

Is the Trucking Industry in Alberta a career for you?

Back Injuries among Professional Drivers is a recognized high-risk occupational hazard as a result of long hours on average of 15-hour days, 70 hours a week. Job duties that can include physically demanding heavy repetitive lifting and moving of heavy loads, inadequate meal breaks and rest periods in-between shifts that result in no personal time to recover from mental and physical fatigue. This can have a profound impact on your personal safety and a long-lasting negative impact on your health and well-being, your quality of life, family life and social life with friends, and from earning a **Gainful and Productive** and an **Independent Living** with **Financial Security** for your future.

How a well-respected and trusted professional trucking company from a small rural Alberta community having a proud history of family values, and principles with the motto: **"Since 1947...A Family Affair", is one which we do our utmost to uphold**, had an ambitious goal to be recognized as a leader in the trucking industry. Instead, this company was able to **avoid accountability** and demonstrated defiance by **refusing to accept responsibility** and report a work-related injury to the **Workers Compensation Board**. This report is a requirement by law. But instead, **Termination of Employment** without just cause of an injured professional driver while on approved supervised medical leave following my physician's instructions via the company's Employee Group Disability Policy.

It was **acknowledged later that 63 Back Injury Claims in 41 Months** among their own professional drivers in their charge and in return, they were allowed to walk away without being disciplined or monitored by Associations within the trucking industry that emphasizes **Compliance and Safety Standards**. Nor did they face justice or penalties by government intervention for failing to follow **Government Acts and Regulations** that are intended to protect the worker's earned income and from serious injury. This is the same well-respected and trusted professional company that claimed to the trucking industry, respected members and the public they would lead by example and be a role model for others to follow by promoting change for safer working conditions in the industry.

The goal here is to break the silence by raising awareness to push for improved workplace safety conditions through strict enforcement of **Compliance and Safety Standards**. The employers' legal and moral obligations to their employees. This includes **Workers Compensation Board Act and Regulations** and **Employee Group Disability Policies** that must include: 90% of net earnings which would also include overtime, annually indexed for inflation, out-of-pocket medical expenses, expert medical/specialists' reports and examinations, effective treatment, retraining and rehabilitation, permanent partial disability benefits and received CPP Disability Pension, is not deducted.

I strongly recommend that an **Independent Governing System** is made **mandatory** and is established with an **Independent 3rd party** consisting of **Medical Specialists'** and **Legal Professionals** without provincial government involvement to monitor employers and the entire trucking industry in Alberta for **equality, fairness, transparency (Full Disclosure)** and in keeping them **honest** to protect all professional drivers who earn their living on the road. **Do not** easily be persuaded to submit a job application and drivers' abstract with a professional company to work for based entirely on public image and rhetoric promoting themselves as a 1st class organization. Before saying "yes" give careful consideration and, understand your rights and learn how to protect yourself in this industry.

This is my personal experience as a professional driver and how I was treated after I had reported a work-related back injury to my employer. I hope that by sharing this experience with fellow veteran professional drivers and the next generation of professional drivers who are setting their sights on this industry as a way of life will benefit from and share this information with others to help educate and prevent what has occurred to me personally to not be repeated to others. No injured worker deserves employment standards and human rights abuse in any industry.

Exposing an **abusive culture and mentality** and **appalling lack of leadership/mentorship** in the trucking industry in Alberta in protecting professional drivers' rights, safety, health, and well-being in this demanding environment.

Bob Siluch

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October 31, 1997

Mr. Bob Siluch

Dear Bob,

I am sorry that your experience since your injury has been unpleasant.

I understand that it was not handled
to your satisfaction.

I understand that you have filed a claim with Alberta Human Rights

Yours truly,

Chief Operating Officer

THE ROADRUNNER



ASK TAZ

I KEEP SEEING THOSE "PERFORMANCE REPORTS" ALL OVER THE PLACE. WHAT EXACTLY ARE THEY USED FOR?

THESE FORMS ARE DESIGNED FOR REPORTING VARIOUS TYPES OF SAFETY, CUSTOMER SERVICE AND POLICY ISSUES. THESE CAN RELATE TO PUBLIC COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS, TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS, AND ANY TYPES OF CONCERNS RELATING TO SAFETY, CUSTOMER SERVICE, OR ANY OTHER PRACTICES.

THE PURPOSE OF THE FORMS IS TO KEEP TRACK OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ISSUES, DETERMINE IF THERE IS A CONTINUAL PROBLEM, AND DEVELOP A PLAN TO PREVENT PROBLEMS FROM OCCURRING IN THE FUTURE. THIS COULD MEAN CHANGING OR ADDING A COMPANY POLICY OR PROCEDURE, IMPROVING COMMUNICATION, OR CHANGING EXISTING TRAINING PROGRAMS. THE FORM IS ALSO A KEY COMPONENT IN ISO 9000 PROGRAM. IT'S A GREAT TOOL, BUT WE NEED EVERYONE TO TAKE THE TIME TO COMPLETE AND SEND THEM IN!

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION YOU WOULD LIKE ANSWERED, PLEASE WRITE TO "ASK TAZ" AT HOME OFFICE.

Driving is Top Job in Canada

You guessed it! Of the top 10 most frequently reported jobs done by men, truck driving is #1 in Canada. It is estimated that 222,800 people are currently employed in this capacity. This figure is up from third place from 5 years ago.

Congrats Puzzle Winners!

Congratulations to _____ and _____ They are the winners for submitting the correct answers to the puzzles in the February and April Issues of the Roadrunner.

Thanks to everyone who sent us your entry. Keep your eyes open for more contests in the future!

Back Injuries - What Do They Mean to You?

As a company, any increase in lost time away from work increases overall costs, however how does it affect you?

Since tracking our injuries over the past 41 months, back related injuries alone have taken 63 of you away from your work. 46% of the injuries have been attributed to handling equipment on and around your truck; 11% while driving and 16% due to a fall. 1804 days were lost which meant you had to cover for your co-worker while they recovered! We are sure that anyone with a back injury will attest, they don't want back problems or the slow recovery process associated with it. Many of you have required surgery. Some of you could not return to your profession.

continued on reverse...

Back injuries affect your family, your earnings are disrupted, and your regular routine is never quite the same. The things you took for granted...well you just can't do them anymore.

Back Safety Tips...

Here are some back safety tips, from our own resident physiologist!

As you can see from the statistics above, back pain and injuries are frequent among drivers. The following are the 3 most common reasons for back pain:

1. Poor posture while driving
2. Activities performed around the truck
3. Entering and exiting the vehicle

How does driving affect your back?

- Your risk of back pain is increased by 2 to 4 times if you routinely drive more than 30 km per day.
- Truck driving increases the risk of disc herniation (rupture) by 4 times.
- There is a direct link between vibration from a vehicle and low back pain, and as vibration is increased, so is tension, fatigue & pain.



How do back injuries happen?

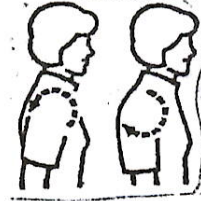
- Most injuries happen after years of accumulated stresses and strains from activities that you do on a daily basis. Very rarely do injuries occur due to a blow or fall.
- Back muscles tire quickly and become stiff and sore when the back is in one position.

Prevention

- Never jump out of the truck or off of the trailer. Use running boards and handles for support.
- Try using a small back rest like a rolled up towel for lower back support.
- Frequently adjust your seat angle to give your back a change of position.
- Try to get out of the vehicle every 1-2 hours.
- Avoid any twisting motions when lifting. Turn by moving your feet - not your back.

Stretches to do in and out of the truck

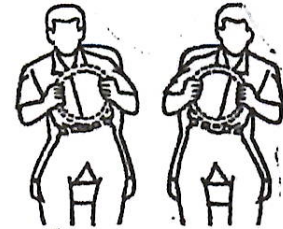
1. Shoulder Rolls - slowly roll the shoulder in both directions in small and large circles



2. Low back Arches - push the small of the back into the seat and then arch or roll the small of the back away from the seat.



3. Hip Shifts - shift your weight on to the right buttock, then to the left. Repeat 3 times and then sit with equal weight on both buttocks



4. Thigh Stretch - standing, place your left hand on your vehicle. Slightly bend the standing leg. Grasp your right ankle or pant leg with your right hand. Tighten your stomach and slowly bring your right foot towards your buttocks. Keep knees close together and point bent knee down. Hold and breathe then repeat on opposite leg.



5. Hip Stretch - stand a good distance way from the vehicle. Place your foot on bumper or running board. Back foot is pointing straight ahead and the back knee is straight. Keep your body upright and move forwards over the bent leg. Hold, breathe and repeat on opposite side.



IN ALL CASES OF INJURY

THE EMPLOYER SHALL

- (1) Furnish first aid in accordance with regulations of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- (2) Keep a written record of all first aid treatment.
- (3) When required, provide immediate transportation to a hospital, doctor, or to any other place that is appropriate for the treatment of the worker's condition.
- (4) Promptly provide the WCB with an Employer's Report of Accident or *Industrial Disease* (Form C-040) and such other reports or information as are necessary. If the accident disables, or is likely to disable the worker for more than the day of the accident, the employer shall give notice of accident or the allegation of happening of the accident to the WCB within 72 hours after acquiring knowledge of the accident or the allegation and shall give a copy of that notice to the worker.
- * (5) If the worker is not disabled beyond the day of accident, the employer is not required to report the accident to the WCB UNLESS necessary Medical Aid is not included under basic health services as defined by the *Alberta Health Care Insurance (AHCIP) Act*. Examples of Medical Aid not included under the *AHCI Act* are drugs and dressing, prosthetic replacement, naturopathic services, dental repair, eye glass replacement, etc.

If the accident disables a worker for the day of accident or part thereof, the employer shall, by the end of the next regularly scheduled pay period after that day, pay compensation to the worker for that day in an amount equal to the minimum normal net wage the worker would have received for that day if he or she had not been disabled and had been available for work in the normal course.
- (6) If the accident disabled a worker for longer than the day of the accident, compensation shall be paid to the worker from, and including, the day following the day the accident occurred.

THE WORKER SHALL

- (1) Promptly obtain necessary first aid treatment.
- (2) Notify the employer immediately of any injury requiring medical aid*, as required under Section 27 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*, and ask the doctor to complete a Doctor's First Report (Form C-050-90) to take to the employer if (6) above applies.
- (3) Have the initial choice of doctor or other qualified practitioner with the understanding that a change of doctor cannot be made without the permission of the WCB.
- (4) Complete and promptly return all report forms received from the WCB. The Workers' Report of Accident (Form C-060) is required to be given by a worker or dependent to the employer and the WCB under Section 27 of the Act. The worker shall give his/her full name and address, and state in ordinary language the cause of the injury, and the date, hour, and place the accident occurred.
- (5) Not leave the province without permission of the WCB. Failure to obtain such permission will place present and future compensation and medical aid entitlements in jeopardy. If a worker plans to leave the province during the disability period, the WCB should be consulted.

* All costs for basic health services, as defined in the *Alberta Health Care Insurance (AHCIP) Act*, will be paid through the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) subject to re-imburement by the WCB. Costs for services under *The Alberta Hospitals (AH) Act* and costs not included under the AHCIP will be paid directly by the WCB.