top concerns by company drivers and owner-operators / independent contractors.

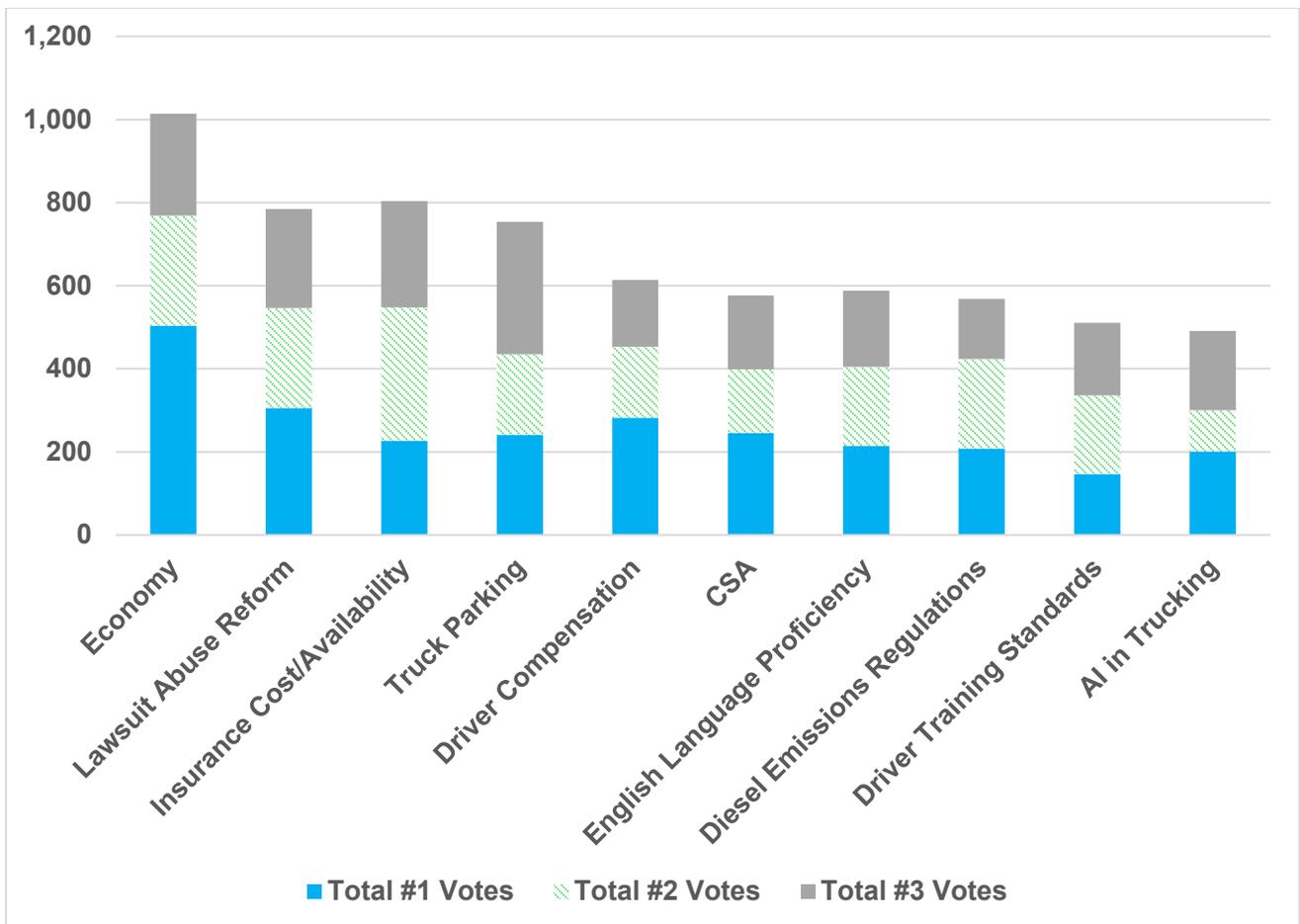
This report presents the findings of the 2025 annual survey and analysis and compares the findings of previous years' results (Table 4) – providing insight into both the ongoing and emerging priorities of the trucking industry.

The Top 10 Trucking Industry Issues

Across all respondents, the **Economy** was once again selected as the top industry concern, the third year in a row that it has taken the top spot. **Lawsuit Abuse Reform** rose one spot this year to be the number two concern, followed by **Insurance Cost/Availability**, which also rose one spot from the 2024 survey. The lack of available **Truck Parking** dropped two spots to number four overall and once again rounding out the top five this year was **Driver Compensation** (Figure 1).

Four new issues emerged in this year’s top 10, including **English Language Proficiency for Drivers** at number seven, **Diesel Emissions Regulations** at number eight, **Driver Training Standards** at number nine and **Artificial Intelligence in Trucking** at number 10 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Distribution of Industry Issue Prioritization Scores*



*The bars reflect total points from first, second and third place rankings. Issues that generate more second and third place rankings may appear to have a higher ranking than preceding issues.

1. Economy

Ranked 1 st 12.3%	Ranked 2 nd 6.7%	Ranked 3 rd 6.1%	Total Share 24.8%	Industry Concern Index 100
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For the third year in a row, concern over the state of the nation’s Economy was the top-ranked industry issue. The combined impacts of rising operational costs with the lingering freight recession are leading to more carriers filing for bankruptcy.¹⁴ Non-fuel operating costs documented in ATRI’s annual *Operational Costs of Trucking* research were \$1.779 per mile, the highest in the 17-year history of the research.¹⁵

Coming on the heels of two years of reduced freight demand and declining freight rates, the addition of increased – and often changing – tariffs this year has introduced additional strain and uncertainty for the freight industry.¹⁶ From decreases in container volumes to potentially significant increases in the cost of equipment, the industry’s economic challenges do not appear to be abating any time soon.¹⁷

The economic challenges extend beyond motor carriers and truck drivers to include those who supply the industry as well. Recent reports show that truck orders are down 44 percent year over year based on a number of factors, including tariffs.¹⁸ Among industry supplier respondents to this year’s survey, over 46 percent selected the economy as one of their top concerns.

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Quantify the impact of increasing trucking operational costs on supply chains and the nation’s economy, including the impact of new tariffs.* ATRI’s *Operational Costs of Trucking* research documented three years of industry cost increases that outpaced inflation, while average profit margins were below 2 percent for most sectors of the industry, with the truckload sector experiencing average profit margins of -2.3 percent.¹⁹ The combined pressure of these factors on the trucking industry will play out across the broader supply chains and understanding how trucking’s economic challenges impact the national economy is the preferred strategy of 44.6 percent of respondents.

¹⁴ Quinn Donoghue, “8 more trucking companies go bankrupt, 2 shut down,” *Equipment Finance News* (August 12, 2025), <https://equipmentfinancenews.com/news/transportation/8-more-trucking-companies-go-bankrupt-2-shut-down/>

¹⁵ Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update, American Transportation Research Institute (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/new-atr-report-shows-trucking-profitability-severly-squeezed-by-high-costs-low-rates/>

¹⁶ Deborah Lockridge, “How Latest Trump Tariffs Could Affect Trucking,” *Heavy Duty Trucking* (August 21, 2025), <https://www.truckinginfo.com/10235316/how-new-trump-tariffs-could-affect-trucking>

¹⁷ Marcus Williams, “US truck tariff to come into effect on November 1, Trump confirms,” *Automotive Logistics* (October 7, 2025), <https://www.automotivelogistics.media/news/us-truck-tariff-to-come-into-effect-on-november-1-trump-confirms/675741>

¹⁸ Connor D. Wolf, “Class 8 Truck Orders Slide 44% as Tariffs Strain,” *Transport Topics* (October 9, 2025), <https://www.ttnews.com/articles/truck-orders-september-2025>.

¹⁹ Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update, American Transportation Research Institute (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/new-atr-report-shows-trucking-profitability-severly-squeezed-by-high-costs-low-rates/>

b) *Research the patterns and causes of the current, prolonged freight recession.* The preferred strategy of 23.2 percent of respondents is to fully understand the underlying causes of the current freight recession to better prepare for future downturns. While past freight recessions lasted 1.5 to 2 years, the current 3-year recession continues with little optimism for its end.²⁰

c) *Research why industry supply has been slow to adjust to changes in freight demand including potential factors such as the illegal use of B-1 drivers, delayed equipment repossession, and factoring services, among others.* Similar to understanding the demand side of the current freight recession, 21.5 percent of respondents believe the top strategy is to quantify what supply factors – and to what degree each impacts the industry – are at play in the industry’s slow response to decreased freight demand. Among these factors is the illegal use of B-1 visa drivers in cabotage, delivering point-to-point freight in the U.S.²¹ One of the top research priorities for 2025 identified by ATRI’s Research Advisory Committee (RAC) is an examination of the scale and impacts of cabotage on the trucking industry.²²

²⁰ Cliff Abbott, “Too many trucks for available freight keeps rates at unprofitable levels,” *The Trucker* (April 8, 2025), <https://www.thetrucker.com/trucking-news/business/too-many-trucks-for-available-freight-keeps-rates-at-unprofitable-levels>

²¹ Noi Mahoney, “Illegal use of foreign drivers undercuts US trucking industry, stakeholders say,” *FreightWaves* (May 8, 2025), <https://www.freightwaves.com/news/illegal-use-of-foreign-drivers-undercuts-us-trucking-industry-stakeholders-say>

²² American Transportation Research Institute, “ATRI Releases New Research Priorities for 2025” (April 24, 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/04/atri-releases-new-research-priorities-for-2025/>

2. Lawsuit Abuse Reform

Ranked 1 st 7.5%	Ranked 2 nd 6.1%	Ranked 3 rd 6.0%	Total Share 19.2%	Industry Concern Index 71.6
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As the number two overall industry concern, Lawsuit Abuse Reform has now reached its highest ranking in the 21-year history of the Top Industry Issues Survey. Recognizing how impactful lawsuit abuse continues to be to the trucking industry, ATRI's RAC prioritized a 2024 research topic to update ATRI's 2020 nuclear verdicts research.²³ In more recent years, the industry has seen verdicts against industry defendants exceed \$100 million.²⁴

While the industry has seen some successful legislation at the state-level to address lawsuit abuse, the tactics employed by the plaintiff bar to target the industry also continue to expand, from third-party litigation funding to underwrite plaintiff cases to staged accidents designed to extort large settlements from trucking and insurance companies. The latter is the target of new federal legislation introduced in April 2025. The Staged Accident Fraud Prevention Act would make it a federal crime to engineer a crash with a commercial motor vehicle.²⁵

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Promote state-level reform to cap damages paid to plaintiffs in truck-involved crashes.* State-level reform to put limits on the amounts that can be awarded to plaintiffs for non-economic damages is the preferred strategy of the majority (58.0%) of respondents. Iowa passed legislation in 2023 that specifically targets non-economic damages in trucking cases, with a cap of \$5 million allowed under the law.²⁶

b) *Advocate for elimination of "phantom" damages.* Phantom damages are the costs built into verdicts and settlements representing the delta between medical costs that plaintiffs submit versus the actual medical costs paid. These inflated costs often result in a non-compensatory windfall for the plaintiff and plaintiff's attorney. 18.3 percent of respondents believe that the best approach for reducing lawsuit abuse is to eliminate phantom damages. The Georgia legislature was recently recognized for its passage of comprehensive legislation to address lawsuit abuse, including elimination of phantom damages.²⁷

²³ American Transportation Research Institute, "ATRI Releases New Research Priorities for 2024" (May 28, 2024), <https://truckingresearch.org/2024/05/atri-releases-new-research-priorities-for-2024/>.

²⁴ Noel Fletcher, "'Thermonuclear' Verdicts on the Rise, Report Finds," *Transport Topics* (August 21, 2025), <https://www.ttnews.com/articles/thermonuclear-verdicts-rise>.

²⁵ American Trucking Associations, "Trucking Industry Backs Bill Cracking Down on Costly, Dangerous Staged Accidents" (accessed on October 13, 2025), <https://www.trucking.org/news-insights/trucking-industry-backs-bill-cracking-down-costly-dangerous-staged-accidents>.

²⁶ Robin Opsahl, "Gov. Kim Reynolds signs law capping certain damages in trucking lawsuits," *Iowa Capital Dispatch* (May 12, 2023), <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/briefs/gov-kim-reynolds-signs-law-capping-certain-damages-in-trucking-lawsuits/>.

²⁷ American Tort Reform Association, "Georgia's Historic Tort Reform Wins National Recognition in ATRA's 2025 'Legislative HeatCheck'" (accessed on October 13, 2025), <https://atra.org/georgia-historic-tort-reform-2025-legislative-heatcheck/>.

c) *Advocate for the disclosure and discoverability of third-party litigation funding agreements in lawsuits.* Third-party litigation funding is used to provide front-end capital for plaintiffs' cases to cover items like accident reconstruction, expert witnesses, focus groups and other litigation tools. The funding is typically provided on a contingency basis and is repaid at a premium out of a judgement or out-of-court settlement favoring the plaintiff. The top strategy for 15.3 percent of respondents to address lawsuit abuse is to advocate for the disclosure and discoverability of third-party funding in lawsuits. Georgia's tort reform package included third-party litigation funding transparency, as did recent legislation enacted in Kansas and Oklahoma.²⁸

²⁸ Keith Goble, "States adopt third-party litigation-financing reform," *Landline Media* (June 30, 2025), <https://landline.media/states-adopt-third-party-litigation-financing-reform/>

3. Insurance Cost/Availability

Ranked 1 st 5.5%	Ranked 2 nd 8.2%	Ranked 3 rd 6.4%	Total Share 19.6%	Industry Concern Index 69.0
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The inaugural Top Industry Issues Survey in 2005 had Insurance Costs ranked as the number three overall industry concern and 21 years later, Insurance Cost/Availability is once again the number three overall industry concern, up one spot from last year.

This climb in ranking is not surprising. ATRI’s *Operational Costs of Trucking* research documented insurance premium cost increases of 36 percent over the past eight years.²⁹ While there are multiple factors driving these increases, the need for lawsuit abuse reform is inextricably linked to the losses incurred by motor carriers and their insurers as a result of excessive litigation.³⁰

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Develop a framework for potential upfront insurance premium reductions when drivers and carriers adopt proven safety technologies.* The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) sponsored TechCelerate program is designed to accelerate the trucking industry’s adoption of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) to reduce fatalities and prevent injuries and crashes.³¹ Identifying a way to quantify the value of safety investments such as ADAS technologies and secure commensurate reductions in upfront insurance premiums is the preferred strategy of 42.7 percent of respondents.

b) *Educate the public on the role that lawsuit abuse plays in increasing consumer prices and insurance costs.* ATRI research has documented the clear nexus between lawsuit abuse and rising insurance rates in the trucking industry.³² More recent research from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce quantified the cost for consumers from excessive litigation, with a total of \$4,207 per American household.³³ Continued work to illuminate these costs for consumers is the preferred strategy of 36.9 percent of respondents.

c) *Research trends in carrier safety management practices and their impact on insurance premium costs.* A small percentage of respondents (9.6) believe that the best approach for mitigating insurance premium cost increases is research to quantify which safety management practices have the greatest safety return on investment. In addition

²⁹ Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update, American Transportation Research Institute (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/new-atr-report-shows-trucking-profitability-severly-squeezed-by-high-costs-low-rates/>

³⁰ Pamela De Leon, “Why insurance premiums keep rising, and what fleets can do about it,” *Commercial Carrier Journal* (April 11, 2025), <https://www.ccjdigital.com/business/article/15742595/why-insurance-premiums-keep-rising-and-what-fleets-can-do-about-it>

³¹ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, “TechCelerate Now” (accessed on October 13, 2025), <https://techceleratenow.org/>

³² Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, *The Impact of Rising Insurance Costs on the Trucking Industry*, American Transportation Research Institute (February 2022), <https://truckingresearch.org/2022/02/the-impact-of-rising-insurance-costs-on-the-trucking-industry/>.

³³ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, “Lawsuit Costs are Escalating, and U.S. Households are Paying the Price” (accessed on October 13, 2025), <https://www.uschamber.com/lawsuits/lawsuit-costs-are-escalating-and-u-s-households-are-paying-the-price>.

to safety technology deployment, ATRI research has shown that trucking fleets that are members of state and national associations have fewer crashes and receive fewer roadside violations than fleets that have never joined an industry association.³⁴ The research identified that networking and sharing of best practices between association members improves safety for all and as such, the research proposed potential insurance premium reductions for fleets that are members of industry associations.

³⁴ Abbigail Markus and Dan Murray, *Membership Counts: Associations with Safety*, American Transportation Research Institute (August 2023), <https://truckingresearch.org/2023/08/membership-counts-associations-with-safety/>.

4. Truck Parking

Ranked 1 st 5.9%	Ranked 2 nd 4.9%	Ranked 3 rd 8.0%	Total Share 18.4%	Industry Concern Index 62.5
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After two years as the number two overall industry concern, the lack of available Truck Parking dropped two spots to the number four concern. However, among truck drivers, it ranks as the second most critical industry issue (Table 2). This is one top concern however, where despite the economic headwinds facing the trucking industry, there has been some positive news this year. Among states advancing truck parking solutions, Ohio and Pennsylvania both recently announced expansion of truck parking capacity, with 1,400 spots to be added in Ohio and 1,200 in Pennsylvania.³⁵

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Advocate for a dedicated federal funding program to increase truck parking capacity at freight-critical locations.* A plurality of respondents (37.3%) believe that a dedicated federal funding source is the best strategy for addressing this perennial industry challenge. Recent ATRI research conducted with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) found that a majority of states (74%) had not worked to acquire land or right-of-way to expand truck parking in the past 10 years, in part citing the lack of funding to do so.³⁶ Given the attention being focused on the truck parking challenge by federal leaders, recently introduced federal legislation would provide the states with much needed funding to expand truck parking.³⁷

b) *Encourage local and regional governments to reduce the regulatory burdens limiting the construction and expansion of truck parking facilities.* A number of factors at the local and regional level make it challenging for the siting and/or expansion of private-sector parking projects. These include purchasing right-of-way and facility maintenance costs (particularly in major metropolitan areas), noise and lighting abatement regulations, and, in some instances, mitigating environmental impacts for nearby agriculture.³⁸ Encouraging the elimination of these regulatory hurdles and potentially identifying new truck parking at the local and regional levels is the preferred strategy of 24.9 percent of respondents.

c) *Support state Department of Transportation applications for U.S. DOT grants to expand truck parking.* Absent a dedicated federal source of funding for truck parking, states will need to apply for parking capacity expansion resources through one of several U.S. DOT infrastructure investment programs. ATRI’s joint research with

³⁵ American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, “State DOTs Investing in Additional Truck Parking,” *AASHTO Journal*, (October 10, 2025), <https://aashtojournal.transportation.org/state-dots-investing-in-additional-truck-parking/>.

³⁶ Andrew Fain and Dan Murray, *Expanding Truck Parking at Public Rest Areas*, American Transportation Research Institute (April 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/04/expanding-truck-parking-at-public-rest-areas/>.

³⁷ Eugene Mulero, “House Panel Approves \$200 Million for Truck Parking,” *Transport Topics* (July 21, 2025), <https://www.ttnews.com/articles/house-truck-parking>

³⁸ Ken Carlson, “Stanislaus OKs truck parking facilities as it tries to limit farmland conversion,” *Modesto Bee* (August 20, 2025), <https://www.modbee.com/news/politics-government/article311775151.html>

AASHTO found that 40 percent of states had applied for U.S. DOT grant funding to expand truck parking capacity. Continued industry support for these state applications for U.S. DOT funding is the preferred strategy of 23.9 percent of respondents.

5. Driver Compensation

Ranked 1 st 6.9%	Ranked 2 nd 4.4%	Ranked 3 rd 4.0%	Total Share 15.0%	Industry Concern Index 59.0
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Driver Compensation once again retained its number five ranking in this year’s survey, and among truck drivers, it was the top concern (Table 2). ATRI’s *Operational Costs of Trucking* research found that driver wages – the primary contributor to cost increases in the three years following the COVID-19 pandemic – rose by just 2.4 percent, half a percentage point less than inflation.³⁹ A recent analysis focused on truck driver job satisfaction found that predictable pay was cited by 81 percent of drivers when asked why they would look for employment elsewhere.⁴⁰

While the preponderance of votes for Driver Compensation as a top industry concern were entered by drivers, 8.1 percent of motor carriers selected Driver Compensation as one of their top concerns, reflecting the challenge of continuing to increase driver pay against a backdrop of lower freight volumes and declining rates.

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Quantify the economic impact of compensating truck drivers for all hours worked, including detention time and congestion delays.* The top strategy ranked by respondents (41.7%) for addressing Driver Compensation is to quantify the economic impact of compensating truck drivers for all hours worked. ATRI research has documented the impacts of driver productivity lost to both detention and congestion, coming in at 135.9 million hours annually for detention and 1.2 billion hours annually as a result of congestion, underscoring how impactful these delays are on drivers’ compensation.⁴¹

b) *Analyze truck driver compensation models and their relationship to driver satisfaction, retention, and productivity.* Understanding how the trucking industry’s myriad compensation models – per-mile, per-hour, per-load, percentage of revenue – relate to driver satisfaction is the top strategy recommended by 30.5 percent of respondents.

c) *Research and prioritize the effectiveness of carrier programs that financially incentivize drivers for retention, safety performance, and fuel economy.* Quantifying the efficacy of bonus programs for rewarding drivers is the recommended strategy of 17.8 percent of respondents. ATRI’s *Operational Costs of Trucking* research found that,

³⁹ Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, *An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update*, American Transportation Research Institute (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/new-atrri-report-shows-trucking-profitability-severly-squeezed-by-high-costs-low-rates/>

⁴⁰ Pamella De Leon, “Truck driver pay falls behind other careers, widening a \$3,500 wage gap,” *Commercial Carrier Journal* (April 22, 2025), <https://www.cjdigital.com/business/article/15743117/truck-driver-pay-falls-behind-other-careers-widening-a-3500-wage-gap>

⁴¹ Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, *Costs and Consequences of Truck Driver Detention: A Comprehensive Analysis*, American Transportation Research Institute (September 2024), <https://truckingresearch.org/2024/09/costs-and-consequences-of-truck-driver-detention-a-comprehensive-analysis/>; Jeffery Short and Alex Leslie, *Cost of Congestion to the Trucking Industry: 2024 Update*, American Transportation Research Institute (December 2024), <https://truckingresearch.org/2024/12/cost-of-congestion-to-the-trucking-industry-2024-update/>.

even in a soft economy, starting bonuses were the highest average amount among the four bonus types analyzed, at \$2,122. With a focus on retaining the best drivers through the economic downturn, driver retention bonuses increased by 42.1 percent from 2023 to 2024.⁴²

⁴² Alex Leslie and Dan Murray, An Analysis of the Operational Costs of Trucking: 2025 Update, American Transportation Research Institute (July 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/07/new-atri-report-shows-trucking-profitability-severly-squeezed-by-high-costs-low-rates/>

6. Compliance Safety Accountability (CSA)

Ranked 1 st 6.0%	Ranked 2 nd 3.9%	Ranked 3 rd 4.5%	Total Share 14.1%	Industry Concern Index 53.4
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Compliance Safety Accountability – FMCSA’s safety measurement system – rose one spot this year to be the sixth overall top concern, while among motor carrier respondents, it ranked fourth overall. In November of last year, FMCSA announced a number of changes that it intended to make to CSA in response to industry concerns.⁴³ Those changes include reorganizing several BASICS (which will now be called compliance categories), simplifying the severity weights, and placing a greater focus on more recent violations.⁴⁴ However, FMCSA has not – as of this writing – announced when those changes will be implemented and as a result, CSA continues to rank high among survey respondents.

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Encourage FMCSA to review and address enforcement disparities / geographic variations in enforcement between states and local jurisdictions that impact CSA scores, which may unfairly penalize carriers based solely on where they operate.* The top strategy for addressing concerns with CSA is to account for state and local enforcement disparities, which can penalize carriers for nothing more than where they operate. That strategy was ranked first by 38.1 percent of respondents. ATRI research in 2014 found that normalizing state enforcement disparities would impact individual carrier safety scores anywhere from a 17.7 point decrease to a 12.2 point increase from the actual scores reported by the SMS.⁴⁵ ATRI followed up that research with an analysis that identified the top 10 states in terms of enforcement effectiveness, utilizing the findings of the enforcement disparities research along with ATRI’s crash predictor model.⁴⁶

b) *Work with FMCSA to update its carrier prioritization methodology, improve its accuracy, continuously review and evaluate crash preventability factors, and enhance transparency in CSA.* FMCSA has indicated that its proposed changes to CSA will include the exclusion of non-preventable crashes from score calculations, reorganizing more than 2,000 violation codes into approximately 100 violation groups of similar safety behaviors, and adjust the intervention thresholds for three compliance categories to focus on carriers with the highest crash rates.⁴⁷ 35.7 percent of respondents believe

⁴³ Rob Abbott, “Changes to the CSA program are coming,” *Fleet Owner* (April 24, 2025), <https://www.fleetowner.com/perspectives/ideaxchange/blog/55284638/major-changes-coming-to-fmcsa-safety-measurement-system-what-fleets-need-to-know>

⁴⁴ FMCSA, “CSA Prioritization Preview: Coming Soon – An Enhanced Safety Measurement System” (accessed on October 15, 2025), <https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/prioritizationpreview>.

⁴⁵ Amanda Weber and Dan Murray, *Evaluating the Impact of Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement Disparities on Carrier Safety Performance*, American Transportation Research Institute (July 2014), <https://truckingresearch.org/2014/07/evaluating-the-impact-of-commercial-motor-vehicle-enforcement-disparities-on-carrier-safety-performance/>

⁴⁶ Amanda Weber and Dan Murray, *Technical Brief: Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement – Top 10 High Performance States*, American Transportation Research Institute (October 2014), <https://truckingresearch.org/2014/10/cmv-enforcement-top-ten-high-performance-states-tech-brief-request/>.

⁴⁷ FMCSA, “CSA Prioritization Preview: Coming Soon – An Enhanced Safety Measurement System” (accessed on October 15, 2025), <https://csa.fmcsa.dot.gov/prioritizationpreview>.

that continued collaboration with FMCSA on these and other improvements is the best approach for addressing concerns with the safety management system.

c) Support FMCSA's work to speed up the DataQ process by improving internal processes for reviewing Request for Data Reviews (RDRs). 14.4 percent of respondents believe that the best strategy for improving CSA is to support FMCSA's work to improve the processes for reviewing carrier data requests so that they operate as efficiently – and quickly – as possible.

7. English Language Proficiency for Drivers

Ranked 1 st 5.2%	Ranked 2 nd 4.9%	Ranked 3 rd 4.6%	Total Share 14.4%	Industry Concern Index 52.8
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English Language Proficiency for Drivers (ELP) was added to the list of issues in the 2025 survey due to the significant number of write-in responses to the 2024 survey that indicated that drivers operating without being proficient in the English language was a top industry concern.

Then, in April of this year, President Trump issued Executive Order 14286, which required the Secretary of Transportation to rescind the 2016 guidance document titled, “English Language Proficiency Testing and Enforcement Policy.”⁴⁸ It further required that the Secretary of Transportation – through FMCSA – issue new guidance outlining revised inspection procedures necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements that truck drivers must “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 entries on reports and records.”

English Language Proficiency for Drivers is now the 7th overall top industry concern and among truck drivers, it ranks as the third most pressing concern (Table 2).

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Identify gaps in CDL training and testing that allow drivers to be licensed without proficiency in the English language.* A fatal crash on the Florida Turnpike in August of this year highlighted the significant safety risks from drivers who are issued commercial drivers licenses (CDLs) without meeting ELP requirements.⁴⁹ A majority of respondents (57%) believe that the preferred strategy for addressing ELP is to address it the CDL-issuance level.

b) *Quantify the relationship between English Language Proficiency violations and crash involvement.* Nearly 25 percent of respondents believe that the best strategy for addressing ELP is to examine the relationship between ELP violations and crash involvement. One recent analysis examined ELP violation data and found a correlation between those violations and crash involvement.⁵⁰

c) *Research the nexus between driver violations for English Language Proficiency and cabotage violations.* Examining the relationship between ELP violations and those received for cabotage is the preferred strategy for a small number (7.3%) of

⁴⁸ Exec. Order No. 14286, 90 Fed. Reg. 18759 (2025), (accessed on October 15, 2025), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/05/02/2025-07786/enforcing-commonsense-rules-of-the-road-for-americas-truck-drivers>

⁴⁹ Noel Fletcher, “DOT Investigating Fatal Crash Involving Undocumented Driver,” *Transport Topics* (August 20, 2025), <https://www.ttnews.com/articles/dot-florida-crash-probe>.

⁵⁰ Alex Lockie, “Non-English speaking carriers more dangerous than drug, speeding violators: Study,” *Overdrive* (August 6, 2025), <https://www.overdriveonline.com/regulations/article/15752375/elp-violators-more-dangerous-than-drug-speeding-violators-study>.

respondents. ATRI's 2025 research priority topic to examine the frequency of cabotage may shed additional light on this topic.⁵¹

⁵¹ American Transportation Research Institute, "ATRI Releases New Research Priorities for 2025" (April 24, 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/04/atri-releases-new-research-priorities-for-2025/>

8. Diesel Emissions Regulations

Ranked 1 st 5.1%	Ranked 2 nd 5.5%	Ranked 3 rd 3.6%	Total Share 13.9%	Industry Concern Index 52.5
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Debuting at number eight, concerns over upcoming Diesel Emissions Regulations emerged as a top ranked industry issue overall. Among Owner-Operators, Diesel Emissions Regulations appeared as a top five concern this year (Table 3). This issue supplants previous concerns related to zero-emission vehicles, which had ranked as a top ten issue the previous two years. However, the Trump administration’s move to revoke California’s electric vehicle mandates earlier this year dropped Battery Electric Vehicles from number six in last year’s survey to number 23 this year.⁵²

A new federal regulation, commonly referred to as the heavy-duty NOx rule, is scheduled to take effect in slightly more than one year, beginning with model year (MY) 2027 trucks.⁵³ It is expected to substantially increase the cost of new diesel trucks.⁵⁴ This comes on the heels of post-COVID-related impacts that have added more than 20 percent to the average price of new Class 8 trucks.⁵⁵ The timing and impacts of this regulation on new truck purchases, particularly during a freight recession, makes this a top ranked issue.

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Identify the financial impacts associated with compliance of mandated diesel emission regulations.* The majority of respondents (54.6%) believe the best strategy for addressing the upcoming regulations is to identify the cost of compliance. Research done on earlier federal emission reduction regulations found that the EPA had significantly underestimated the compliance costs associated with its truck mandates, by a factor of 2-5 times.⁵⁶ That same research also identified that EPA failed to accurately analyze and project higher truck operating costs, reduced truck reliability, and lower truck fuel economy performance.

b) *Quantify alternative low-cost pathways for achieving emission reductions.* The preferred strategy of 18.7 percent of respondents is to examine less costly paths to achieve the industry’s and the nation’s goals for emissions reduction. For instance, ATRI research found that a transition to battery electric vehicles for long-haul trucking

⁵² Alex Nieves, “Trump revokes California’s nation-leading electric vehicle mandate,” *Politico* (June 12, 2025), [Trump revokes California’s nation-leading electric vehicle mandate - POLITICO](https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/12/trump-revokes-california-ev-mandate).

⁵³ <https://www.epa.gov/regulations-emissions-vehicles-and-engines/final-rule-and-related-materials-control-air-pollution#rule-summary>

⁵⁴ American Trucking Associations, Trucking Industry Calls on EPA to Delay and Reconsider Federal NOx Standard” (accessed on October 16, 2025), <https://www.trucking.org/news-insights/trucking-industry-calls-epa-delay-and-reconsider-federal-nox-standard>.

⁵⁵ Jeffery Short and Andrew Fain, Repealing the Federal Excise Tax on New Truck Equipment: Impacts and Opportunities for Industry Safety and Operations, American Transportation Research Institute (April 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/04/new-atri-research-quantifies-the-environmental-and-safety-benefits-of-repealing-the-federal-excise-tax-on-new-trucks/>

⁵⁶ Patrick Calpin and Esteban Plaza-Jennings, *A Look Back at EPA’S Cost and Other Impact Projections for MY 2004-2010 Heavy-Duty Truck Emissions Standards*, American Truck Dealers (February 13, 2012), <https://www.regulations.gov/comment/EPA-HQ-OAR-2012-0313-0008>.

would cost over \$1 trillion in electric infrastructure and vehicle purchase costs over 15 years. However, to achieve similar CO₂ benefits with renewable diesel, ATRI estimated a price tag of \$203 billion, a significant cost savings for achieving the same environmental benefits.⁵⁷

c) *Research the performance of emission control technologies.* 15.5 percent of respondents believe that the best approach for addressing Diesel Emissions Regulations is to study the real-world performance of emission control technologies. Similar research done on previously mandated emission control technologies found a wide range of fleet operator experiences.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Jeffrey Short, "Renewable Diesel – A Catalyst for Decarbonization," American Transportation Research Institute (April 2024), <https://truckingresearch.org/2024/04/renewable-diesel-a-catalyst-for-decarbonization/>.

⁵⁸ Ken Claar, Curtis Cummings, Steve Dudley, Dan Miller and Frank Nicholson, "Presentation Highlights: Fleet Experiences with EPA 2007 Compliant Diesel Engines: A 300,000-Mile Assessment," *The Trailblazer: The Technical Journal of TMC's 2010 Annual Meeting* (February 2010).

9. Driver Training Standards

Ranked 1 st 3.6%	Ranked 2 nd 4.8%	Ranked 3 rd 4.4%	Total Share 12.5%	Industry Concern Index 43.5
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Another new issue debuting in this year’s overall top 10 is Driver Training Standards, coming in at ninth overall. However, Driver Training Standards first appeared on the truck drivers’ list of top concerns in 2019, when it was ranked number seven among drivers. It has remained on the drivers’ list of top concerns since 2019, peaking at number four in 2021. Based on the accompanying write-in comments and strategies ranked by drivers over the years, the majority believe that new entrants are not being trained adequately to prepare them to safely operate large commercial vehicles.

FMCSA’s 2022 Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT) rule required that new entrant truck drivers complete a structured program of theory and behind-the-wheel instruction before taking the Commercial Driver’s License skills test. It also provided for an online Training Provider Registry where CDL training programs could self-certify that they met the federal training requirements.⁵⁹

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Advocate for an FMCSA audit of its Training Provider Registry to ensure that training providers are meeting the basic Entry-Level Driver Training standards and are compliant with all requirements.* 42.9 percent of respondents believe the best approach for addressing Driver Training Standards is for FMCSA to audit and more closely monitor its Training Provider Registry to ensure that training providers are compliant with all requirements. The associations representing training providers recently asked U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Duffy to step up enforcement and oversight of the ELDT requirements, echoing requests from the American Trucking Associations and others.⁶⁰

b) *Work with driver training schools to develop and/or update “best practices” and model curricula.* The preferred strategy of 31.3 percent of respondents is to collaborate with driver training schools to develop best practices and model curricula that all schools can follow, creating de facto standards, and providing for more consistent training of new entrant drivers.

c) *Research the impact of Entry-Level Driver Training regulations on highway safety.* With an effective date in 2022, FMCSA’s ELDT rule was designed to improve safety through better trained new entrant drivers. However, gaps in enforcement of the ELDT

⁵⁹ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, “Entry-Level Driver Training (ELDT)” (Accessed: October 7, 2025), <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/entry-level-driver-training-eldt>.

⁶⁰ Commercial Vehicle Training Association, “CVTA and NAPFTDS Urge Stronger Enforcement of ELDT Rule to Protect Students and the Public,” (April 11, 2025), <https://www.cvta.org/post/cvta-and-napftds-urge-stronger-enforcement-of-eldt-rule-to-protect-students-and-the-public>.

have allowed new entrants to receive CDLs without proper – or any – training.⁶¹ The preferred strategy of 15.1 percent of respondents is to quantify ELDT impacts on highway safety. One of ATRI's 2025 top research priorities is designed to examine the effectiveness of new entrant training on driver safety and retention.⁶²

⁶¹ Alex Lockie, "CDL schools call out 'threat' of 'unscrupulous training entities'," *Overdrive* (April 18, 2025), <https://www.overdriveonline.com/regulations/article/15743372/cdl-driver-trainers-call-out-threat-of-bad-actors-among-cdl-schools>.

⁶² American Transportation Research Institute, "ATRI Releases New Research Priorities for 2025" (April 24, 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/04/atri-releases-new-research-priorities-for-2025/>

10. Artificial Intelligence in Trucking

Ranked 1 st 4.9%	Ranked 2 nd 2.5%	Ranked 3 rd 4.8%	Total Share 12.0%	Industry Concern Index 43.4
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The fourth issue to debut on this year’s list is Artificial Intelligence in Trucking, coming in as the tenth overall concern. Among truck drivers, AI in Trucking ranks sixth overall (Table 2). Now more than ever, the trucking industry is immersed in automation, electronic transactions across myriad supply chains, and technology utilization – both in the cab and at freight facilities. The almost infinite data generated by these freight systems makes the labor-constrained trucking industry a logical testbed for AI. The potential productivity and revenue gains from effectively using that data is unquestionable.⁶³ However, there is concern that greater reliance on AI could lead to elimination of jobs, generating concern among industry employees.⁶⁴ Additionally, AI-enabled fraud and theft create additional concern among industry stakeholders.⁶⁵

Proposed Strategies (in rank order):

a) *Research the role and applications of AI in trucking operations, including positive and negative impacts on the labor force.* 41.1 percent of respondents believe that the industry needs to better understand the role and applications of AI in Trucking, including what benefits it offers and what the potential downsides may be. One of ATRI’s 2025 top research priorities is to examine how fleets can better utilize the myriad data that generate from telematics systems.⁶⁶

b) *Develop Federal preemption legislation that provides national guidance on appropriate AI usage, restrictions and legal protocols.* While individual states continue to pass legislation on appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI, 27.7 percent of respondents believe a federal-level response is necessary to ensure consistent application of the requirements and legal protocols surrounding AI use across the country.⁶⁷

c) *Produce a comprehensive primer and guidebook on AI applications in trucking for motor carriers and truck drivers.* 12.2 percent of respondents believe that the trucking industry needs a comprehensive guidebook on AI applications. ATRI’s current study on Capitalizing on Telematics Data will provide some initial guidance for fleets.

⁶³ Erica Frank, “Why AI, and why trucking companies are implementing it now,” *Fleet Owner* (August 19, 2025), <https://www.fleetowner.com/perspectives/ideaxchange/blog/55310465/enhancing-profitability-in-the-trucking-industry-through-automated-decision-making>

⁶⁴ Angel Coker Jones, “Applications of AI in the trucking industry,” *Commercial Carrier Journal* (March 19, 2025), <https://www.ccjdigital.com/technology/article/15740277/applications-of-ai-in-the-trucking-industry>

⁶⁵ Jeffrey Short and Dan Murray, *The Fight Against Cargo Theft: Insights from the Trucking Industry*, American Transportation Research Institute (October 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/10/the-fight-against-cargo-theft-insights-from-the-trucking-industry/>

⁶⁶ American Transportation Research Institute, “ATRI Releases New Research Priorities for 2025” (April 24, 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/04/atri-releases-new-research-priorities-for-2025/>

⁶⁷ National Conference of State Legislatures, “Artificial Intelligence 2025 Legislation” (accessed October 16, 2025), <https://www.ncsl.org/technology-and-communication/artificial-intelligence-2025-legislation>

Emerging Issues

As part of its analysis of critical industry issues, ATRI also tracks the emerging topics that generate significant industry interest but fall just outside of the Top 10 concerns (Table 1). This analysis can provide insight on issues that may emerge in the future as a top industry issue, as well as document issues whose criticality has decreased over time, including the Driver Shortage dropping out of the top 10 list this year for the first time in the survey’s history.

Table 1: Issues 11 – 13

Rank	Issue	ICI
11	Driver Distraction	42.5
12	Driver Shortage	40.9
13	Broker Issues	40.8

Driver Distraction first appeared in the Top 10 list in 2014, ranking 10th overall and then dropped off the Top 10 list until 2023, when it ranked 7th overall. Last year Driver Distraction was the 10th overall concern. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that 3,308 people were killed in traffic crashes in 2022 that were found to be distraction-affected crashes, and 368 of those individuals died in crashes involving at least one driver who was engaged in cell-phone-related activities.⁶⁸

After dropping to number nine overall last year, the Driver Shortage has now fallen out of the top 10 for the first time in the survey’s 21-year history. While this drop in concern is no doubt the result of the persistent freight recession, motor carriers still rank the need to find and retain qualified drivers as their number five and number six concerns, respectively (Table 2).

Broker Issues first appeared in the Top Industry Issues Survey in 2023, when it ranked as the number eight concern among truck drivers. Last year it rose to number six among drivers and this year it is their number four concern. The elevation of Broker Issues to number 13 overall this year reflects the fact that both drivers and motor carriers are experiencing challenges with issues such as broker fraud, broker liability litigation and double-brokering. ATRI’s recent research on cargo theft identified double-brokering as a primary tool used by thieves in strategic theft.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ NHTSA, “Distracted Driving in 2022” (April 2024), <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813559>

⁶⁹ Jeffrey Short and Dan Murray, *The Fight Against Cargo Theft: Insights from the Trucking Industry*, American Transportation Research Institute (October 2025), <https://truckingresearch.org/2025/10/the-fight-against-cargo-theft-insights-from-the-trucking-industry/>

Commercial Driver versus Motor Carrier Issue Rankings

This report details the results of the overall industry survey analysis for industry stakeholders including employee drivers and owner-operators, motor carrier executives, and other trucking industry stakeholders. However, each stakeholder group has differing levels of involvement in, and unique perspectives on, how these topics impact them. As a result of these varied experiences, the selection and ranking of issues will differ across these groups. To provide insight into the differing perspectives in the ATRI survey sample, a separate analysis is provided to juxtapose how truck drivers and motor carriers rank the issues (Table 2).

The ranking of industry issues by truck drivers and motor carrier executives is invariably influenced by their day-to-day experiences and perspectives. The divergence of opinions between these two groups can provide deeper insight and context into the consequences of an industry issue.

Table 2: 2025 Truck Driver and Motor Carrier Top Concerns

Rank	Truck Drivers	Motor Carriers
1	Driver Compensation	Economy
2	Truck Parking	Lawsuit Abuse Reform
3	English Language Proficiency for Drivers	Insurance Cost/Availability
4	Broker Issues	CSA
5	Detention/Delay at Customer Facilities	Driver Shortage
6	Artificial Intelligence in Trucking	Driver Retention
7	Driver Training Standards	Driver Distraction
8	Autonomous Trucks	Diesel Emissions Regulations
9	Electronic Logging Device Mandate	Truck Parking
10	Diesel Emissions Regulations	Broker Issues

Even within the truck driver population, the top concerns are ranked differently by company drivers and owner-operators (Table 3).

**Table 3: Company Driver and Owner-Operator / Independent Contractor
Top Concerns**

Rank	Company Drivers	Owner-Operators / Independent Contractors
1	Driver Compensation	Broker Issues
2	Truck Parking	Truck Parking
3	English Language Proficiency for Drivers	Driver Compensation
4	Artificial Intelligence in Trucking	English Language Proficiency for Drivers
5	Driver Training Standards	Diesel Emissions Regulations

Table 4: Top Industry Issue Rankings, 2015 – 2024

	Issue Rank									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2025	Economy	Lawsuit Abuse Reform	Insurance Cost/Availability	Truck Parking	Driver Compensation	CSA	English Language Proficiency for Drivers	Diesel Emissions Regulations	Driver Training Standards	AI in Trucking
2024	Economy	Truck Parking	Lawsuit Abuse Reform	Insurance Cost/Availability	Driver Compensation	Battery Electric Vehicles (previously ZEV)	CSA	Detention/Delay	Driver Shortage	Driver Distraction
2023	Economy	Truck Parking	Fuel Prices	Driver Shortage	Driver Compensation	Lawsuit Abuse Reform	Driver Distraction	Driver Retention	Detention/Delay	Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV)
2022	Fuel Prices	Driver Shortage	Truck Parking	Driver Compensation	Economy	Detention/Delay	Driver Retention	CSA	Speed Limiters	Lawsuit Abuse Reform
2021	Driver Shortage	Driver Retention	Driver Compensation	Lawsuit Abuse Reform (previously Tort Reform)	Truck Parking	CSA	Detention/Delay	Infrastructure/Congestion/Funding	Insurance Cost/Availability	Diesel Technician Shortage
2020	Driver Shortage	Driver Compensation	Truck Parking	CSA	Insurance Cost/Availability	Driver Retention	Tort Reform	Economy	Detention/Delay	Hours-of-Service
2019	Driver Shortage	Hours-of-Service	Driver Compensation	Detention/Delay at Customer Facilities	Truck Parking	Driver Retention	ELD Mandate	CSA	Infrastructure/Congestion/Funding	Economy
2018	Driver Shortage	Hours-of-Service	Driver Retention	ELD Mandate	Truck Parking	CSA	Driver Distraction	Infrastructure/Congestion/Funding	Driver Health/Wellness	Economy
2017	Driver Shortage	ELD Mandate	Hours-of-Service	Truck Parking	Driver Retention	CSA	Cumulative Impacts of Regulation	Driver Distraction	Infrastructure/Congestion/Funding	Driver Health/Wellness
2016	ELD Mandate	Hours-of-Service	Cumulative Impacts of Regulations	Truck Parking	Economy	CSA	Driver Shortage	Driver Retention	Infrastructure/Congestion/Funding	Driver Distraction

Note: **Bold** indicates first year in top ten.