

# FIRST GEAR

## NEW DRIVER NEWSLETTER

Presented by



APRIL 2020



### Making the Most of Your Career Top Tips for Success

By Kim McDonnell

Being a truck driver is not just about being a good driver. There is much more that goes into creating a successful career in trucking. We reached out to several drivers in the trucking community that are at the top of their profession and here is what they had to say.

- 1 Be professional**  
It begins with the way you communicate to the customer and to others all the way down to the way you dress and present yourself. Always dress for success and conduct yourself in a professional manner following the old golden rule: Treat others how you want to be treated.
- 2 Be on time**  
Be dependable and show up when you are expected to. Yes, it will surely happen— there could be traffic jams and weather conditions that could cause you a delay but plan ahead. Give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination – leave early and be proactive. If you expect to be late because of unforeseen circumstances – call them and let them know.
- 3 Be Patient**  
Yes you will get into situations where you are waiting to be loaded for longer than expected or you are stuck in traffic for as far as the eye can see. You will encounter many things in this career that are out of your control. Stressing about it or becoming impatient will not help you and could affect your overall health and well-being. Your patience will also be tested when dealing with others you encounter out on the road.
- 4 Have a Positive Attitude**  
Along with patience, your attitude is everything. Having a positive attitude when dealing with the grumpy dispatcher or dock worker can make a world of difference in how you deal with the situation. While it can be hard, especially when dealing with someone that is difficult or flat out mean, take the high road and be positive to them you just might coax them into a smile or change their attitude for the better.
- 5 Follow the Rules**  
While it may seem like a good idea at the time to cut corners or take risks remember the most important thing is to protect your job and your career. Make sure you are always running legal, be aware of the speed limit or traffic patterns in the area, don't cut corners that could cost you losing your license or worse, getting yourself into an accident harming yourself or others.
- 6 Exercise and Sleep**  
Spending your day sitting behind a wheel can have its effects not only on your body but also your mind. Try to get 15 minutes of exercise per day or at the very least three times a week. It might seem like a large task but you really don't need to hit the gym to get some exercise. Taking a brisk walk when you stop for your break or doing something as simple as push-ups, working out with small weights or practicing a few yoga moves can be beneficial and even help you sleep better. Getting the right amount of sleep can be hard especially with trucks idling next to you or the temperature levels outside being too warm or cold. While caffeine may be your go-to to stay awake and alert on the road – remember to limit it when you are getting close to ending your day and drink water instead. Get yourself a pair of comfortable earbuds that will work while you are sleeping and listen to soothing music to lull you to sleep. Make sure to have a blanket or a fan to keep your body either warm or cool while you sleep. (Check out Hope Zvara's article in this edition of First Gear for more tips on sleep).





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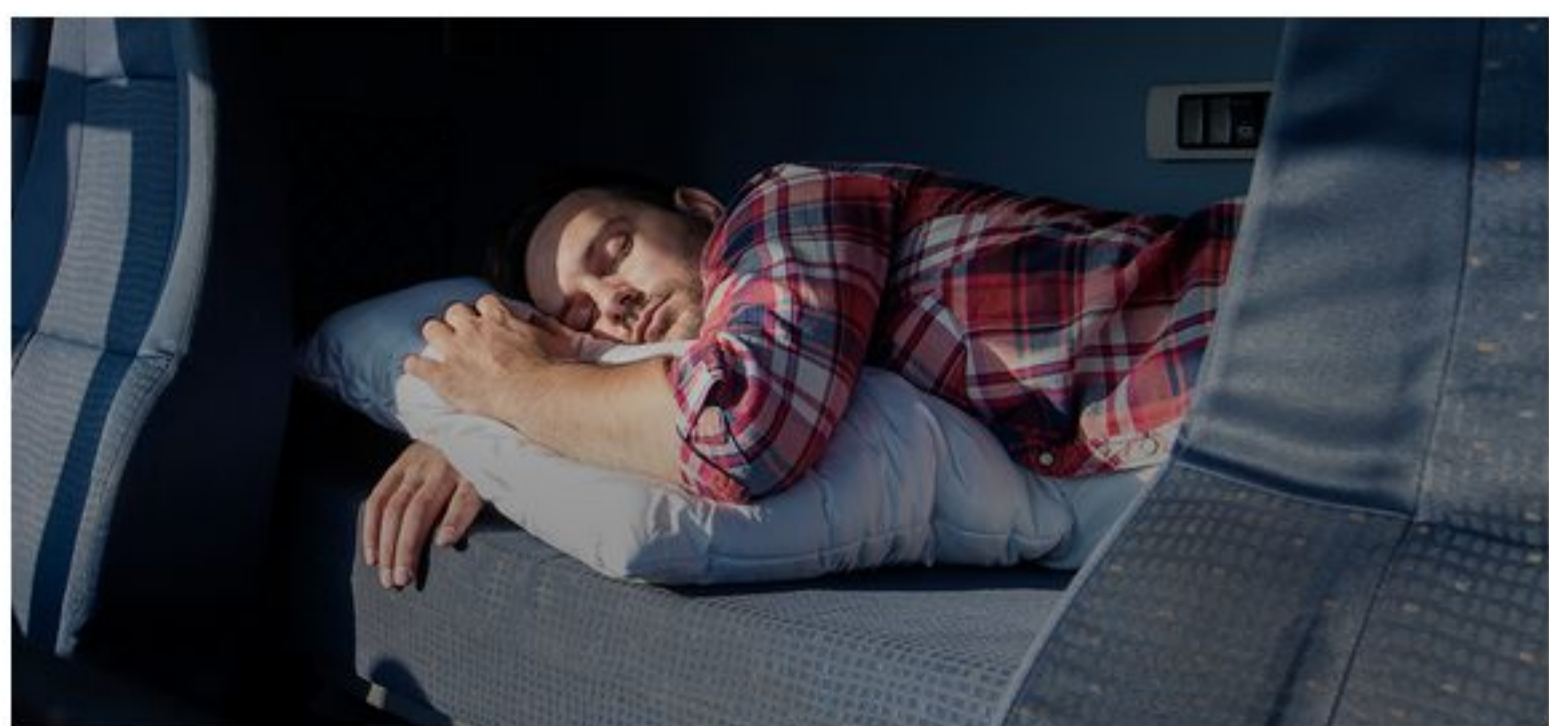
STAY CONNECTED, ALERT AND ON TRACK



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## 5 Ways to Sleep Better on the Road

By Hope Zvara yoga & lifestyle expert, CEO of Mother Trucker Yoga

The trucking industry runs 24/7/365. As a trucker, you sleep when you can and wherever you can. Bedtime is not something that would be described as bliss by any means. Getting a good night's sleep needs to be a priority but it isn't always easy--especially when your sleeping quarters consist of a small cubicle on wheels parked next to an idling truck or busy highway.

Poor sleep patterns decrease your reaction time which then increases the chance of accidents occurring when you are on the road. Obviously, this isn't a good thing for anyone. Check out these simple changes you can make today to start to increase the quality of your shut-eye on the road.



### Tip 1: Relax

Easier said than done, right? I know--sometimes I need to take my own advice. However, music is an easy tool that you have at your disposal that can help you relax when you are on the road. Music can really help your body relax and prepare for sleep. Adults who listen to 45 minutes of relaxing music before bed fall asleep faster, sleep longer, wake up less during the night, and rate their nights as more restful than when they don't listen to music. Music will help you to relax before bed so that you can enjoy a longer, more restful night's sleep.



### Tip 2: At Night, Skip The Caffeine

Although caffeine may help beat a lack of sleep, the effect is only temporary. High doses of caffeine can make it hard to fall asleep and stay asleep. One study also found that [caffeine can delay the timing of your body clock](#). These effects will reduce your total sleep time. Caffeine also can reduce the amount of deep sleep that you enjoy. Try to avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate) at least 2 hours prior to your scheduled bedtime to help reduce restlessness throughout the night.



### Tip 3: Move

You can move wherever you want, however you want, and whenever you want BUT you just need to move! I'm not saying you need to try to park your rig at a gym or yoga studio but a stretch here, a squat there--it all adds up and it all matters. Exercise and mindful movements are the easiest way to effectively reduce stress and improve the quality of your sleep.



### Tip 4: Drink Up

Water that is. Many people realize that their level of hydration can affect the way they feel and function throughout the day but hydration also plays a critical role in how well (or not) you sleep at night. You should be drinking half your body weight in ounces of water per day. In order to help avoid a million bathroom breaks, try getting up an hour earlier and start guzzling 10 ounces of water. Then an hour before you stop for a break, guzzle another 10 – 20 ounces. Get the point?



### Tip 5: You Are What You Eat

Well, not literally, but what you eat does play a big role in how well you sleep at night. A diet low in fiber and high in saturated fats takes a toll on your sleep by decreasing the amount of deep, slow-wave sleep that you get during the night. Meanwhile, eating too much sugar could result in waking up more throughout the night. A healthy balanced diet that's high in fiber and low in added sugars can help you to fall asleep faster and sleep longer. Check out [Mother Trucker Yoga](#) for some awesome, healthy, recipes for truckers, that help you create the balanced diet your body needs!



Hope is a yoga, movement and lifestyle expert who is also a nationally recognized speaker and best-selling author and is the CEO of Mother Trucker Yoga®. She also hosts radio show titles "A Daily Dose of Hope" and focuses on the well-being of truck drivers implementing programs that speak to both the body and mind. Providing drivers with a more fulfilling lifestyle by improving their health, mobility and mental point of view. For more information visit [www.MotherTruckerYoga.com](http://www.MotherTruckerYoga.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MotherTruckerYoga/>

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## Spring Ahead

By Rich Guida, Brand Manager from Howes

Winter is finally winding down and we are starting to see the first signs of spring. But the cold hasn't quite disappeared, and fluctuating temperatures can wreak havoc on your fuel tank. Sudden or drastic temperature changes make it easier for condensation to form in the tank, creating the perfect conditions for microbial growth. The three requirements for microbial growth are water, air, and fuel temperatures between 50° and 100°F. Though sometimes unnoticeable, it usually appears as a dark slime, and can accumulate in your tank. Removing microbial growth is very costly and time consuming. It often includes using fuel biocides, which are generally toxic to humans and harmful to the environment. It may also require manually draining and chemically cleaning your tank. Thankfully, there are ways to prevent this issue.

### DEFEND YOUR DIESEL

Using a fuel additive is a simple, cost effective way to help remove water from fuel. But beware, not all additives are created equal. Many contain harmful alcohol and emulsify water, meaning it mixes the water into your fuel. You want your additive to demulsify water, pushing it down and out of the fuel where it can be safely removed by the water separator. One such product is Howes Diesel Defender. Alcohol-free Diesel Defender will demulsify the water in your tank, leaving only pure fuel to burn.

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### SPRING CLEANING

Spring is also known as a time for cleaning. From your house, to your truck, and especially your engine, everything can benefit from a good “Spring Cleaning.” Today’s High-Pressure Common Rail (HPCR) systems experience problems such as Internal Diesel Injector Deposits (IDID). Diesel Defender contains IDX<sup>4</sup> Detergent, a state-of-the-art detergent designed to rapidly remove IDID’s and prevent future deposits from forming. Adding Defender to your spring-cleaning routine will provide you with a superior cleaning that will save you money and costly downtime.

### APRIL SHOWERS

While it’s true that April showers bring May flowers, Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) sure isn’t bringing much lubricity to your fuel. Without vital lubricity, ULSD can cause premature wear in your injectors, pumps, and upper cylinders. Diesel Defender contains 2.5 times the amount of required lubricity, protecting and preserving your fuel system.

### SPRING INTO ACTION!

There is a simple checklist to follow to get your diesel into tip top shape this spring:

**Remove Water** – Getting the water out of your fuel tank eliminates one of the three necessary components for microbial growth.

**Keep it Clean** – Cleaning your injectors prevents coking, fouling, and harmful deposits.

**Lubricate, Lubricate, Lubricate** – Adding maximum lubricity back into your fuel allows your engine to run smoother and your system to last longer.

You can accomplish all of this and more with Howes Diesel Defender. When used at every fill up, Defender is guaranteed to increase your fuel economy by a minimum of 5% and will give your truck the power and performance you need all year long.





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## The Best Part About Being a Trucker

By Kim McDonnell

When you make driving a truck a career you have to put up with the negative side of the business – inclement weather conditions, navigating through traffic jams, dealing with a grumpy dispatcher and being away from family and friends for long periods of time. But there is also the upside of being out there on the open road. A recent **Drivers Discussion on RoadPro's Brake Time** community yielded a variety of comments and insights that we thought we would share.

*Every day as a truck driver offers a variety of new experiences as nothing is ever routine.*

While most people work all year at a job they don't like to save up and take a few weeks of vacation truck drivers have an opportunity to be tourists every day. Each load is different and brings you to a new place. Seeing spectacular sunsets or sunrises is not something that everyone gets to experience and certainly never grows old. Making a living while enjoying the beauty and wonder of the country is also a big WIN! Being able to see a variety of scenery and special places as you drive such as the mountains, crossing famous waterways and rivers and seeing national treasures. There are also opportunities to visit famous places, museums, landmarks and more while you have some downtime. Every day as a truck driver offers a variety of new experiences as nothing is ever routine.

*If you think the brotherhood and sisterhood of trucking has gone missing – think again.*

Of course, there is also not being stuck behind a desk or in an office and even dealing with the same commute each day. The freedom and independence that come with trucking mean you are pretty much in charge of YOU while in your cab and you are your own boss. You also get to meet new people, maybe fellow drivers that share great stories or become good friends. If you think the brotherhood and sisterhood of trucking has gone missing – think again. There is a new growing sense of community within the trucking industry, especially with the growing popularity of social sites and online communities. And while the camaraderie is great, you can also experience some much needed 'solo' time, where you just may want to drive and not be connected. There are not many 9-5's that offer that luxury.



Not many businesses let you bring your pet to work, but you can enjoy the company of your fur baby when you are a trucker. They can provide companionship as well as an added level of protection and you don't have to leave them alone all day in your house while you work.

This career isn't for everyone – but is one that certainly can provide some great opportunities to make the most of it!





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6. You must submit receipt within 30 days of purchase.





## Do You Have a Clear View?

By David Hollis, Editor, Truckers News

Thanks to Mary Anderson, your answer can be an emphatic “Yes,” whenever you get asked, “Do you have a clear view?” as you drive through rain or snow. And, thanks to continued improvements and technological advances, you’ll continue to see better than ever.

Anderson was visiting New York City in the early part of the last century and is said to have noticed how the driver of the trolley car she was on continually opening the window to clean off the snow so he could see out the front of the car. The Birmingham, Alabama resident was inspired to invent a device — a lever attached to a rubber blade — that a trolley driver could operate as they drove to wipe their window clean.

*The most important aspect of windshield wiper maintenance is replacing blades before it's too late.*

Thus, the windshield wiper was born. Anderson is said to never have earned any money from her invention, and it wasn't until 1922 that Cadillac made windshield wipers standard equipment. But, over the years, wiper technology has changed and improved.

Today, truckers and their companies' maintenance departments have plenty of wipers from which to choose. But, the most important aspect of windshield wiper maintenance is replacing blades before it's too late.



Ideally, checking your truck's windshield and wipers are basic — and important — parts of the pre-trip inspection process suggested by the Department of Transportation.

The DOT says of your windshield:

- Check for damage and clean if dirty
- Check windshield wiper arms for proper spring tension
- Check wiper blades for any damage, “dead” rubber, and securement to arm

While there are — if done properly and comprehensively — lots of small things to check during your pretrip, making sure your wiper blades are in good shape is one of the most important. Imagine the consequences if a wiper blade goes bad while you're 86 miles from nowhere on an interstate in the middle of a torrential downpour at 2 in the morning. No wipers. No travel. No good.

One of the ways to ensure you're not on the phone with dispatch at 2:01 a.m. in that downpour explaining you're going to be late for your delivery, is to have good wiper blades on your truck. Whatever the brand you or your maintenance staff chooses, experts say your best bet is to have flex beam blades installed. There are numerous advantages when compared to traditional blades, which may be less expensive, but might not deliver the kind of performance flex beam blades do.



### Patented Flex Blade Technology

Creates even pressure distribution to give you continuous smooth operation in all weather conditions.

Here are five reasons why:

1. Flex beam blades have better aerodynamics, meaning they won't get lifted from the windshield at highway speeds, or by high winds or in blizzard conditions.
2. Flex beam blades have fewer moving parts, so they have fewer chances to break down due to wear and tear. And, its parts are not exposed to the elements.
3. Flex beam blades are smaller and lighter.
4. Flex beam blades are manufactured to fit the contours of today's truck windshields. That means they hug the glass evenly and deliver better coverage and cleaning.
5. Premium flex beam blades are also more durable, which is important if you're trying to squeeze every penny out of your maintenance budget.

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WeatherAce unveiled a full line of premium flex beam wiper blades this fall meant to keep your windshield not just free of rain, snow or other precipitation, but also keep it clean and free of streaks that can impair your view of the highway.

Their blades' aerodynamic frame provides enhanced performance regardless of the conditions. Made of natural rubber, WeatherAce blades also provide smear-free wiping, important when you're navigating through demanding conditions and locations.

Pre-installed universal adapters make for fast and easy installation, something that can be appreciated when replacement occurs while you're on a deadline. WeatherAce's stainless steel blade backing provides the kind of durability you need while on the road.

A member of the RoadPro Family of Brands, WeatherAce blades are available in 16", 17", 18", 19", 20", 22" and 24" sizes. They come with a 30-day warranty. Look for them online and in travel centers.



Here are a few other tips to ensure your wipers deliver peak performance and extend their useful life:

- Cleaning your windshield frequently so your blades don't have to work so hard
- Defrosting and scraping snow and ice from your windshield in the winter BEFORE you turn on your wipers
- Avoiding running your wipers on a dry windshield as when there is dust or pollen on it; wipers are meant to work with water, so use your truck's windshield washers first

• Reposition your wipers off the windshield during the winter when you are stopped for any length of time, so they do not freeze in place

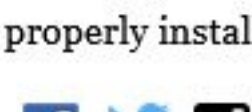
• Inspect and clean them with a wet cloth to remove road grit that could damage the rubber or scratch your windshield

Regardless of how good you are at maintaining your windshield wipers, blades do wear out. They do their job thousands of times when you are on the road in rain and snow. Some manufacturers suggest replacing blades every six months; others say a year.

Your best bet is to check them closely during every pretrip and replace them when you see they need it or be sure to mention it to your maintenance team when your truck is in for service. Replace them if they leave streaks, you can hear them chatter as they move across your windshield or you see the rubber is ripped, frayed or worn. (And, it doesn't hurt to carry a spare pair in your truck if you need to make an impromptu repair on the road.)

After all, few things are as important as good visibility while on the road. **The American Optometric Association says 90% of all driving decisions are based on reacting to what you see.**

So, when asked, “Do you have a clear view?” you can say always say “Yes” if you have properly installed and maintained wiper blades.





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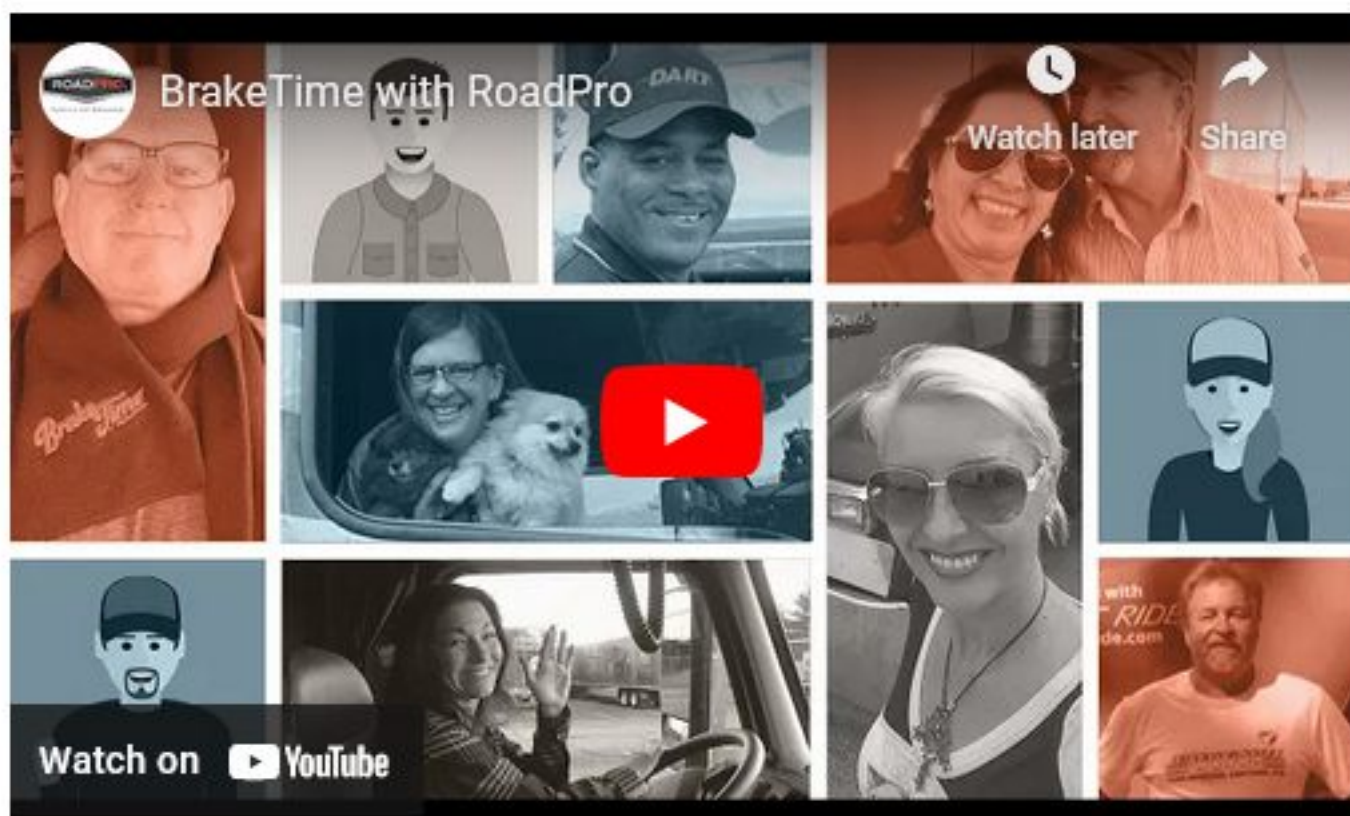
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