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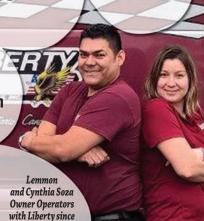
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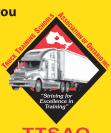
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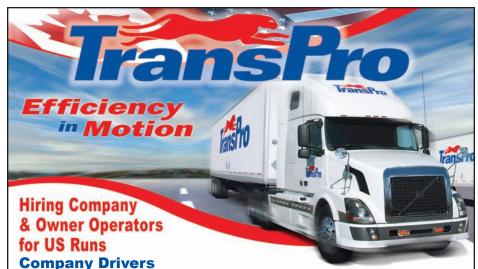












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### The Danger of Owning Multiple Trucks



There are two different models of owning multiple trucks without being a Carrier: Lease Operators and Owner Operators. The industry has many examples of both. The one model that is typically much more successful than the other is Owner Operator

(percentage).

Of all the lease operators who grow into managing multiple trucks, nine out of ten fail. And they generally fail somewhere between twelve and 36 months. The failure is always linked to three things: employee, the truck or the carrier. The highest casualty catalyst would be the employee. Operators compete with carriers who generally have higher margins to work with than they do. Operators also compete with other operators.

The disciplines that create success as a single operator are not the same as the disciplines needed to succeed as a multiple truck operator. The addition of managing a truck profitably at a distance (i.e. maintenance) is usually the easy part. The complication of having an employee is usually the downfall.

Anyone can buy a truck but not everyone can keep a profitable driver sitting in the seat for the duration of the truck payments. A driver who is hard on a truck may not be revealed to the truck owner for six months. By then the list of parts and labor may be extensive. Fuel can be tracked trip by trip if the operator is well disciplined but maintenance is harder to nail down conclusively. The employee must be liked and respected by the carrier (which is often times out of the control of the operator) and expectations too often turn to conflict when the honeymoon is over.

Owner Operators are confronted with additional conflicts above those of lease operators: wait time, additional customer service as well as other needs. The only reason Owner Operators have a higher success rate than lease operators is because average, successful O/O's tend to have a much sharper and more disciplined pencil than the average lease operator.

My guess is O/O's are twice as likely to succeed at multiple trucks as are L/O's. Not because the margins are that much better as an O/O but the quality of manager is higher in O/O's than in L/O's. There are just too many fly by the seat of their pants L/O's who assume that if they make \$1000 as a L/O they will make \$2000 with a second truck. It takes a couple months or a couple years before they realize that if all goes well, they only make \$100 and usually, not all goes well!

The one feature about owning a second truck that multiplies the probability for success is the ability for an operator to hire relatives rather than a driver off the street. Having the

option for a committed, like minded driver greatly reduces unexpected turnover.

Another feature that greatly multiplies success is if, at least one of the two trucks is totally paid for. Having the ability to park one truck while waiting for an appropriate driver is critical to success. More often than not, having the wrong driver is worse than parking a truck. The operator needs control.

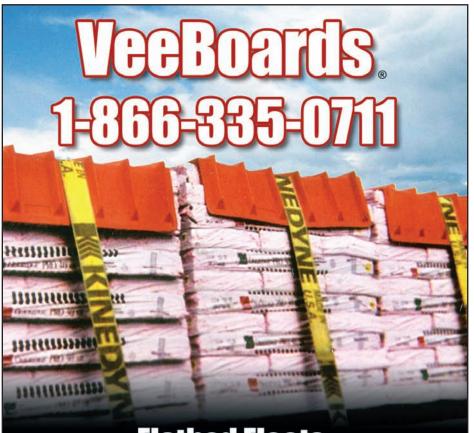
The failure rate of owning a second truck is so high I have often, seriously considered releasing clients from our firm the moment they get their second truck. The crisis to crisis management issues that follow multiple truck ownership can cause a firm like mine a great deal of hardship and costs.

The key to successful multiple truck ownership is humility in the face of all the facts. Operators must have humility to wait until they are better prepared and objective about all the risks. It's not impossible, just improbable for those unprepared.

Ten out of every ten operators start their second truck with the same opinion "...I will be the one out of ten..."

Robert D Scheper operates an accounting and consulting firm in Steinbach, Manitoba. He has a Masters Degree in Business Administration and is the author of the Book "Making Your Miles Count: taxes, taxes, taxes" (now available on CD). You can find him at www.thrconsulting.ca and thrconsulting.blogspot.com or at 1-877-987-9787. You can e-mail him at: robert@thrconsulting.ca.





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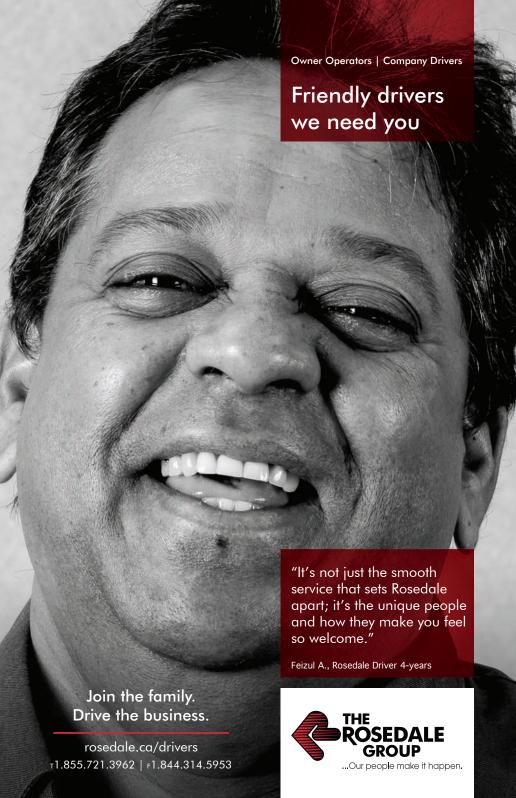
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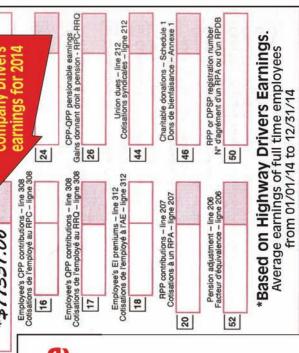
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### Speaking from Experience

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### Will Ontario/USA Get it Right?

Will they get entry level driver training or ELDT right? I believe the odds at this point are 50/50. This is an issue that I have personally been knee deep in for a number of years as past Chairman of the PTDI (Professional Truck Drivers Institute) and current Co-Chair of the School Committee of the Truckload Carriers Association.

ELDT has been in discussion and in various stages of review and development by the FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) for over 20 years. One of the reasons this has dragged out for so long is that this is a watershed move for any country. Ontario has just recently entered the fray with the recent announcement of mandated ELDT. Currently I believe that roughly 50% of the new A/Z or CDL license holders in North America have no acceptable formal training whatsoever. So to mandate a minimum training standard is a big deal and there are some big, powerful companies and Associations who are totally convinced that their position to turn this issue into legislation and the law of the land is the right one. So what are the options that are available? Let's review them.

First is a minimum, hourly based certified course similar to what PTDI has had in the marketplace for decades. This system is predicated on mandated, minimum hours of training and the least of which is 144 hours behind the wheel. A student must spend mandated minimum hours mastering the elements necessary to be proficient in each category, some of which are: basic control, vehicle inspec-

tion, nighttime driving, backing up, HOS and dozens of others. Each element of the training has detailed teaching materials that the student must master. The course is subject to audit by PTDI, who is an independent body and the course must be recertified on a regular basis to ensure compliance to the minimum standard. This includes ongoing instructor education, accreditation and correct teacher student ratios while performing in cab training plus schools recording and keeping records that assure compliance to standards. http://www.ptdi.org/standards/

There are pros & cons to this PTDI program. The pro is that this system ensures a minimum exposure to all elements necessary to be proficient in this trade and also, third party auditing and accreditation ensures compliance to minimum standards. Compliance to paper trail and quality of process and equipment would eliminate many existing subpar schools in the industry and puppy mills would be eliminated.

The cons are that this process is usually longer than most training courses sold in North America and thus is usually more expensive.

Second is a competency based training system that is predicated on the individual's capability to master a given skill and then move on to the next skill at a pace that is individual to that particular student. The process would also require an individual to demonstrate the required knowledge and skills prior to sitting for the AZ/CDL skills exam, rather than simply requiring an individual to complete a

specific number of hours of training where he or she may or may not learn what is required. A curriculum would be developed that would be consistent throughout North America; governess/compliance would be the role of the FMCSA or the MOT (Ministry of Transportation). This curriculum may mirror PTDI's curriculum but would eliminate mandated minimum hours and the accreditation process.

Again the pros: this system allows an individual who has a higher aptitude around heavy equipment to move through the training much quicker than someone who might be less comfortable around similar equipment. This system would likely be less costly and allow many individuals to enter the workforce at an earlier time-frame.

The cons: the determination of competency has a high level of individual judgement involved and the level of competency may vary greatly. Also, likely the testing will still be left to a government official with limited time to test the individual. This system is not too dissimilar to what currently exist in the marketplace. Which is of course, not acceptable and would likely not eliminate the puppy mills that currently exist.

Maybe the answer is a combination of these two options because when we are speaking about peoples' lives on the nation's highway the decision cannot be made by consensus but rather by common sense while yielding to caution, by adopting a minimum mandated hours of curriculum type model or PTDI. When competency is allowed to be measured by privately owned training schools, some schools will cut some corners. This is a fact, have no doubt.

I want to preference this by invoking the familiar 80/20 rule because I believe

that 80% of the schools that currently use a competency based curriculum do it right and with conscience. The scary as hell 20% do it for nothing but the money and their interpretation of their students being competent starts with, did the check cash or did the student get funded? Funded means, funded by our tax dollars and if so, they are already half way to getting their licence and the sooner the better so the school can get on with the next pay check. Some of these courses last less than a week. They are commonly known as puppy mills and no matter what system is adopted in Ontario or the US, they must be eliminated and all the holes plugged. We must ensure that they never return if this great industry is ever to realize its full potential.

We are at a crossroads in my opinion; a watershed moment in our history as truckers. This single piece of legislation has the power to change the landscape forever. ELDT has the power to elevate the profession of driving a tractor-trailer from something someone can do until they get a real job, into something to aspire to with detailed training required. In Ontario, add the apprenticeship program that is already in place and this thing is really starting to look more like a skilled trade than a job that just anyone can do.

So will they get it right? Let's hope so. This great industry certainly deserves more than we have now, which isn't much. Some smart people are at the table and it's my sincere hope that they put aside their partisan positions and do the right thing for all of our sakes.

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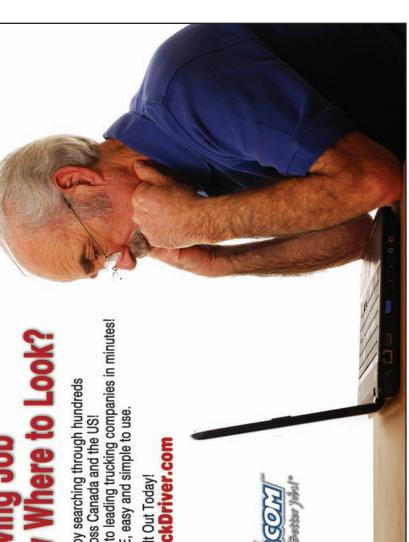


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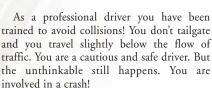


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Chris Harris Safety Dawg chris@safetydawg.com

## What to do if You Have an Accident



The crash is not your fault and it wasn't even preventable. (Yes, there is a difference between "fault" and "preventability".) Now as a professional driver, what do you do?

At the scene of a crash, the first step is to turn on your four-way or emergency flashers. You want to warn others about the crash scene so that they might avoid becoming involved.

The second thing to do is to turn off the engine of your truck. This is of course, to prevent fires. You have not yet gotten out of the cab of the truck to assess the damage, but turn off the engine of your truck right away. In most cases, you do not want to move your vehicle until the police arrive. That being said, if it's a minor crash in a major metropolitan city you may be required to move your vehicle to go to the accident reporting center.

Assuming that you are not moving your truck, the next thing to do is to set out your warning devices (triangles or flares). You are trying to protect the scene of the crash as well as protect yourself and anyone else involved in the crash. You are also trying to warn other motorists about a crash scene so they do not get involved.

Now that you have protected the scene it is time to assess damages. The first types of damage you want to know about are personal injuries. If someone has minor injuries at the scene of the crash, use your common sense and the first aid kit in your truck and render assistance. If someone has serious injuries do not move the person unless their life is in danger! Again, you can assist the injured but do not move them unless his or her life is in danger.



Now it's time to call the police and report the collision. After the police are notified it is time to get in touch with your company. If your phone is not working then give the necessary information to a passerby and asked them to make the two phone calls. Remember that you are to stay at the scene until the police arrive. Always remain polite and courteous to everyone, even the person that caused the crash.

You may speak to the police and your company's insurance representatives but never speak to the media. When you are giving your verbal statement to officials, try to make sure, if possible that you are not overheard and always tell the truth. Never admit guilt or apologize!

Now it's time for you to document the scene and to take photographs. Most of us have cameras on our cell phones. When you take photos, be sure to take pictures of the license plates of the vehicles involved in the crash. You will also want to photograph the accident scene. Take lots of photographs. Take photographs from all angles including a 360° circle. The photographs should be both from near and far. You will also want to photograph any evidence such as skid marks. Try to include stationary objects in some of your photographs. This will help in the future if an investigator has to return to the scene of the crash as they now have a fixed object to relate the photographs to. Never take pictures of seriously injured people. If your crash is of the catastrophic or very serious nature (with serious injuries or fatalities), you do not need to take photos as your insurance company and the police will send out professionals to record the crash.

There you have it. What to do at the scene of the crash even when it's not your fault. Drive safe and I hope you never have to use these tips! *Chris Harris* 

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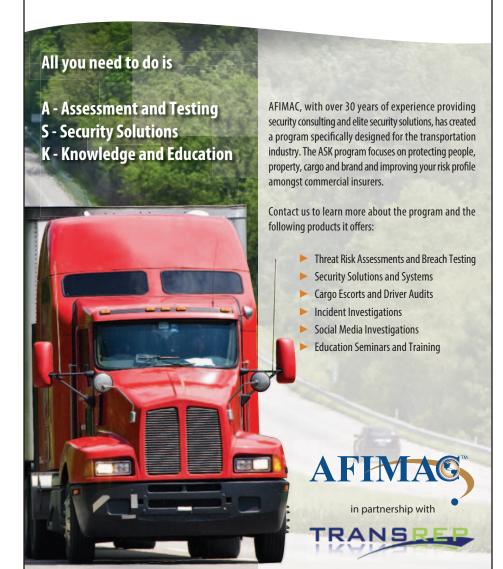


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