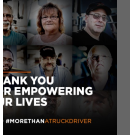


# Truck Drivers Deserve Our Appreciation Year-Round



*By Michael Cancelliere, President, Truck*

National Truck Driver Appreciation Week comes only once a year – this year, September 8 through 14. International Truck is celebrating this week with the #MoreThanATruckDriver social media campaign. Here's why:



While the calendar often seems crammed with special commemorative days and weeks, in this case the honor is more than well deserved. And frankly, one week a year is not enough.

The role these individuals play in literally driving our economy, managing valuable technology assets, and selflessly serving others, demands that we provide them with our profound respect and gratitude, every day of the year.

## **Pillar of the Economy**

Let's start with truck drivers' most obvious role: Pillar of the Economy. Trucks move more than 70% of America's freight by tonnage, accounting for more than 80% of the nation's freight bill. More than 3.5 million truck drivers were employed nationally in 2018, and 7.8 million people were employed in jobs related to trucking, excluding the self-employed.

Trucks and the people who drive them are also the mainstay of many small businesses. As of May 2019, the number of for-hire carriers on file with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration totaled 892,078.

And drivers' economic role will only become more important, as freight tonnage carried by trucks is projected to grow more than 21% between now and 2030. The role of e-commerce certainly plays a contributing role to this growth.

## **Manager of Sophisticated Assets**

Drivers' jobs can be both physically and technically demanding, and need to be recognized as such. Skilled drivers are certainly in demand: the American Trucking Associations recognizes that the U.S. currently needs 60,000 more drivers than it has. And the shortage of skilled drivers is expected to grow.

Truck drivers have always needed to be skillful, knowledgeable, and resourceful. In the future, they will need to be even more so. The vehicles tomorrow's truck drivers will be managing will be even more technologically sophisticated than today. These vehicles represent a major investment, of which the driver is in charge.

Drivers, already highly trained, are on a path to becoming regarded more like airline pilots ... as they should be, considering the important work they do in managing their vehicles for maximum efficiency and safety.

Hats off to those throughout the industry who also place a focus on driver health and wellness. It is critical that we all do everything we can to ensure that the industry's professional truck drivers are well educated about the importance of exercise and nutrition, and have options available to them to make healthy choices, whether it is the food available at truck stops or the exercise equipment available at their place of employment.

### **Angel of the Highway**

Safely moving America's goods is not the only important role truck drivers play. They also have a strong history of going above and beyond in the area of helping other motorists. Over the years, many drivers have been recognized for their selfless assistance to those in need. The phrase "Highway Angels" is used by the Truckload Carriers Association to acknowledge the contributions of these heroic individuals.

Just one recent example will give a flavor. A husband-and-wife team were driving in West Virginia when they came across a car that was rolled over in a ditch, and on fire. The couple blocked traffic with their truck, then pulled the driver from the burning car just moments before it exploded. Thanks to their heroism, that driver survived. Again, this is more typical of truck drivers than most would realize.

### **Truck Drivers - At the Center of Everything We Do**

All these roles put the driver at the center of the trucking "ecosystem." And our attitude at Navistar is, that's exactly where they belong.

"DriverFirst" is the philosophy that guides us in designing and building our trucks. We design vehicles around drivers' measurements and according to their specifications. We bring drivers in to test drive our products. Our goal is to build trucks that drivers want to drive. And our commitment is to Uptime - keeping drivers on the road, making money for their families, and getting them home to their families on time. We do this by providing reliable, durable equipment, backed by the industry's largest service network. Professional truck drivers don't want to miss their son's Little League game or their daughter's dance recital any more than you or I do.

Our year-round thanks go out to you, truck drivers, for everything you do.

To join me in celebrating truck drivers and what they do for all of us, please follow us on [Facebook](#) and share our posts using the hashtag #MoreThanATruckDriver.