



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Groups join forces to address driver shortage

OTTAWA, Ont. – A cross-section of Canada's trucking industry, government agencies and training institutions are joining forces to address a critical shortage of qualified truck drivers, the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) has announced.

Representatives from these groups recently participated in a Toronto summit to discuss challenges including licensing standards that vary from one province to the next, training programs that don't meet industry needs, and a lack of funding options for future drivers who want to be effectively trained. Focus groups across the country are now being scheduled to help identify related solutions

"We are entering a time in the transportation industry where we are looking at the potential loss of 3,000 drivers per month," explains Roy Craigen, chairman of the CTHRC, which hosted the Toronto summit. "The cost of doing nothing is that Canada will be less competitive in the world marketplace. We will end up with more dangerous highways."

The impact of the loss is heightened by the fact that the industry is losing its most experienced workers.

"We are losing drivers with 30 and 40 years of driving experience and replacing them with individuals with one and two years of experience, who may not have been trained to professional standards," Mr. Craigen says, referring to the aging workforce.

A cross-section of the industry is needed to identify the wide array of related issues, agrees Bruce Richards, President of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada. "We have a good mix of industry and government – a broad cross section of those who are being impacted [by the shortage]. The next steps will be to digest their ideas and determine a course of action."

"Any time you get people involved in defining the problem and sharing solutions, it's a positive step," adds David Bradley, Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Trucking Alliance. "The challenge now is to get carriers involved, and for them to tell us what the problems are".

Any proposed solutions will need to involve a number of stakeholders. Even though the driver shortage is a national issue, licensing standards and training efforts are provincial jurisdictions.

LICENSING STANDARDS SEEN AS INADEQUATE

One of the immediate challenges identified during the Toronto summit was the gap that exists between the entry-level skills required to earn a licence, and those required to be effective in a career at the wheel.

Licensing standards vary from one province to the next, and rarely meet the needs of the industry, CTHRC studies have found. Training programs are often developed to meet these minimum licensing requirements rather than identified National Occupational Standards. And half of Canada's entry-level drivers do not attend formal training schools before earning a licence.

The summit also identified several funding-related challenges to training would-be truck drivers.

Training at an effective commercial driver training school can cost between \$6,000 and \$8,500, and those costs could rise if it's discovered that existing training programs need to be improved. But trainees are seldom eligible for funding programs, and do not receive the tax credits that are associated with community college and university tuitions.

A mere 38 per cent of the students who graduate from truck driver training schools have been funded under programs including student loans, skills development programs, and Social Assistance. Seventy-five per cent or more of them will obtain and keep a trucking-related job.

In contrast, there is no financial help for Canadians who want to trade low-paying jobs for a higher-paying career in the trucking industry.

CAREER OPTIONS FOR NEW CANADIANS?

New Canadians are often cited as a source of potential drivers, but immigration-related regulations fail to recognize their work as a skilled occupation. As such, drivers who have been trained in another country cannot earn some of the points needed to earn entry into Canada.

There is also the question of how many immigrants may be needed to meet the need, Mr. Craigen says. "If we eliminated barriers of entry for young people, second-career people, low-income people, and northern and rural residents, we may be surprised how many resident Canadians would excel in trucking."

"Any time you can get industry together, and have discussions like this, it has to move forward," added Wayne Gibson of Teamsters Canada (Ontario), which participated in the Toronto summit.

Canada's trucking industry employs more than 400,000 workers, generating an estimated \$54.7 billion in annual revenues.

-- The Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) is an incorporated not-for-profit organization that helps attract, train and retain workers for Canada's trucking industry. For more information, visit www.cthrc.com.

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[Backgrounder attached.](#)

Backgrounder

What is the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council?

The Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) is an incorporated not-for-profit organization that is the official Certification and Accreditation body for commercial drivers, dispatchers, trainers and training providers in Canada's trucking industry.

It promotes professional standards in the industry through training programs, products and information.

Who is involved in the council?

Through representatives on our Board of Directors, industry partnerships and memberships, the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council involves every stakeholder in the nation's trucking industry, including:

- For-hire and private carriers
- Industry associations
- Labour unions
- Training institutions
- Insurance companies
- Drivers
- Owner-operators
- Provincial and federal governments
- Equipment manufacturers and lessors

Are you a branch of the government?

No, actually we represent the trucking industry and takes direction from the Board of Directors. The CTHRC is one of many sector councils initiated by industry and funded through the Sector Council Program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. As a permanent organization, it brings together representatives from every corner of an industry. These groups help the Government of Canada facilitate and support industry partnerships that will help Canadians acquire the skills they need in a modern economy.

What does the CTHRC do for the trucking industry?

Our mission is "to assist the Canadian trucking industry to recruit, train and retain the human resources needed to meet current and long-term requirements."

What resources do you provide?

We offer numerous tools and services to meet the trucking industry's human resources needs, including:

- **National Occupational Standards** to identify the skills that employees such as drivers, dispatchers, driver-trainers and transportation safety professionals need to master on the job. These benchmarks can be used to evaluate current or future employees, identify training needs, and allocate work.
- **Training Programs** for classroom settings or self-directed learning. Whether helping entry-level drivers turn wheels for the first time, upgrading the skills of dispatchers, or improving the business skills of owner-operators, we have the tools to teach, upgrade and certify a wide array of competencies.
- **Labour Market Research** to paint a clear picture of this growing industry's human resources challenges and offer insight into future solutions.
- **Promotional efforts** to draw attention to the need for better training and national occupational standards, and tell the world about career paths in the trucking industry.