

# On the Move

## Careers in the Trucking Industry



Brant - Haldimand - Norfolk



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie  
Commission de planification de la main-d'œuvre de Grand Erie

The Trends, Opportunities and Priorities (TOP) labour market planning consultations for the communities of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk Counties are facilitated by the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie. During these community consultations, one of the priority issues identified was the need for more in-depth and current information on careers in the truck transportation sector.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the many Grand Erie employers who gave their time and effort to participate in this project. Your contribution, knowledge, time, ideas and expertise were invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Bell City Transport

Carrier Truck Centers

Fleetway Transport Inc.

Jeff Bryan Transport

Keith Hall & Sons Transport Ltd.

KRTS Transportation Specialists Inc.

LA Dalton Systems Inc. (Contrans Income Fund)

Ludwig Transport Ltd.

ScottLynn Longhorn Group

Project Coordination:

Mark Skeffington, Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie  
Commission de planification de la main-d'œuvre de Grand Erie

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# On the Move

## Careers in the Trucking Industry

Lots of people these days are looking for a new career road.

There are many exciting opportunities in Ontario's trucking industry. Careers in trucking are attractive to job-seekers, both those entering the workforce for the first time and those changing careers. There are many reasons trucking is attractive:

- Truck transportation is big business in Ontario;
- Trucking appears to be on the upswing, judging by the number of trucks on the road;
- There has been talk about a driver shortage;
- People know that truck drivers can make good money;
- There's an opportunity to be your own boss when out on the road;
- Truck drivers don't need a college or university education to get hired;
- And truck driving school is a short-term commitment, usually lasting a few weeks.

### Do Your Homework

Grand Erie trucking companies say there are opportunities for good people, especially for company drivers and owner-operators (drivers who have their own trucks and contract their services to companies). There are also many other jobs on the large support teams that keep trucks moving, from mechanics to dispatchers and front office staff. The industry is looking for talent. However, the route to success isn't as easy as job seekers think. It's important for anyone looking at a career to do their homework to make sure it's right for them.

Many graduates from truck driving schools are behind the wheel today. But others may experience difficulty finding a job for a number of reasons. Individuals may not always be aware of employers' needs before they take their training.

“There is a whole world out there available to kids in the transportation industry. Those that come prepared will do well. This industry is crying for young blood.”

– Michael Ludwig, Ludwig Transport Ltd., Simcoe

## Clean Records

First there are legal requirements. Trucking companies require drivers with clean driving records and no criminal records. Second, obtaining an AZ or DZ licence is only the first step. Many Grand Erie trucking companies require experienced drivers. Such companies prefer new drivers to learn the business by working for firms doing local or short-haul routes, or for large carriers who hire new graduates or train through apprenticeship. Some truck driving schools have good relationships with carriers and arrange for the placement of graduates. A few local companies say they will hire new driver graduates but will still put them through their own training programs.

## More Women

For many years, truck drivers have been mainly men but Grand Erie and Ontario companies report that is changing. More women are entering the field every day and more women are working at a variety of jobs in the industry. “There are many successful female mechanics, drivers, dispatchers, planners, logisticians, senior executives and company owners,” says Michael Ludwig of Ludwig Transport Ltd. of Simcoe.

While drivers make up the large majority of jobs in the trucking industry, it isn’t the only opportunity. There are many other occupations that offer challenging careers, good pay and benefits, career advancement, and personal satisfaction.

Other occupations include:

- Truck Mechanic
- Dispatcher
- Material Handlers
- Fleet Manager
- Driver Trainer
- Safety and Compliance Officers
- Loss Prevention Officers
- Wheel and Tire Technicians
- various management positions
- Scheduler
- front office staff
- Welder

“There are a vast array of opportunities, both in driving and operations and administrative. A very dynamic and exciting industry – rarely boring.”

– *Unnamed Grand Erie trucking company*

## What Are Trucking Companies Looking For?

This booklet is designed to give job-seekers realistic information about Grand Erie’s truck transportation industry to ensure they are well informed ahead of time. The booklet tries to answer the question: What are trucking companies looking for?

In interviews with Grand Erie truck companies, employers want new drivers to know these things:

- A clean driving record is essential to work.
- Many trucking companies, especially those that do long-haul trucking across Canada or into the United States, are looking for experienced drivers with a minimum of 2-3 years behind the wheel. There are exceptions to this.
- Truck driving is not a 9-to-5 job; drivers can sometimes spend a week or more on the road and away from their families;
- New recruits should understand the demanding schedules of the transport industry; goods have to be delivered on tight schedules and on time. Many manufacturers use just-in-time delivery, meaning trucks serve as warehouses on wheels;
- Customer service is No. 1; this covers everything from being able to solve problems to good manners and grooming. Drivers are expected to look clean and professional; they are the face of their company.
- Drivers must be aware of the requirements to cross the U.S. border and how to handle all government regulations. This includes having a passport, no criminal record, and a FAST card.
- Drivers are expected to be team players; although they’re often out on the road alone, drivers are part of a large supporting team.

In the following pages you’ll find occupational profiles of key careers in the trucking industry.

"It's a good industry and you can make a good living at it. We need professional looking drivers. The first impression will make a difference with me. Our industry has been known for too many years as being cowboy."

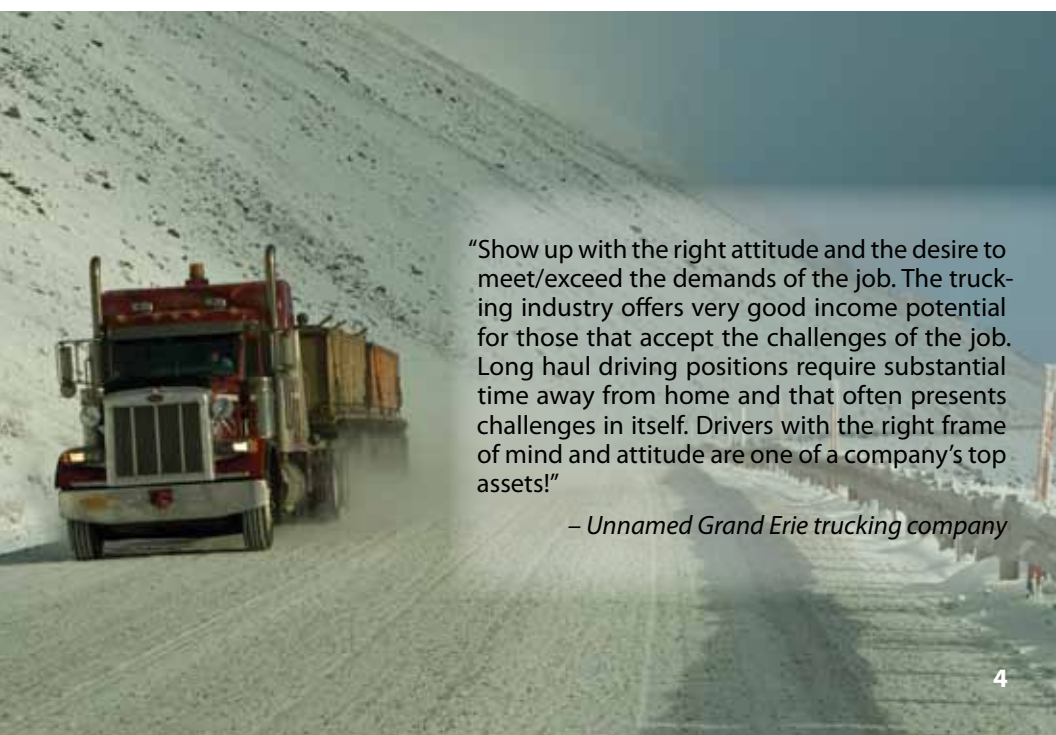
– David Rees, Fleetway Transport Inc., Brantford

## By the numbers

Truck transportation is big business in Canada and especially Ontario.

- Truck transportation is a \$50-billion-plus a year industry in Canada.
- 8 million two-way shipments per year by truck across the U.S. border;
- 638,000 trucks registered in Canada; 178,000 in Ontario;
- 366,000 people employed in Canadian trucking in 2006;
- 36,000 trucks cross the U.S. border every day;
- 3 Ontario border crossings – Windsor, Fort Erie and Sarnia – account for 62% of cross-border trucking

Source: Transportation in Canada 2007, Transport Canada

A red semi-truck is driving on a snowy road, kicking up a cloud of snow. The truck is viewed from a low angle, emphasizing its size. The background shows a vast, snow-covered landscape under a clear sky.

"Show up with the right attitude and the desire to meet/exceed the demands of the job. The trucking industry offers very good income potential for those that accept the challenges of the job. Long haul driving positions require substantial time away from home and that often presents challenges in itself. Drivers with the right frame of mind and attitude are one of a company's top assets!"

– Unnamed Grand Erie trucking company

Truck drivers operate heavy trucks to transport the goods and materials we use every day. Truckers drive locally, across Ontario and Canada, or across the border into the United States and Mexico. Drivers carry the food we eat, the TVs we watch, the cars we drive and the gas we put in those cars. Just about everything we use is transported at some point by trucks. Other drivers carry material factories need to make the products we use.

# truck drivers



**National Occupation Code (NOC): 7411 Level C**

In Grand Erie, truck transportation is a major employer, ranking in the Top 10 in both the Brantford-Brant (8th) and Haldimand-Norfolk (7th) areas.

(Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2010)

Overall, about 3,700 people are employed as truck drivers in Grand Erie, accounting for about 3.2% of the area's total workforce. Two-thirds of truck drivers, about 2,500 of the total, work directly in the truck transportation industry, largely for truck companies. The remaining one-third of drivers work in other sectors, led by wholesale trade, manufacturing and construction.

(Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census)

In 2010, there were 660 businesses in the industry in Grand Erie. (Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2010). A majority of truck drivers in Grand Erie work for small- to medium-sized companies (those with 1-99 employees), although there are several larger firms. Other drivers are self-employed and known as owner-operators. Owner-operators contract out their services to other transport firms.

## Working Conditions

Long hours behind the wheel are typical for truck drivers, although there have been great strides made in making truck cabs more comfortable, especially for long-haul trucks. Delivery and local drivers often unload their own trucks, requiring physical lifting. Drivers travel in all kinds of weather and traffic conditions, often overnight as well as during the day. Long-haul drivers can expect to spend days away from home. Sometimes two drivers share the workload on long-haul drives. Hours behind the wheel are limited by legislation, with drivers required to keep log books for hours driving and working. Failure to comply with legislation can result in licence suspension.

# Main Job Duties

Job duties and responsibilities vary depending on the types of trucks being driven, the cargo being carried and the distance travelled.

Local truck drivers and delivery drivers typically drive trucks locally or between cities to pick up and deliver shipments. Such drivers generally work close to home and during regular business hours.

### Typical duties include:

- Planning delivery routes.
- Ensuring deliveries arrive on time.
- Loading and unloading cargo.
- Dealing with customers.

Long haul drivers typically take trips of a few days to a week, covering long distances and spending many hours in their trucks. Such drivers carry a lot of

responsibility for their trucks and work with little supervision.

### Other duties include:

- Perform inspection of vehicles, including tires, lights, brakes and cold-storage systems.
- Monitor all aspects of vehicles, including loading and unloading, truck safety, security of cargo.
- Perform emergency roadside repairs to fix minor problems.
- Record cargo information, driving time, distance travelled, fuel consumption and other information in log book or on-board computer.
- Obtain and keep in order all documentation and permits, especially when transporting goods across borders.
- Communicate with a dispatcher.
- Maintain safety records for vehicle.

# Typical Job Titles

There are many types of truck drivers operating different types of trucks, including flatbed, tanker, bulk and reefer (refrigerated) trucks. Some examples are: delivery driver, short-haul truck driver, long-haul truck driver, tractor-trailer driver, dump truck driver, cement truck driver.

# Wages and Salaries

Wages and salaries of drivers can vary considerably depending on a number of factors, including the size of company, type of driving and distances covered. Long-haul drivers earn more than local delivery drivers. Some companies pay by the hour, while others pay by the mile. Some offer benefits and incentive packages, such as performance and safety bonuses.

**\$15/hr – low | \$19.10/hr – average | \$24.55/hr – high**

Source: WorkinginCanada.gc.ca, Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula-Brantford Area, 2009

**Average yearly salary (full-time): \$44,937**

Source: Statistics Canada, Grand Erie wages, 2006 Census.

Some Grand Erie companies advertise that top drivers can make \$48,000 to \$80,000 a year. Those that pay by the mile have advertised in the .41 cents to .43 cents range, with benefits and performance bonuses offered.

## Grand Erie Employment Potential - Good

Grand Erie trucking companies also see a looming driver shortage in coming years. The average age of drivers is higher than the general Ontario workforce. In Grand Erie, 39% of drivers are 50 years and older, while another 30% are 40 years and older, meaning 69% are 40 years and older. The other 31% are aged 20 to 39. (Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census)

Meanwhile, local companies have reported openings for drivers, both for experienced and new drivers.

In Grand Erie, the number of truck companies have shrunk over the last couple years, as the industry was affected by the recession and the loss of manufacturing. In all, 53 small- to medium-sized truck companies closed in Grand Erie in the 18 months between December 2008 and June 2010. That still left about 660 employers. Employment fell by about 200 positions across the truck transportation industry.

(Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2010)

Local companies report a turnover rate for drivers of about 10% a year is normal. There is movement of drivers from one company to another. Some companies offer their drivers bonuses if they recruit an experienced driver to join the team. Because of this industry competition, some firms are motivated to offer better compensation and benefits packages to veteran drivers.

## Essential Skills Required

The most essential skills are: problem solving and document use, followed by reading text, writing and decision making.



## Industry Employment Potential - Good

People in the Canadian trucking industry forecast a driver shortage in the coming years. The Ontario Trucking Association, for one, warns of a “severe shortage of professional truck drivers in North America.”The shortage is expected for a number of reasons: an older workforce, competition for new workers from other sectors such as construction, and a lack of women interested in the field. Potential for long-haul drivers is considered higher since many drivers prefer shorter routes to be closer to their families.

# What Local Employers Are Looking For

- Experience preferred
- Clean driving record (known as an Abstract)
- Customer service skills
- Commitment to safety
- Clean appearance
- Honesty
- Good work ethic
- Ability to follow instructions
- Knowledge of customs rules
- Mechanical knowledge for basic repairs
- Training from reputable driving schools
- Excellent record keeping

Local trucking companies, especially those using tractor-trailer drivers on long-haul trips, often want drivers with at least two years behind the wheel of large trucks. With trucks and cargos worth hundreds of thousands of dollars – and in some cases millions – it is risky for companies to take a chance on an inexperienced driver. Firms often expect drivers to gain experience with companies that do short-haul runs. Some local companies also recommend new drivers begin their careers working for one of the larger carrier companies, firms that have hundreds of trucks on the road. Some of these larger firms have their own training programs. Overall, companies shy away from drivers in their early 20s because of higher insurance costs.

**Some companies, even those doing long-haul and cross-border runs, do hire new drivers out of training schools. Some companies have preferences for graduates of particular driving schools.**

Most employers who advertise are looking for drivers who have the following experience and skills:

**Experience:** 2-3 years

## **Specific Skills:**

- A Class D licence is required to drive straight trucks (those with axles attached to the truck frame).
- A Class A licence is required to drive articulated trucks (tractor trailers or trailers hooked to the truck cab).
- 21 years of age to drive into the United States.
- If driving trucks with air brakes, an air brake endorsement (Z, as in Class D-Z and Class A-Z) is required.
- If transporting dangerous goods, such as fuel or chemicals, a Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) certification is required.
- Companies may also require additional certification, such as first aid, health and safety.
- Companies also want to see a driver's abstract (driver's record for last three years), while many require a medical test, criminal record check and drug test.

## Specific Duties

- Fill in drivers' checklists
- Coupling/uncoupling
- Complete loading manifests
- Read fuel tables
- Read maps
- Complete drivers' log book
- Fill out accident and damage reports
- Monitor the state of the shipment
- Secure loads safely and in compliance with regulations
- Fill out customs forms

The skills required have been increasing over the years, especially with today's just-in-time trucking, on-board computers, GPS systems, and numerous forms to fill out to comply with government regulations regarding customs, hazardous goods shipments, and vehicle safety.

## Related Occupations

Although the majority of jobs in Grand Erie's trucking industry are for drivers, there are many other occupations that help keep trucks on the road and the industry running.

- Dispatcher
- Truck mechanics
- Tractor trailer technicians
- Operations managers
- Fleet managers
- Driver trainers
- Safety and loss prevention officers
- Compliance officers
- Material handlers
- Front office staff



"Tomorrow's truck drivers are going to have to be better trained and have achieved higher educational levels in order to cope with all the new technologies being installed on trucks to improve productivity, efficiency and safety."

– David Bradley, Ontario Trucking Association

# Education and Training

There are no mandatory education requirements to become a truck driver. Many older current drivers have not finished high school. However, most new drivers have high school education or higher. A minimum of high school is recommended, especially as drivers are required to use on-board computers more often and fill out complex paperwork.

Most trucking companies run their own training programs for newly-hired drivers, even when the driver has years of experience. New drivers are usually matched with veteran drivers. These training programs vary from a few days to a few weeks. Some companies also offer mentor programs.

There are many reputable truck training schools, which offer driver training as well as other courses needed to learn the ropes. When investigating private career colleges, consider these things: a school's reputation, hours of instruction provided, scope of course, career planning help, and success in placements. A private career college must be registered and approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

For more information about how to choose a private career college and for private career colleges in your community, visit the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities by clicking on this link:

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/postsecondary/schoolsprogram/pcc/>

You may also contact the Ministry by calling toll-free 1-800-387-5514.

More information on training resources are available on these websites:

**Employment Ontario:** [www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/)

**IWIN:** [www.iwin.on.ca/english/index.cfm?lb=14](http://www.iwin.on.ca/english/index.cfm?lb=14)

## Examples of local training schools:

**KRTS Transportation Specialists Inc.**

Caledonia, ON and Simcoe, ON

[www.krway.com](http://www.krway.com)

**Shaun-David Truck Training School**

Brantford, ON

<http://shaundavidtts.com/>

**Robar Training Specialists**

Brantford, ON

[www.robarttraining.com](http://www.robarttraining.com)

**Transport Training Centres of Canada Inc.,**

Brantford, ON

[www.ttcc.ca](http://www.ttcc.ca)

# Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a new route to learn how to drive trucks. Apprenticeships for tractor-trailer commercial drivers were introduced in 2006 and the program is still not widely known or used. Like all apprenticeships, individuals must find a company willing to employ them as an apprentice. The voluntary apprenticeship lasts one year. Participants complete 2,000 hours of training that includes up to 12 weeks of mentor training, and up to 40 weeks of on-the-job training. Grade 10, or equivalent, is the minimum educational pre-requisite for entry.

For more information and to look for apprenticeship opportunities, visit:  
[www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Ontario Trucking Association Career Highways  
[www.ontruck.org/careers](http://www.ontruck.org/careers)

Truckingcareers.ca  
[www.truckingcareers.ca](http://www.truckingcareers.ca)

Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council  
[www.cthrc.com/en](http://www.cthrc.com/en)

Truck mechanics keep trucks on the road, maintaining and repairing them so cargo can keep moving. Some mechanics focus on keeping small trucks running. Other mechanics keep large transport trucks, while some specialize in maintaining and repairing trailers. Sometimes the same mechanic will have the skills and qualifications to maintain and repair both the cab and the trailer. The responsibility of a truck mechanic has become more important with increasingly higher standards and regulations for safety and emission controls. Also, with the high cost of fuel, keeping trucks in peak operating condition is important to the bottom line of a truck owner. Breakdowns cost money and frequent ones can cost business.

# truck mechanic



## National Occupation Code (NOC): 7321 Level B

Overall, about 135 people are employed as truck mechanics in Grand Erie. Some companies will have licensed journey people mechanics working with apprentices. Apprentices are not included in the above figures. (Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census) Truck mechanics are part of a larger occupational group that includes automotive service technicians. However, truck mechanics have a specialized set of skills.

In 2010, there were more than 660 businesses in the truck transportation industry in Grand Erie.

(Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2010)

### Working Conditions

Most mechanics work out of truck company garages or shops, servicing the trucks in the corporate fleet. Other mechanics work for firms that specialize in servicing the trucks owned by transport companies. Some mechanics work for manufacturers that own and operate their own fleet of trucks. Still others work for municipalities or utilities that own trucks. Some mechanics also provide mobile repair, being dispatched in a service truck to repair rigs that have broken down on the road.

The majority of mechanics work daytime hours but some are required to work nights and weekends. Mechanics are regularly exposed to exhaust fumes, oils and lubricants, and must have knowledge of how to safely work in this environment. Similarly, safety is a top concern, since mechanics use power tools and work around heavy equipment. Use of safety boots and other safety equipment is required.

## Main Job Duties

Job duties and responsibilities vary depending on the types of trucks. Mechanics who maintain delivery vans typically work with gas engines. Mechanics who maintain large trucks such as tractor-trailer trucks work on diesel engines. Mechanics may work alongside Wheel and Tire Technicians, specialists who are certified in Ontario to install wheels on commercial vehicles.

Duties include:

- Inspect, repair or replace parts and components of transport truck systems, including engine, chassis, frame, body, drive train, air brakes, steering and fuel, hydraulic, electrical and electronic systems.
- Use of diagnostic and other tools to find and repair problems.
- Test and repair systems to manufacturer's specifications, which requires following manuals.
- Maintain maintenance schedules and records for trucks in a fleet.
- Review work orders and discuss needed work with supervisors.

## Typical Job Titles

Truck mechanic, transport truck mechanic, transport truck trailer mechanic, diesel engine mechanic, truck trailer service technician, mobile trailer mechanic, truck and coach mechanic.



## Wages and Salaries

Wages and salaries of mechanics vary depending on a number of factors, including the size of company, fleet size, location and personal experience

**\$11/hr – low | \$17.55/hr – average | \$26.00/hr – high**

Source: WorkinginCanada.gc.ca, Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula-Brantford Area, 2009

**Average yearly salary (full-time): \$41,000**

Source: Statistics Canada, Grand Erie wages, 2006 Census.

Some Grand Erie trucking companies have advertised for experienced mechanics in the \$24/hour range. Firms often also provide allowances for tools and steel-toed safety boots.

# Grand Erie Employment Potential - Average to Good

Several Grand Erie trucking companies rate job prospects and hiring opportunities in the next 5 years as fair to excellent for mechanics. Many companies used fewer trucks and trailers over the last few years, as some saw a falloff in business due to the recession. Some firms have begun to grow their fleets again. Meanwhile, with higher fuel costs, stricter safety regulations and the Green movement, companies are motivated to keep trucks in peak operating condition. Trucks are also becoming increasingly more sophisticated, requiring more highly skilled technicians to maintain them.

## Essential Skills Required

The most important Essential Skills: Oral communication, problem solving, finding information and computer use.



## Industry Employment Potential - Good

National projections for Canada forecast that there will be more job openings in the wider field of Motor Vehicle Technicians – which truck mechanics is part of – than job seekers over the next decade. Over that time, retirements and other factors are expected to create job openings.

On one hand, technological advancements and improved quality and durability of trucks is expected to constrain demand for technicians. On the other hand, increasing emphasis on truck and trailer safety, promoted through roadside inspections, is expected to sustain demand for mechanics.

(Source: Ontario Job Futures, 2009)

The Canadian Human Resources Trucking Council has surveyed trucking firms, indicating that a majority find it challenging to recruit and retain mechanics on their workforce. Trucking companies have chiefly blamed this on not enough people being trained as mechanics, followed by the difficulty in paying high enough wages to keep mechanics on staff.

# What Local Employers Are Looking For

- Experience
- Skilled at job
- Good work ethic
- Ability to follow company policies
- Ability to work unsupervised
- Team player
- Commitment to safety
- Flexibility
- Honesty
- Problem solver
- Clean driving record
- Criminal record clearance
- Interest in upgrading skills and education
- Computer skills

Most employers who advertise are looking for drivers who have the following experience and skills:

**Experience:** 2-3 years

**Specific Skills:**

- Licensed mechanic
- Either Truck Mechanic 310T or Trailer Mechanic 310J certification
- Driver's licence; in some cases AZ or DZ licence is required
- Knowledge of health and safety

## Job Description Example

Carrier Truck Centers, which operates truck repair facilities in several southern Ontario communities, including Brantford and Woodstock, has a 5-page job description for Truck and Coach Technician.

Here are highlights of duties and responsibilities:

- Wears approved Company uniform at all times, including safety boots
- Complies with all Carrier policies and procedures
- Is punctual
- Maintains service department in a clean, orderly fashion
- Ensures customer property is treated with care and respect
- Accurately diagnoses and reports repair work to Supervisor
- Produces accurate, legible write-ups on customer work orders
- Obtains/maintains Class A-Z drivers licence in good standing
- Attends company/supplier training and information sessions
- Keeps current on technical service information and updates
- Completes upgrading courses
- Assists in the care and maintenance of department equipment/tools
- Offers constructive suggestions for improving department goals
- Complies with all company safety policies/procedures, Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

(Source: Carrier Truck Centers)

## Specific Duties

- Use diagnostic tools to test for mechanical flaws
- Maintain trucks and trailers so they are in compliance with safety regulations
- Maintain inventory of regularly needed parts
- Order replacement parts by phone or via a computer-ordering system
- Maintain maintenance and repair records for all trucks
- Perform preventative maintenance
- Schedule regular maintenance for trucks
- Advise on future repair needs
- Contact a truck's manufacturer if needed to resolve warranty claims or to get advice/guidance on a problem
- Road test vehicles and trailers
- Use computers and databases to find information to assist with their work
- Welding ability is seen as an asset

## Related Occupations

Although the majority of jobs in Grand Erie's trucking industry are for drivers, there are many other occupations that help keep the trucks on the road and the industry running.

- Wheel and Tire Technician
- Dispatcher
- Operations managers
- Fleet managers
- Driver trainers
- Safety and loss prevention officers
- Compliance officers
- Welder
- Parts Supervisor



“Good mechanics will need to have a good, solid knowledge of computers, engineering, and methods of diagnostics and repair. Days of the backyard mechanic are long gone.”

– Michael Ludwig, Ludwig Transport Ltd.

## Education and Training

Changes in the truck industry point to truck mechanics requiring more education, training and skills than ever before.

Truck mechanics have Grade 12; some have either college, apprenticeship or a combination of both. To work in the trade, a person must hold a valid certificate or be registered as an apprentice. To be eligible for receive a certificate, someone must complete an automotive service technician program or a related apprenticeship program.

There are two certifications available for truck mechanics. Both are Red Seal trades, meaning once the requirements are met and certification achieved, a mechanic can work across Canada in the field.

### **TWO CERTIFICATIONS:**

**Truck and Coach Technician (310T):** Mechanics complete either a college-level service technician program or a minimum four-year apprenticeship in this specialization.

**Truck Trailer Service Technician (310J):** Truck-trailer repairers complete a minimum four-year apprenticeship or complete a college-level service technician program.

Mechanics frequently attend specialized training courses designed or offered by a truck manufacturer to learn how to maintain and repair particular models of trucks that are part of a transport company's fleet.

Mechanics are expected to remain current on how to maintain and repair new trucks, and frequently need to update their training.

More information on training resources are available on these websites:

**Employment Ontario:** [www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/)

**IWIN:** [www.iwin.on.ca/english/index.cfm?lb=14](http://www.iwin.on.ca/english/index.cfm?lb=14)

### **Examples of local training schools:**

Mohawk College in Stoney Creek and Conestoga College in Guelph have centres where they offer both Truck-Trailer Service Technician and Truck and Coach Technician programs. Fanshawe College in London offers a Motive Power Technician (Diesel) diploma and apprenticeship program, while also offering an apprenticeship in Truck and Coach Technician.

**Mohawk College**  
Gerald Marshall Centre for  
Transportation, STARRT Institute  
Stoney Creek, ON  
[www.mohawkcollege.ca](http://www.mohawkcollege.ca)

**Conestoga College**  
Guelph, ON  
[www.conestogac.on.ca](http://www.conestogac.on.ca)

**Fanshawe College**  
London, ON  
[www.fanshawec.ca](http://www.fanshawec.ca)

# Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are available in Ontario in two categories.

**Truck-Trailer Service Technician (310J):** These technicians maintain, service and repair truck trailers and their many components. This includes maintaining the trailer frames, suspension systems, wheels, tires and axles, braking systems, hitching/coupling systems, as well as trailers' heating and refrigeration systems.

**Truck and Coach Technician (310T):** These technicians focus on the maintenance, service and repair of heavy trucks, truck trailers and motor coaches, such as buses. Their work includes maintaining engines, transmissions, electrical/electronic systems, heating/air conditioning, fuel systems and emission control systems.

For more information and to look for apprenticeship opportunities, visit:  
[www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

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Truckingcareers.ca  
[www.truckingcareers.ca](http://www.truckingcareers.ca)

Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council  
[www.cthrc.com/en](http://www.cthrc.com/en)

Dispatchers and radio operators keep truck drivers connected to their home base. They co-ordinate the movement of trucks and their cargos to help ensure they arrive on time and without problems. Dispatchers, who are sometimes former drivers, are also an important support system for drivers. Dispatchers are able to stay in constant contact with drivers, alerting drivers to such things as bad weather ahead or wait times at the United States border. When there are problems, such as major mechanical breakdowns, dispatchers can send out repair trucks.

# truck dispatcher



**National Occupation Code (NOC): 1475 Level C and D**

Dispatchers also ensure the accuracy of drivers' completed time sheets, which are used for payrolls. Dispatchers also maintain records of mileage, fuel use and expenses and write related reports.

In Grand Erie, about 135 people are employed dispatchers inside the Truck Transportation industry, with a similar number working in other industries. Dispatchers also work for warehouses, manufacturers, local governments and utilities, and other transportation services. Dispatchers and truck service technicians-mechanics are in a virtual tie as the second largest occupation in trucking after drivers.

In 2010, there were more than 660 businesses in Truck Transportation in Grand Erie, with the majority of businesses being considered small- to medium-sized (SMEs).

(Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2010).

## Working Conditions

Dispatchers spend the majority of their work time sitting at a computer and connected to a telecommunications systems. Dispatchers often work under pressure in a fast-paced environment, and need to be well-organized, able to solve problems and handle stress. Because of the 24/7 nature of trucking, a dispatcher may be asked to work shifts, including nights and weekends.

## Main Job Duties

Dispatchers maintain the vital link between trucking companies and their drivers when the drivers are on the road, and also act as a link between drivers and customers. Dispatchers often keep in contact with dozens of different trucks travelling many different routes on a given day. They co-ordinate the delivery of freight to deadlines.

### Typical duties include:

- Staying in computer, phone or radio contact with drivers
- Keep track of shipments/cargo
- Monitor workload and time log for drivers
- Monitor location of drivers/cargo
- Advise drivers of route, traffic and weather problems
- Ensure trucks are weighed properly
- Dispatch emergency assistance if needed
- Maintain computer logs of mileage, fuel use, expenses

## Typical Job Titles

Truck dispatcher, transport truck dispatcher, fleet dispatcher, inbound/outbound freight co-ordinator.



## Wages and Salaries

Wages and salaries of dispatchers can vary depending on a number of factors, including work experience, familiarity with the industry and the size of company.

**\$11/hr – low | \$18.85/hr – average | \$29.10/hr – high**

Source: WorkinginCanada.gc.ca, Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula-Brantford Area, 2009

**Average yearly salary (full-time): \$41,714**

Source: Statistics Canada, Grand Erie wages, 2006 Census.

Grand Erie truck companies report dispatchers can earn \$50,000.

## Grand Erie Employment Potential - Average

There is limited information about employment prospects for dispatchers in Grand Erie. Several local truck companies, however, have rated prospects for dispatchers as "Good" for the next 5 years. The number of openings for dispatchers is also affected by the number of trucking companies and the health of the industry.

In Grand Erie, the number of truck companies have shrunk over the last couple years, as the industry was affected by the recession and the loss of manufacturing. In all, 53 small- to medium-sized truck companies closed in Grand Erie in the 18 months between December 2008 and June 2010. That still left about 660 employers. Employment fell by about 200 positions across the truck transportation industry during that same time period.

(Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, June 2010)

Good dispatchers are well regarded by trucking firms.

## Essential Skills Required

The most essential skills are: problem solving, oral communication and decision making.



## Industry Employment Potential - Fair

There is limited information about employment prospects for dispatchers in Ontario and Canada, because of the small number of employees in the occupation. Dispatchers are part of a larger occupational group Recording, Scheduling and Distributing Occupations (NOC 147). Over the next decade, it is projected that there will be more job seekers than positions in this wider category.

# What Local Employers Are Looking For

- Experience in industry (many dispatchers are former drivers, but it's not necessary)
- Good communications skills
- Computer skills
- Good organizational skills
- Customer service skills
- Knowledge of customs rules
- Excellent record keeping
- Ability to multi-task
- Decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Ability to remain calm during busy or stressful periods
- Conflict resolution skills
- Strong attention to detail
- Understanding of North American geography

Most employers who advertise are looking for drivers who have the following experience and skills:

**Experience:** 0-2 years

**Specific Skills:**

- Ability to operate radio and computer-aided communications equipment
- Basic computer skills
- Strong communications and language skills
- Bondable, a background check that allows you to be insured to handle money



## Specific Duties

- Advise drivers of route and traffic problems
- Maintain records of mileage and fuel use
- Maintain records of repairs
- Monitor drivers and location of trucks
- Monitor workloads of drivers
- Complete drivers' log book
- Ensure trucks are weighed properly
- Act as a liaison between customers and drivers
- Maintain current knowledge of trucking regulations and cross-border rules
- Using specialized software to track trucks and shipments

## Related Occupations

Drivers account for the majority of jobs in Grand Erie's trucking industry. But there are other occupations that help keep the industry running.

- Operations Managers
- Fleet Managers
- Billing Administrator
- Safety and Loss Prevention Officers
- Compliance Officers
- Material Handlers
- Customer Service Representative

Outside trucking, dispatchers can work as transportation route and crew schedulers, or for emergency services such as police, fire and ambulance.



# Education and Training

There are no mandatory education requirements to become a dispatcher. However, many companies prefer employees with at least a high school education. More and more companies seek people with college or university studies.

Most dispatchers learn on the job. There is largely an absence of formal education and training programs specifically geared to dispatchers. There are short-term training and online training available. For example, the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council offers two levels of E-Learning courses for dispatchers.

Fanshawe College's James N. Allan Campus in Simcoe offers dispatch training under continuing education in partnership with KRTS Transportation Specialists Inc., a private career college. The program includes the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council's online learning modules, trip planning, carrier tours, and a two-day in-truck observation component. Topics covered include border crossing, interpersonal and motivational skills, speed management and hours of service.

Fanshawe College, Simcoe

[www.fanshawec.ca/EN/simcoe/](http://www.fanshawec.ca/EN/simcoe/)

More information on training resources are available on these websites:

**Employment Ontario:** [www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/)

**IWIN:** [www.iwin.on.ca/english/index.cfm?lb=14](http://www.iwin.on.ca/english/index.cfm?lb=14)

## Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is not available for this occupation.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Ontario Trucking Association Career Highways

[www.ontruck.org/careers](http://www.ontruck.org/careers)

Truckingcareers.ca

[www.truckingcareers.ca](http://www.truckingcareers.ca)

Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council

[www.cthrc.com/en](http://www.cthrc.com/en)

# WORKFORCE PLANNING BOARD OF GRAND ERIE

The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie serves the communities of Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk as a leader in local labour market planning. WPBGE delivers authoritative research, identifying employment trends, targeting workforce opportunities and bringing people together to act on solutions. WPBGE conducts annual research on the trends, opportunities and priorities impacting the local labour market and releases regular updates, reports and an annual publication that captures strategic actions to address key labour market priorities.



Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie  
Commission de planification de la main-d'œuvre de Grand Erie

Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie  
1100 Clarence St. South, Suite 103B, Brantford, ON N3S 7N8  
Phone: 519-756-1116 | Fax: 519-756-4663  
[www.workforceplanningboard.org](http://www.workforceplanningboard.org)

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