



**WOMEN IN  
TRUCKING**

**Same Gender Training Policy:  
Recruiting and Protecting  
Female Drivers**

**Whitepaper Safety & Harassment Series**

## Same-Gender Training Policy: Recruiting and Protecting Female Drivers

### Introduction

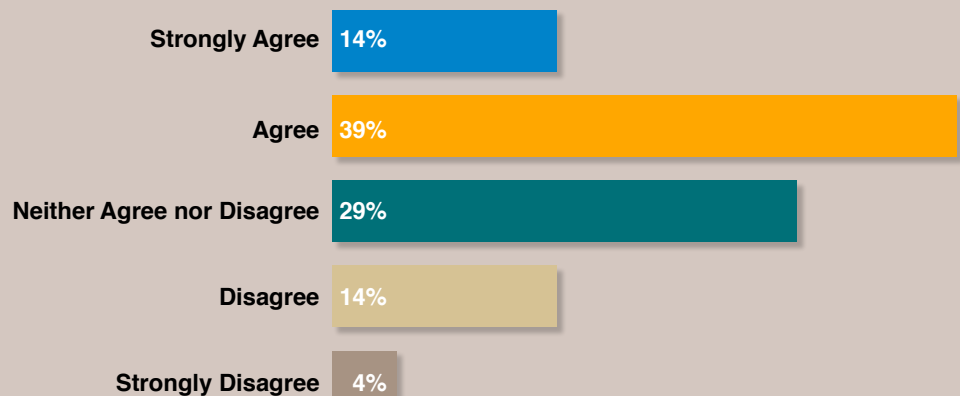
The Women In Trucking Association (WIT) is America's leading industry association for women in the trucking industry. With more than 6,000 members in 10-plus countries around the world, the mission of WIT is to encourage the employment of women in the trucking industry, promote their accomplishments, and minimize obstacles they face. From educating women about the benefits of becoming a truck driver to ensuring companies adopt best practices to ensure proper recruitment, training, and safety protocols, WIT is on the front lines of advocating, protecting, and promoting the need for more inclusivity in the trucking industry.

From July through September 2021, WIT conducted a driver safety and harassment survey to gain perspectives from professional drivers about their perceptions and experiences involving safety and harassment in the North American trucking industry. WIT conducted this survey primarily due to the results of a 2017 WIT/FreightWaves study, in which women gave the industry just a 4.4 out of 10 perceived safety score on average. The survey also found that they comprise less than 6 percent of the industry's workforce. When asked about the most critical aspect the trucking industry should focus on to increase the percentage of drivers in the industry, safety tied for family/home time as females' top response.

Prior to deploying this survey in 2021, WIT was aware that a lot has changed over the last four years since the previous survey. The North American trucking industry has gradually come to a consensus on the need to address this homogeneity problem and has taken strides to correct it. Recent U.S. Department of Labor data indicates that there has been an 88 percent increase in female drivers since 2010. At the same time, however, the Department of Labor found that women still currently comprise under 8 percent of all drivers, sales workers, and truck drivers. These figures suggest that, while the industry is moving in the right direction, stakeholders need to do more to encourage female participation in the industry. The most recent WIT survey sought to determine what has changed for better or worse since 2017 while exploring what further steps the industry can take to increase gender inclusivity.

A key learning from this study was to gauge the perception of professional drivers of whether or not the North American trucking industry is a safe industry in which women drivers can work. Approximately 53 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, while another 18 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Approximately 29 percent were neutral in their perception on this.

### Trucking is a Safe Industry for Women



*When asked about the most critical aspect the trucking industry should focus on to increase the percentage of drivers in the industry, safety tied for family/home time as females' top response.*

## Demographics

There were 436 professional drivers who completed this survey. Approximately 66 percent were female, 32 percent were male, and nearly 2 percent identified as non-binary. Approximately 77 percent of respondents identified their race as White; 15 percent identified themselves as Hispanic/LatinX, Native American, Asian, or other; and another 8 percent identified their race as Black. A vast majority of respondents (approximately 95 percent) hold a Class A or Class B driver's license.

A large percentage of respondents (nearly 37 percent) were highly experienced, with more than 20 years of professional driving experience. An additional 23 percent had 10 to 19 years of experience. Another 34 percent had between 1 to 9 years of experience. Nearly 6 percent were new to the professional, with less than one year experience.

Naturally corresponding with the level of experience as a professional driver, a majority of respondents (approximately 74 percent) were more than 50 years of age. Another 23 percent were between the age of 35 to 49 years. Approximately 3 percent were younger than 25 years of age.

A significant percentage work for a for-hire trucking company (47 percent) and nearly 27 percent work for an Owner/Operator. An additional 11 percent work for a private fleet, and an additional 15 percent work drive for a third-party logistics provider or other type of company.

What type of routes do respondents typically run? A vast majority drive long-haul over-the-road (nearly 74 percent), while another 22 percent are involved in short-haul driving assignments. Nearly 16 percent are involved in pick-up and delivery.

## Same-Gender Cab Sharing

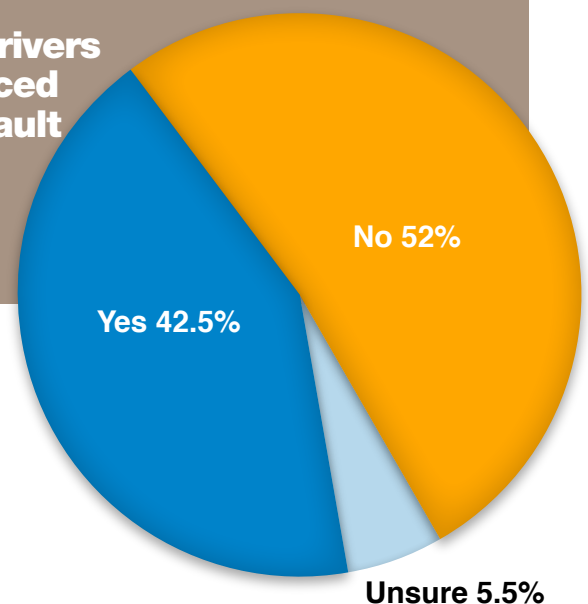
Same-gender cab sharing during over-the-road training consistently has been a primary concern of current and prospective female truck drivers. As such, it was a primary focus of this WIT survey.

After receiving their commercial driver's license, aspiring drivers accompany an experienced one on their route to become more confident, safer, and capable on the road. That not only means working exclusively with a stranger in close quarters for long hours during the day; it also means sleeping in the same vehicle.

Given that 46 percent of drivers have had an unwanted physical advance made toward them at least once and 52 percent know of someone who had an unwanted physical advance made toward them, it is understandable why the prospect of cab sharing with a member of the opposite gender concerns many women.

The WIT survey found that while most drivers believe their truck cabs are safe, they also indicated knowledge of women falling victim to harassment or assault while cabin sharing and that altering corporate policies could help significantly in shifting this trajectory.

**Are You Aware of Drivers who have Experienced Harassment or Assault when Sharing Cab with Opposite Gender Trainer?**





## Perceptions Among Professional Drivers

Most female professional drivers believe their truck cabs are safe. In fact, respondents gave their personal truck cabins an average safety rating of 83 percent. In addition, respondents gave their meeting/training rooms an average safety rating of 84 percent.

At the same time, however, survey respondents suggested that many women are at risk of falling susceptible to vulnerable situations during cabin sharing. In fact, respondents gave women sharing a cab with a trainer an average safety rating of just 51 percent.

## Corporate Policy Recommendations: Same-Gender Training

Because the overwhelming majority of current professional drivers are men, female drivers must often share the truck cab with a member of the opposite sex. In the WIT survey, approximately 42 percent of respondents said they are aware of female drivers who experienced harassment or assault due to sharing a cab with an opposite-gender trainer.

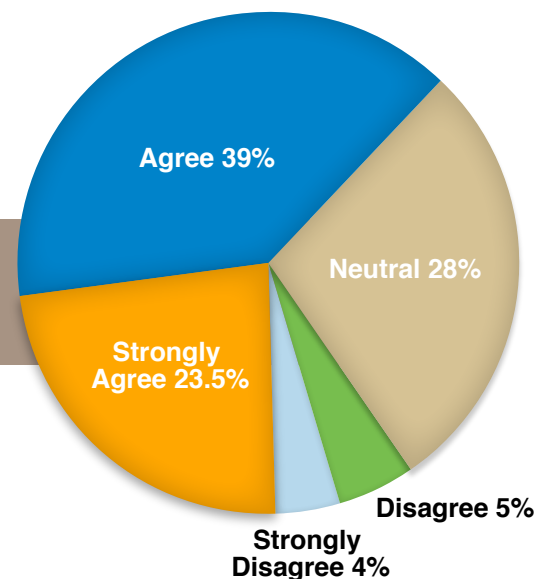
In addition, 33 percent of respondents indicated that none of the companies they have ever driven for had offered same-gender training programs. An additional 28 percent indicated that they were unsure if the companies they had driven for had offered same-gender training programs.

Yet, 62.5% percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that implementing a same gender training program would encourage more women to pursue careers as drivers.

Given these perceptions and the many issues related to training programs involving opposite genders, WIT strongly encourages corporations to adopt a same-gender training policy that enables female professional drivers to have the option for a same-gender trainer when involved in on-the-road training activities.

When having a same-gender trainer isn't an option in instances involving female drivers, there also are alternatives to help reduce or eliminate issues, such as ensuring that when sleeping arrangements need to be made that one of the parties has the ability to have a paid hotel room available to avoid the need to sleep together in the same cab.

### Implementation of Same-Gender Training Would Encourage More Women as Drivers



## Encourage Partner Driving Teams

Today, an increasing number of industry stakeholders are encouraging driving teams, where partners — friends and friends, husbands and wives, and boyfriends and girlfriends — alternate their time behind the wheel on the same route.

Team driving is not a new concept; it has been around since the inception of the trucking industry. That said, trucking companies would likely find it in their best interest to begin encouraging and marketing them more to female drivers to alleviate their two primary concerns with the trucking industry — safety and lack of family time.

## Additional Recommendations:

- **Upgrade In-Cab Safety Technology.** Equipping trucks with sound-enabled in-cab cameras, as well as a panic/emergency buttons in the sleeper and cabin areas, would increase women's safety and comfort on the road.
- **Utilize day cabins for on-the-road training.** Drivers sleeping in separate lodging rooms, as opposed to the same truck cabin, would reduce opportunities for cases of abuse and harassment to arise.
- **Utilize local routes for on-the-road training.** Utilizing routes that feature people and places trainees are familiar with would make female drivers feel more safe and secure on the road.

## Conclusion

While the North American trucking industry should be proud of the great strides it has made in fostering gender inclusivity over the last four years, it is clear much work remains to address concerns over safety and security.

Trucking companies should address women's concerns not only to become more inclusive but also to address the growing supply chain crisis the industry is currently facing. The results of this WIT Driver Safety and Harassment Study suggest that alleviating females' shared cab-sharing safety concerns would represent a great place to start.



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