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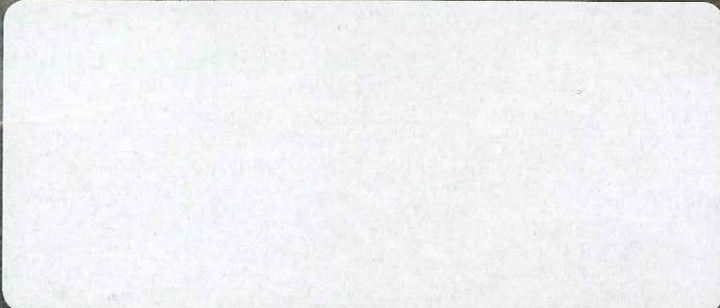
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LOGISTICS FOR TODAY'S COLD-CHAIN MANAGEMENT

April 2009

QUALIFYING DRIVERS

Freymiller streamlines the driver recruitment process



Women in trucking



A path to healthier drivers

I've got a suggestion for not only recruiting and retaining drivers, but for keeping them performing at a peak level: invest in their health and well-being.

Driving a truck, particularly in over-the-road operations, is an inherently unhealthy occupation. Drivers often fail to get enough exercise and restful sleep due to long and irregular working hours. This often gives rise to a number of physical ailments, including poor nutrition and obesity.

Are you aware that industry studies show that more than seven out of 10 drivers are overweight?

There are also high levels of stress in truck driving. Stress robs a person of energy, making them feel tired and apathetic.

Research finds there is a higher occurrence of sleep apnea among professional truck drivers than any other occupational group in America. Sleep apnea is a potentially serious sleep disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts.

Furthermore, it is estimated that some 65% of truck drivers have high blood pressure. (To be medically certified, professional drivers need to have a blood pressure below 140/90.)

The concern about drivers' health has prompted the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), as part of its *Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010*, to include safety-oriented initiatives that aim to identify unsafe carriers and drivers, and to hold them accountable for "sustained performance by regularly determining their safety fitness."

Safety fitness will be determined by tracking driving records, as well as records related to a driver's health "to focus attention on driver physical qualifications," FMCSA says.

Considering the potential impact of the safety rating on a carrier, fleets have more reason to be concerned about the health and wellness of their drivers.

For those operations not already doing so—and I wish there was only a small number—it is high time to focus on making drivers, and all employees for that matter, healthier.

Improving their health improves job satisfaction and retention, and helps curtail absenteeism, which advances productivity and reduces operating costs. Plus, companies gain a reputation as a good place to work, and that assists with recruitment efforts.

Not sure where to begin? There's an organization that can help with that challenge: the Healthy Trucking Association of America (HTAA).

A national non-profit association, it was formed to provide drivers with the resources they need to live healthier and longer lives, and to provide trucking companies with resources to assist their drivers with healthier lifestyles, and to help protect their companies from the liability generated by unhealthy drivers.



Companies that join HTAA become a participant in the Healthy Fleet program, which provides resources to build a foundation for a company-wide health and wellness program. These include inter-terminal screenings and treatment campaigns for such things as hypertension, obesity, and cholesterol; yearly flu shots; sleep apnea consultation; and smoking cessation.

There are also programs that member companies can provide to their drivers, owner-operators, and others, such as prescription discounts, 24-hour nurse line, health topics information line, and discounts on fitness equipment.

Contacting HTAA is time well-invested: www.healthytruck.org; andy@healthytruck.org.

The bottom line is, a healthy trucking industry benefits us all.

I welcome your thoughts and comments.

—David A Kolman
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