



The Safety Perspective

By Tim Doyle
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Virtually all trucking companies today agree that their number one issue is finding good, qualified drivers to haul for them. The American Trucking Associations has estimated the driver shortage at approximately 50,000 drivers, and growing. Exacerbating the issue is that the average age of today's driver is 55 years old. Additionally, our Industry is competing for drivers with other trades such as the contractors and manufacturers who are all in the same boat.

It is not lost on anyone that pays attention that trucking moves the economy..."If you got it, a truck brought it" is an ATA slogan. In fact, nationally, trucking moved 71% of the freight tonnage by utilizing over 3.5 million drivers. Without trucking, the country's supply chain falls apart within days. Thus, the critical need for good and qualified drivers is becoming increasingly important.

The Industry has responded to the driver shortage in several ways. Efforts include increasing driver pay and benefits, promoting the role of professional truck drivers to enhance the image of today's professional driver, and working to hire veterans while leading efforts to allow their military driving skills to transition to a civilian CDL. While these efforts have been largely successful, the driver shortage persists.

The focus of this article is on a current effort to recruit

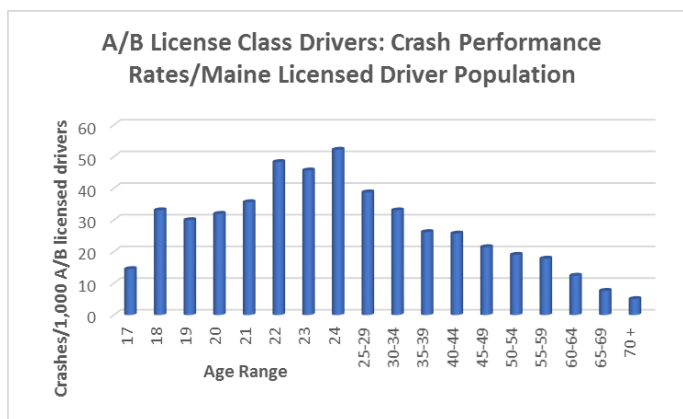
younger drivers to the profession and Maine's experience with allowing 18 to 20 year old drivers to operate CDL trucks in intrastate commerce.

For many years, younger drivers have obtained a CDL license but are then prohibited from operating in interstate commerce because federal regulations require these drivers to be 21 years of age. Most all states (including Maine) allow younger drivers to operate intrastate with some restrictions such as air mile limits. In fact, Maine allows drivers as young as 16 to operate within 100 air miles in Maine if the movement is entirely intrastate in nature. To put this into perspective, a 16-year-old driver in Maine can drive from Augusta to Old Town, but cannot drive from Kittery to Portsmouth, NH a distance of less than 5 miles. An 18-year old driver in Maine can operate statewide, driving hundreds of miles.

The result for industry in our country is that 18 to 20 year old drivers often obtain their CDL, but then find other employment before reaching their 21st birthday. Once employed in another profession many of these young professionals never return to the trucking industry. Championed by the ATA, this issue has reached the attention of Congress.

Representatives Duncan Hunter and Trey Hollingsworth have introduced and Rep. Bruce Poliquin has co-sponsored the DRIVE-Safe Act that will create a pathway for this segment of drivers to operate in Interstate commerce under certain conditions. The legislation requires 18 to 20 year old drivers who obtain their CDL and want to operate in interstate commerce, to undergo a two-step program that includes 400 hours of additional training and 240 hours of driving with an experienced driver in the cab with them. All trucks used in the program must be equipped with the latest safety equipment including active braking, collision mitigation, video event

Annual Crashes/ 1000 Licensed Drivers	
AGE	RATE
17	14.49
18	33.06
19	29.95
20	31.93
21	35.62
22	48.29
23	45.64
24	52.18
25-29	38.72
30-34	33.03
35-39	26.18
40-44	25.71
45-49	21.41
50-54	18.98
55-59	17.79
60-64	12.40
65-69	7.61
70 +	5.04



capture and a governor set at 65 mph or below. This training far exceeds the training of any other CDL driver and that of the requirements for 18 to 20 year old drivers who have been operating in Maine for decades.

In an effort to gather data on the Maine experience, Maine Motor Transport Association asked Duane Brunell of Maine DOT to gather crash data on Maine CDL holders. The review looked at the 5-year period from 2013 to 2017 for crash data involving drivers with a class A or B license and operating a vehicle with a GVWR of over 26,000 pounds.

The data comprised the following and has some limitations:

Crash data included those that occurred in parking lots and reported by law enforcement;

- Rates are based on Maine licensed driver populations and estimates and do not factor in any possible differences of number of annual miles travelled by different age groups; and
- Not all commercial miles driven in the state are driven by Maine operators, nor do all crashes involve Maine operators, so rates are a general approximation using known Maine-based crash and driver exposures.

The results of the review led us to several observations and a couple of conclusions:

Observation #1: Crash rates in Maine are highest for drivers 22-24, but are better on either side of that age range.

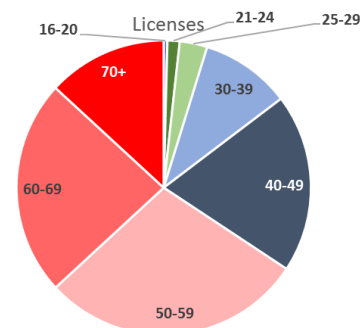
Observation #2: We have evidence of the aging workforce in the trucking industry.

- Over 65% of the licensed CDL drivers in Maine are over 50 years of age
- Only 0.4% of all CDL driver in Maine are under 21 years of age.

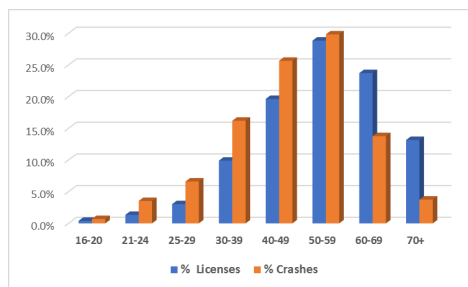
Observation #3: The number of crashes by age group would only be relevant if we could also determine mileage by age group as well.

- With about 270 CDL holders age 16-20 we don't know if they all use their CDL to drive commercially and how many miles they drive in order to understand the relevance of 8 crashes per year
- The rate of crashes to licensed driver in each age group reaches a relative balance (percentage of licenses compared to percentage of crashes) after age 50, which is what we understand about younger drivers with less experience.

Age Group	Licenses
16-20	0.4%
21-24	1.3%
25-29	3.0%
30-39	9.9%
40-49	19.6%
50-59	28.8%
60-69	23.7%
70+	13.2%



Age Group	5yr Average Licenses	% Licenses	5yr Average Crashes	% Crashes
16-20	269	0.4%	8	0.7%
21-24	903	1.3%	42	3.5%
25-29	2,040	3.0%	79	6.6%
30-39	6,661	9.9%	194	16.2%
40-49	13,207	19.6%	307	25.6%
50-59	19,403	28.8%	356	29.8%
60-69	15,955	23.7%	165	13.8%
70+	8,850	13.2%	45	3.7%



Conclusion #1: There are not enough 17-20 year olds driving commercially in Maine for the results to be statistically relevant.

Conclusion #2: None of the current statistics considers the additional training and significant mentorship that are included in the DRIVE-Safe Act.

to draw relevant conclusions on the issue. With that stated, however, taking the very comprehensive and responsible steps outlined in the DRIVE-Safe Act can only serve to further safeguard what appears to be working in Maine and many other states, which is allowing 18 to 20 year old drivers to operate in commerce. A pilot program such as the DRIVE-Safe Act, and continuing efforts to attract drivers of all ages to the Industry are vitally necessary as the driver shortage in this country is continuing to grow.

A full summary of the review is available by contacting Brian Parke or Tim Doyle at MMTA.

Tim