



## Crime Prevention for Truckers Study

### BACKGROUND

FMCSA initiated the Crime Prevention for Truckers Study to understand the nature and prevalence of harassment and assaults against truckers. Harassment, in this study, is defined as the threat of harm or actual physical harm perpetrated against a trucker, their possessions, vehicle, or cargo.

### OBJECTIVES

The study's goals are to determine the prevalence of threats and assaults against minority and women truckers, to identify trends, and to understand potential impacts to the current truck driver shortage.

### METHODS

The project team first performed a literature review on the topic. The literature review was followed by the development of an online survey to collect data. The data collected pertained to three driver groups: 1) women truck drivers, 2) minority male truck drivers, and 3) non-minority male truck drivers (control group).

Statistical analysis was performed using the collected data to determine if the nature and frequency of crimes committed against women and minority male truck drivers differ significantly from the control group of non-minority male truck drivers.

### FINDINGS

The following summarizes the findings from the survey data collected and analyzed.

#### *The nature and frequency of harassment against truck drivers*

Harassment against truck drivers is prevalent. Being called undesirable names (59 percent of women, 52 percent of minority males, and 51 percent of non-minority males) and receiving threatening words

(38 percent of women, 40 percent of minority males, and 44 percent of non-minority males) are the most common forms of harassment. Relative to men (8 percent of minority males and 14 percent non-minority males), women truck drivers (33 percent) are exposed to more sexual harassment.

#### *Where and when do these incidents occur*

Harassment is more likely to happen at truck stops (23 to 30 percent depending on gender and minority status), places where truck drivers pick up or deliver cargo (15 to 17 percent), and fueling stations (9 to 11 percent). In addition, the respondents mentioned that crimes are more likely to happen in urban areas (42 to 56 percent) compared to rural areas (26 to 35 percent). Harassment against women truck drivers is particularly more likely to happen at night (after 12 a.m. to 6 a.m.).

#### *Characteristics of the aggressors*

The individuals committing the harassment are more likely to be other truck drivers whom the victims did not already know (e.g., 31 percent of women, 27 percent of minority male, and 34 percent of non-minority male truckers who were victims mentioned that the perpetrator was another truck driver whom they did not know before). Relative to men, women truck drivers are more likely to experience harassment from another truck driver at their company (15 percent) or their trainers (11 percent).

#### *How many of these incidents go unreported and why*

About half of the harassments go unreported (i.e., 42 percent of women, 57 percent of minority males, and 51 percent of non-minority males choose not to report the harassment). The reason given was that they did not think that it would make a difference (29 to 38 percent), or they have to deal with it anyway (17 to 38 percent).



### ***Statistical analysis comparing crimes among the trucker groups***

Statistical analysis of the survey data did not find a statistically significant difference in the experience of harassment overall between women and minority men compared to non-minority men. This combined measure refers to at least one incident of occurrence in any of the six specific harassment categories over the preceding two years. However, statistically significant differences did arise in two harassment categories. Women truck drivers were found to be two to four times more likely to report being touched without permission compared to non-minority men. Minority women were up to nine times more likely to report being physically harmed compared to non-minority men. Similarly, non-minority women are two to six times as likely than non-minority men to be touched without permission.

### **SURVEY PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS**

The following are based on the *survey participants'* suggestions and recommendations.

#### ***Enhance safety at existing trucking facilities***

Providing adequate lighting and security features to existing truck parking lots, fueling stations, truck stops, and docking areas of shippers and receivers should be the priority. Restrooms should be located closer to parking entrances. Presence of safety patrol and law enforcement is beneficial for safety.

#### ***Provide additional parking facilities***

The majority of survey participants suggested that many of the crimes that happen against truckers are the direct result of limited parking availability, especially in urban areas. In some cases, truck drivers resorted to parking their trucks on freeway ramps and abandoned lots, putting them at increased risk of accidents and crimes.

### ***Allow firearm carrying in the trucking industry***

Many respondents mentioned that they would feel safer if they were allowed to carry a firearm. However, policies of many trucking companies, shippers, and receivers do not allow truckers to carry firearms in their trucks. Also, State laws on carrying firearms vary significantly. Many truckers suggested a regulation prohibiting carriers, receivers, and shippers from barring truckers to carry legally owned firearms. *Note: regulatory and policy changes related to carrying firearms are beyond the purview of FMCSA's authority.*

### ***Improve communication within the trucking industry***

Truck drivers, dispatchers, carriers, and customers need to communicate to choose a travel plan that is efficient and safe, e.g., delays and scheduling conflicts at shipper and receiver facilities force truckers to park in unsafe locations.

### ***Provide personal safety training to truck drivers***

Many respondents indicated that they never received any type of training on personal safety and protection. Therefore, truck drivers could benefit from personal safety, security, and protection, as well as self-defense programs.

### ***Develop educational material to increase awareness***

Educational material that promotes the safety of truck drivers is needed. The material should address topics such as how to recognize, prevent, interject, and report crimes. The educational material can also be directed to trucking companies, encouraging them to have a clear and zero-tolerance policy against harassment.

To read the complete report, please visit:  
<https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/64915>

