

# COVID 19 RESPONSE

## Trucking Heroes Keep Supplies Moving

Daily life abruptly changed for millions of Americans during the coronavirus pandemic, but one group of workers has continued to do one of the most important tasks of all: truck drivers.

America's truckers are playing a critical role in keeping people fed, stocked and safe during the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak. Whether delivering supplies on long-haul routes or making local and regional deliveries, truck operators are keeping cargo moving at a time when America critically needs it.

### KEEPING SHELVES STOCKED

Shoppers nationwide have been stocking up on supplies as they hunker down for an unknown period of time. This has led to empty shelves and high demand of some products — such as paper goods and sanitation supplies — while people practice social distancing to slow the virus's spread.

The professionals keeping those shelves stocked include truck drivers, who serve as the backbone of America's supply chain. There are more than 1.8 million drivers of heavy and tractor-trailer trucks in the workforce, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and they can be away from home for days or weeks at a time.

They also do more than drive long distances. They're often responsible for properly



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securing cargo for transport, inspecting their equipment for problems, carefully logging their mileage and working hours, and keeping their trucks in good shape.

### CHANGING TIMES

Operating a truck is always an important part of the American economy. Right now, however, drivers are getting even more attention and thanks for delivering food and medical supplies where they are needed.

Some procedures have changed, depending on the customer. For example, drivers may be required to keep more distance from workers at loading docks, or take steps to minimize the risk of catching and spreading viruses.

Industry suppliers are changing, as well, to keep the trucks moving even while much of the economy has shut down. Restaurants and some truck stops are shutting down their dining rooms but keeping delivery options open.

Some fast-food restaurants have created an option in their mobile ordering apps specifically for truck drivers who need curbside service. Others are offering discounts for pickup orders as a way to thank truckers.

The Federal Highway Administration also temporarily relaxed the rules that prohibited food trucks from operating at highway rest areas. Keeping truckers fed and fueled has taken on new

importance during the pandemic.

### SUPPORT NEEDED

While much has been done to thank truck drivers and keep them on the road, there are still concerns. Here are some ways to help:

— Get them sanitation supplies. If you know a truck driver, try to donate hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes to them. These supplies are in short stock everywhere, but they're especially important for truckers who are traveling and contacting people in potential virus hotspots.

— Support legislation that helps the trucking industry stay safe and well-funded. Some parts of the industry are still seeing high demand,

including groceries and medical supplies. With large parts of the American economy effectively shut down, though, even transportation companies and independent owner-operators are seeing a drop in business. They need help to keep their doors open.

— Drive carefully. Big, heavy trucks can't move like smaller cars. Be patient and cautious when driving near them.

— Appreciate truck drivers when there's not an emergency. Truckers are playing a critical role all the time, not only after natural disasters or public health crises.

With the public's continued help and appreciation, America's truckers can keep on trucking for a long time to come.

# Trucking Heroes



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