



The Trucking Job Market in Florida

Though the outlook is as grim in this state as it is anywhere else, truck driving jobs in Florida are always available. Read on to find out more about the trucking industry in Florida.



Outlook on the Industry

The **Florida trucking industry** accounts for about 465,000 jobs in the state, which is roughly 6% of the work force. Truckers in Florida carry 79% of the tonnage hauled in the state and 94% of the freight

by dollar value. The Florida Trucking Association estimates that the Florida trucking industry generates about \$17.6 billion in wages.

Nationwide, truckers move about 70% of the overall tonnage of U.S. products and are one of the first indicators of what direction the economy is going in because truckers not only haul products that end up on store shelves, but also materials between manufacturers. It's also a key indicator for U.S. politicians that are trying to reinvigorate economic growth, which slowed to 0.6% between October and December last year, down 4.9% from the preceding quarter according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Not only have the soaring fuel prices affected Florida trucking, the flagging housing market due to the subprime mortgage meltdown and overall economic downturn has as well. This has created a slowdown in consumer spending that has had a trickle-down effect on the trucking industry. Wayne Smith, CEO and president of FEPCO Trucking says, "The current housing market and home mortgage situation, combined with energy costs soaring, is forcing consumers to pay higher fuel costs, gas and power bills, leaving them with little discretionary income to purchase cars, trucks, electronics and other goods."

Florida trucking companies are not on the verge of folding, but many of them are running fewer trucks. Matt Ubben, vice president of public affairs for the Florida **Trucking Association** says, "2007 was generally a down year, and it continues to be down in the first quarter this year." R&L

Carriers Inc., for example, normally has about ten trucks hauling merchandise out of Orlando every day, but their shipments were down 5% in 2007 and never recovered. Similarly, Joma Logistics in Orlando saw their profits decrease by 25% last year. Even shipping giant UPS had its median weight per delivery drop by 9% in the fourth quarter of 2007.

Despite all this, truck driving jobs in Florida are still available. Not every company is doing poorly. McTyre Trucking in Orlando, for example, started 2008 poorly, but ended up doing great. In addition, 2008 was good and the company expects to finish 25% higher than the year before. In all fairness, McTyre has a very specialized niche working on industrial plants, with the power-generating industry, and on Florida Department of **Transportation projects**.



So the key is to do some research into the various trucking companies operating out of Florida before jumping in with both feet. Find a company that has a specialized niche or one that has been consistently doing well despite the economic downturn. If you can get in good with one of these companies, you should be set. Some good companies to look into include JB Hunt, Cardinal Logistics, CRST Van Expedited, Combined Transport, US Xpress,

Barr-Nunn, Butler Transport, Melton Truck Lines, RNC Inc., Schneider International, Tap Enterprises, Teton Transportation, and VSI Trucking.

Education and Training

You don't need any sort of degree to be a truck driver, but most truck drivers at least have a high school diploma or GED. That isn't to say that you don't need to be smart to be a truck driver, because you do. Not only do you need to be organized and detail-oriented, you also need to have common sense and



Trucking Career Feature

be capable of making good decisions. As far as actual training goes, you need to have your Class C driver's license, and your employer may require more training or testing before they will let you drive for them. **Truck driving jobs** in Florida are the same as they are anywhere else in the country.

Salary

The salary for truck driver jobs in Florida is fairly typical for the nation. The average wage for truck driver jobs in Florida was about \$66,000 annually according to a survey conducted earlier this year. This number of course hinges upon how much work you do in a given year, as truckers commonly work on an hourly or mileage-based system.

Conclusion

The market for trucking jobs in Florida is definitely in a slump, but the industry must keep moving regardless. Without

truckers, our economy would be in a world of hurt and we would essentially be reverting to the days in which things were only transported via train or boat. Truckers keep this economy alive and we need them on the road. As a result, if you want to be a trucker or have already been trucking for a while now, keep your nose to the grindstone and keep plugging away at it. The economy will turn around soon enough. In the meantime, there are trucker jobs available in Florida if you look hard enough. The best thing you can do is keep your wits about you when you are searching for a job; make an educated decision about where you want to work. Look at how the various companies' stocks are doing on the stock market (if they are traded). If you can get in with a trucking company that has weathered the current economic storm fairly well or one that has a very specialized niche, you should be good to go in the long run. Trucking jobs may be hard to come by right now, but they are out there.

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