

1. **Comment:**

the scandal plagued cdc wants a meeting to discuss truck driving issues and they want everybody to travel to Rosemont Illinois for that meeting. now why is that necessary. We have washington dc. we have atlanta where the cdc has full offices. AND WE HAVE THE INTERNET WHERE WE CAN HAVE A SOFTWARE MEETING AND THE CDC HAS INTERNET CAPABILITIES. WHY EVEN HIGH SCHOOL KIDS MEET WORLDWIDE ON THE INTERNET AT PRESENT. WHY DID THE TAXPAYERS PAY FOR ALL KINDS OF COMMUNICATIONS ABILITIES AT THE CDC IN ATLANTA WHEN THEY DONT USE IT?

TAKE COMMENTS ON THIS ISSUE VIA THE INTERNET. LET THE PUBLIC SEE THE WRITTEN COMMENTS YOU GET ON THIS ISSUE. NOBODY NEEDS TO PROMOTE GLOBAL WARMING BY TRAVELLING OUT TO ROSEMONT ILLINOIS FOR THIS MEETING.

WHAT KIND OF STUPIDITY AND WASTEFUL SPENDING OF TAX DOLLARS GOES ON AT THIS AGENCY. THE TAX DOLLARS SHOULD BE USED EFFICIENTLY NOT WASTEFULLY.

**Response:**

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments. The location of the November 2007 stakeholder meeting was selected based on comments and recommendations made by stakeholders at the January 2007 Transportation Research Board (TRB) meeting in Washington, D.C. NIOSH is located in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Comments on this issue may be submitted via the Internet on the NIOSH blog (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/blarchive.html>) or through this electronic docket.

2. **Comment:**

Hi,

I read with interest your proposed survey on Trucker Driver Safety and Health. I would very much like to have my husband perform this survey when it becomes available, but noticed this will be offered only at truck stops. Is there some way to make this survey available on-line? He is currently driving for a Company but is about to go independent. As a safety professional, I am appalled at the treatment of the drivers and the expectations set forth by their employers. I believe the negative issues (fatigue, running long hours, waiting, waiting and more waiting for loading/unloading, etc.) are enhanced by the entrance of the brokers, who pretty much run/dictate the business.

Please make this survey available online and let all safety professionals know when this happens.

Thanks.

Regards,

**Response:**

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. The protocol for this project has not been finalized, and comments such as yours are important for further development of it. In the study of long haul truck drivers that we are planning, our goal is to estimate the percentages of drivers who are affected by different health problems (e.g., high blood pressure) and also to collect information on working conditions and practices (e.g., availability and use of safety devices; safety training; sleep patterns). By asking truck drivers at truck stops to participate in our study, we hope to obtain data that is representative of truck drivers as a whole. While placing our survey on-line would allow us to collect additional information, we would not know how representative the information is. Many drivers do not have access to the internet, and drivers who voluntarily participate in an on-line survey may have greater concerns about their health and working conditions than the drivers who don't participate. If this were the case, then the resulting data might not accurately reflect what truck drivers as a whole experience. For this reason, we are not planning to conduct this study via the internet.

3. **Comment :**

I have received the information from \_\_\_\_\_ about the Survey of US Truck Driver Safety and Health. I practice Occupational Medicine in Fargo ND with Meritcare and have an office near the junction of I 29 which is the main link between Winnipeg and Kansas City and I 94 which links Seattle and Chicago. Two truck stops (Petro and Flying J) are here and may be an option for a site for data collection.

If there is a need please let me know.

John Beauclair MD  
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Rt. 750

**Response :**

Dear Dr. Beauclair:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We are currently finalizing our survey protocol and questionnaire. We intend to perform cognitive testing of the questionnaire spring 2008, followed by pilot testing of the survey summer 2008. Conduct of the survey requires approval from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We expect that data collection to occur 2009-2010.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We would also hope that results to be obtained through this survey would be important for the dissemination and understanding of injury and health information in organizations such as yours.

We welcome the possibility of cooperating with your site for data collection. Thank you for contacting us about this. We will contact you as development of the survey progresses.

4. **Comment:**

Name

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Comments

I recently became aware of the problem that cross-country truck drivers experience in accessing influenza vaccines due to their mobility and work hours. This is of great concern due to their potential ability to spread an influenza virus throughout this country in the course of traveling the highways. Certainly, if the truck drivers were highly impacted by a pandemic flu, incurring high absenteeism, the US commerce would be severely paralyzed. I think your plan to conduct this health survey at the truck stops is excellent. Would it be possible to offer free influenza vaccines to the truck drivers as an incentive to participate in the health survey? The truck stops are the best method of accessing the truck drivers and possibly immunizing a large number of them. Thank you for taking the time to consider this.

D. Paxson Barker, BS, RN, doctoral student

**Response:**

Dear Ms. Barker:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. Your concerns about cross-country truck drivers' potential to spread influenza throughout the country is certainly a valid one, and has been considered in framing our questionnaire. We have included questions concerning influenza and health care in the questionnaire. The possibility of offering flu vaccines to truck drivers as an incentive has been discussed, but is not currently included in the protocol due to logistical and resource limitations.

5. **Comment:**

I have managed an Occupational Health Clinic at a Petro truck stop at the Intersections of Interstates 39 and 88 in N. Illinois for the last 5 years. If we can be of any help to you with the survey, please let us know. We are always interested in improving the health of our truckers. Thank you.

**Never underestimate the difference that you can make.....**

**Jennifer Helfrich RN  
Manager- Occupational Health Services  
Rochelle Community Hospital**

**815/562-2682**

**Response:**

Dear Ms. Helfrich:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We are currently finalizing our survey protocol and questionnaire. We intend to perform cognitive testing of the questionnaire spring 2008, followed by pilot testing of the survey summer 2008. Conduct of the survey requires approval from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We expect that data collection to occur 2009-2010.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We would also hope that results to be obtained through this survey would be important for the dissemination and understanding of injury and health information in organizations such as yours.

We welcome the possibility of cooperating with your site for data collection. Thank you for contacting us about this. We will contact you as development of the survey progresses.

6. **Comment:**

Name

Christine Kielb

Organization

NYS Department of Health

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Comments

Most trucks run on diesel, and many truckers leave their vehicle idling for long periods. Research on school buses shows that the driver and riders are exposed to diesel exhaust, especially during idling. PM2.5, which includes diesel particulate matter, has been linked to cancer and heart disease. Therefore you might want to consider measuring potential exposure to diesel exhaust, including having a question on the survey that asks how much the truck is left idling, especially when the driver is in the vehicle. Depending on your research budget, you might also want to consider air monitoring at selected truck stops, and/or in selected vehicles.

**Response:**

Dear Ms. Kielb:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. A primary aim of the survey is to collect baseline information useful to determine prevalence of certain health conditions and risk factors among truck drivers. This survey is not intended to collect exposure information such as might be obtained from aerosol monitors or to address the relationship between quantitative diesel levels and health conditions. The question of whether truck drivers also sleep in the vicinity of diesel engines is, however, an interesting one which will be included on the survey questionnaire. We are considering other questions regarding diesel exposure information which may be appropriate to include.

We have added a question on truck idling when the driver is in the vehicle to the current draft of the questionnaire. We have not included air monitoring in the survey protocol due to logistical and resource constraints.

7. **Comment:**

I reviewed your questionnaire goals and it is good. However, as a DOT medical examiner, you will find that most drivers do not answer any questions honestly. Dr \_\_\_\_\_ in Crossville, TN asked drivers to fill out the Epworth sleep scale as part of the Dot medical exam. Two of his large trucking companies, offered to pay for a sleep study on any driver who had secondary signs of sleep apnea. His results showed that the drivers who claimed to have absolutely no problems had the worst sleep apnea. Those with problems do not want to disclose any history in fear of losing their certificate. I've found drivers not listing sedating medicines, never admit to snoring, no history of any surgery but have a large scar on their back, no heart problems but have a cabg scar, and many more examples. You need to have a way to verify the honesty factor or your data is 'garbage' with erroneous conclusions. I predict your questionnaire will show drivers are the most healthy, non-smoking, best sleepers, and don't need health intervention in the population. (sorry) I've worked with truckers too long to trust what they say. I trust what I see. Truth Bias is going to be your biggest issue. I look forward to your results.

**Response:**

Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. You bring up important concerns for the validity of this survey. We have discussed these issues internally, with other stakeholders, and in focus groups we have held.

We will be taking several steps to insure valid results. First, information will be collected through our contractor and not by government employees. Hopefully these individuals will either be (retired) truck drivers or individuals with ties to and some understanding of the trucking industry. We also propose to collect information in the long-haul truck driver survey anonymously. We will not collect any personal information for NIOSH research or linking purposes unless absolutely necessary, and then only after we obtain full consent of the driver. If personal information is collected, it will be legally protected from forced disclosure by a Certificate of Confidentiality (available from the National Cancer Institute NCI), and the personally identifiable information will be destroyed at the earliest opportunity. All of these efforts to protect anonymity will be clearly conveyed to potential participants.

We have inserted some redundant questions at different points in the questionnaire, in an effort to determine which replies might be consistent and valid. To ensure questionnaire results are most useful and questions most understandable to the respondents, we are conducting focus groups and cognitive testing of the questionnaire, and will be conducting pilot tests of the protocol procedure. Results from each of these testing phases may result in fine-tuning the questionnaire to ensure most reliable results. Unfortunately, collection of medical screening information (such as from blood pressure measurements or blood tests) which would, as you mention, be a 'gold standard' for some of the data we will collect, is not included in our protocol due to logistic and resource constraints.

As you remark, the Epworth sleep scale has been found not to be reliable in studies of sleep apnea in truck drivers (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration [2002]. A study of prevalence of sleep apnea among commercial truck drivers. ). We are currently re-evaluating the collection of sleep apnea information as originally called for in our protocol, and will be using the Berlin, multivariable apnea prediction (MAP), and Karolinska sleepiness scales to supplement the Epworth scale.



8. **Comment:**

Name

Franklin E. Mirer

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Comments

This comment is based on the post on the Truck Stop study on the NIOSH blog. The post is notable for what it leaves out. I have not had the opportunity to do a detailed review of the study protocol.

The blog post omits mention of diesel particulate matter (DPM). Truck drivers are thought to occupy the front line of exposure to DPM, a health threat in many industries and to the general public. There is little dispute that truck drivers suffer excess mortality from lung cancer, shown in over a dozen studies. The term "suggest" in the post is a weak for discussing this substantial body of data, and lack of mention of DPM is a concern. One study by NIOSH is cited below. There remains a bit of a debate as to whether and how much of that excess is due to DPM exposure. A conclusion that the observed excess derives in any material way from DPM exposure would drive very stringent exposure limitations. A middle-of-the-road account of this information (vintage 1995) is found at

<http://www.healtheffects.org/Pubs/diesum.htm>

The emphasis on truck stops raises an interesting point. Truck drivers, if like other workers, spend about 40% of their waking hours at work, and breathe about 35% of all their air (working and non-working) in the occupational environment, meaning close proximity to operating diesel engines. However, the mention of truck stops raises the question of whether these workers also sleep in the vicinity of these engines. Based on a 5-day week, that's about 70% of sleeping hours and 20% of overall hours.

I would hope that the research team traveling to 40 truck stops would pack nephelometers and real time aerosol monitors as well a survey questionnaires. Getting there would cut the effort of an exposure project in half.

On another topic, the canonical discussion of lifestyle and health behaviors is also a concern.

First, the mention of "sedentary lifestyle" is a bit demeaning for workers who are required to sit and concentrate intensely for their workshift. For most manual occupations, the demerit of "sedentary



We will collect information on working conditions as a part of this survey. In addition, we are considering questions about activities performed on the job, such as what might be obtained from an activity log. An activity log is presently included with the fatigue and sleep disorder components of the survey, although such questions might also be appropriate to include in each component.

Questions relating to the contribution of pain and stress to health behavior are included in the current draft of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your comments. They are helpful in determining further development of the study protocol and questionnaires. I appreciate your interest in this study.

9. **Comment:**

Name

Michael T. Kelley, MD MPH

Organization

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Comments

Our Occupational clinics examine about 2500 - 3000 drivers per year. About 10 months ago we instituted the guidelines recommended by the National Sleep Foundation, Chest Physicians and ACOEM, which were published in AJOEM in September 2006. We have referred a significant number of drivers for sleep studies based on these guidelines and our preliminary results show that approximately 70 - 80% of those referred have sleep apnea (much too high a positive rate for a screening test. The frightening point is that the majority either did not know or did admit to having sleep problems on the history form. The other frightening aspect is that there are a couple of large national carriers that no longer use our service because we are identifying "too many" drivers at risk. Drivers have told us they have heard about this new physical evaluation on their all-night radio shows.

Based on our experience I am concerned that your survey will significantly underestimate the problem. I wish you success.

M Kelley

**Response:**

Dear Dr. Kelley:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. Certainly the possibility mentioned by yourself and other stakeholders of underestimating the prevalence of sleep apnea is a valid concern. The use of various types of monitors and alternative approaches, including not assessing sleep apnea or using sleep scales (such as the Berlin, Epworth, Karolinska, and multivariate apnea prediction), is being reviewed. NIOSH has also contacted other sleep researchers who have conducted sleep apnea studies in trucking populations (such as Dr. David Dinges and Dr. Allan Pack) to determine possible alternative approaches for collection of such data. We hope in this part of the survey to obtain reliable data on sleep disorders which could be used to determine prevalence of sleep disorders among long-haul truck drivers. Other considerations such as the length of sleep time during which the monitor should be worn to obtain reliable information, collection/return of monitors, or training of individuals to suitably use the monitor will also affect

any decision to use sleep monitors. We are also aware that drivers may refuse to participate in the study as they consider any risks involved, and that such considerations may make this part of the study untenable.

10. **Comment:**

Name

Scott A. Weidner

Organization

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Comments

TFC is a 56 year old ministry to truckers and the trucking industry in the US and Canada. We presently have 34 permanent ministry locations and are developing new programs to help the drivers. Our history has shown us that many of the health and safety issues that affect the drivers find their basis in emotional, relational and spiritual difficulties. In fact, I have had one 'physical well being' expert, who had just made a presentation to a state trucking association, state that by far the largest percentage of problems his organization sees have an emotional, relational or spiritual basis.

While we fully recognize the physical issues as they relate to driver well being and safety, we also subscribe to the concept that a driver who is well integrated emotionally, cognitively and spiritually is better able to process both his/her internal world and external world input in such a way that his/her decisions regarding all aspects of their lives and relationships result in potentially more productive and safe decisions in their own lives and on the road. Such a well integrated individual is of great value, if for no other reason than that they are a lower risk, to themselves, their family, their company/industry and the traveling public.

Therefore, TFC is going to be looking forward to your data and we will be working with ATRI to compile and analyze data related to emotional, relational and spiritual issues.

I look forward to you results.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Weidner

President & CEO

Transport For Christ, International

**Response:**

Dear Mr. Weidner:

Thank you for your comments related to emotional, relational, and spiritual issues among truck drivers. Although this survey does not specifically address such issues, issues of stress among drivers and

how it is dealt are of special interest to us and will be collected in the survey questionnaire.

We hope the data to be collected will be useful to you to supplement other analyses you may be contemplating, as indicated in your comments.

11. **Comment:**

I work for a smaller company and I believe that the demands placed upon us by the customers and supervisors contributes to a number of factors that lead to health problems. Look at a drivers lifestyle and what we eat and how we eat as well as little exercise etc.....

I am a fifty five year old white male who smoked heavily for years. I am overweight and I have PAD. I have stents in the right femoral artery. I have also been diagnosed with prediabetes.

Since I have been diagnosed with these conditions I have started to do things differently. I quit smoking over 18 months ago. I walk daily. 25 or thirty minutes. I watch what I eat. I make lunches versus stopping at a fast food place or a truck stop. These are small steps but they add up. I have lost six pounds in a little over a month. I do not want to have a heart attack or die because of things I can change.

I am a firm believer that all truck drivers should have a cardiac work up and stress test every couple of years. I know of truck drivers who have had multiple heart attacks and still drive truck. I know change does not come easy and I also know much of it is up to the individual. Thank you for allowing me to share a little.

**Response:**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this truck driver survey. In this survey we will be asking about drivers' lifestyle and many of the conditions you mention.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We believe comments such as yours regarding change point to the importance of obtaining and disseminating health information such as is to be obtained through this project.



12. **Comment:**

I do think there needs to be an online survey also. I think some people would like to offer input.

**Response:**

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. The protocol for this project has not been finalized, and comments such as yours are important for further development of it. In the study of long haul truck drivers that we are planning, our goal is to estimate the percentages of drivers who are affected by different health problems (e.g., high blood pressure) and also to collect information on working conditions and practices (e.g., availability and use of safety devices; safety training; sleep patterns). By asking truck drivers at truck stops to participate in our study, we hope to obtain data that is representative of truck drivers as a whole. While placing our survey on-line would allow us to collect additional information, we would not know how representative the information is. Many drivers do not have access to the internet, and drivers who voluntarily participate in an on-line survey may have greater concerns about their health and working conditions than the drivers who don't participate. If this were the case, then the resulting data might not accurately reflect what truck drivers as a whole experience. For this reason, we are not planning to conduct this study via the internet.

13. **Comment:**

I believe that a majority of health issues for drivers all relates back to weight & nutrition. To many truck stops have put in fast food & take out restaurants. Alot of driver health issues are blood pressure, weight, breathing (because of being overweight), And there are many others. I can vouch for some of these issues because I have lost 25lbs & can see a big difference. I have tried to talk to drivers about nutritional eating & healthy weight loss & how it will improve their life but it's like talking to a wall. I really think by getting drivers healthier & teaching them nutrition, not junk science dieting, alot of statics would go down. This is just one couple that has a good nutritionist & good company to work with's opinion. If you want to talk to us, Call my cell @ \_\_\_\_\_, it's almost always on. Thanks,

**Response:**

Dear Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in the truck driver survey. In this survey we will be asking about drivers' lifestyle and many of the health issues/activities you mention.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We believe comments such as yours regarding change point to the importance of obtaining and disseminating health information such as is to be obtained through this project.

14. **Comment:**

Dear Sirs,

I would first off like to thank you for conducting this survey...I would also like to know how to take part in this survey..I saw that you thinking of having this screening/survey done at approx 40 trucks stops across the country...Will you be releasing in advance the times dates for doing these??? Will you be comparing male drivers with female drivers???What about team drivers,,same sex vs. husband wife teams ect..What about teams VS single drivers...What about company drivers VS. Owner Operators...Drivers of different ages...Driver that have medical coverage available to them VS drivers that have no coverage??? Married drivers vs. single drivers...

I am looking forward to hearing from you...

Thank in advance for your time,

Ellen Beers  
PO Box 1768  
LaBelle Florida 33975

[egbeerstrucking@isp.com](mailto:egbeerstrucking@isp.com)

**Response:**

Dear Ms. Beers:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We intend to collect information and conduct analyses on most of the factors you mention.

We are still finalizing the protocol for this survey, so locations of truck stops to be included nor timing have yet been determined. We hope to publicize the survey through magazines, brochures, and radio when it does take place, so that drivers will be aware of it and have increased opportunity to take part in it.

15. **Comment:**

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Comments

I think another area to compare is married drivers VS single drivers and or divorced VS married...Also you should consider the amount of education a driver has.

Please keep me informed to sites that you will be conducting this survey..and the start date I am very interested in being a part of this.

As a female driver would like to see the long term impact driving has on women...As someone who has medical issues in the past I now wonder if this career choice has any impact on those issues.

Looki forward to hearing from you.

**Response:**

Dear Ms. Beers:

Thank you for your comments. We intend to collect information and conduct analyses on most of the factors you mention above. It should be noted, however, that the long term impact driving might have on the development of chronic disease in women, for example breast cancer, is difficult to evaluate due to the small number of women in this industry and the fact that many of the female drivers have entered the profession within the past 10 years and it is not possible to draw conclusions about diseases with a long latency such as cancer. However, your question raises an important issue that we will place on our research agenda for the future.

We are still finalizing the protocol for this survey, so locations of truck stops to be included nor timing have yet been determined. We hope to publicize the survey through magazines, brochures, and radio when it does take place, so that drivers will be aware of it and have increased opportunity to take part in it.

16. **Comment:**

I was reading about your survey and would like to know if I would be able to participate. i would like to see Improved health in the industry. I feel that a lot is put on us with little help on how to handle the stress.

I hope questions such as time sitting in docks, Loading and unloading, locations on were to stop and the easy access to them I can come up with question too. A lot of what we have to deal with is caused a lot by our environment that brings on our conduction.

**Response:**

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We intend to collect information on stress and work organization in the industry and conduct analyses on most of the factors you mention above.

We are still finalizing the protocol for this survey, so locations of truck stops to be included nor timing have yet been determined. We hope to publicize the survey through magazines, brochures, and radio when it does take place, so that drivers will be aware of it and have increased opportunity to take part in it.

17. **Comment:**

Dear Sirs:

It seems to me that this study you are creating has only one goal in mind and that is to push the hours of service debate. If your dept. really wishes to find out about driver mortality, fatigue, poor health conditions, and other factors that may lead to accidents then you need to look at hundreds of other factors. Is it not true that fatigue is caused by factors not related to sleep, or that directly affect sleep? Take for instance fumes, coming from trucks exhaust. Every truck leaks carbon monoxide fumes at one level or another. How do the fumes affect the driver when he is consistently working in them, do they build up in a driver's system, and at what levels do they impact the driver's ability to react, and his attentive levels? Lights, they say that the best torture tactic used by the Japanese in WW2 was strobe lights constantly shining in persons eyes; they even caused them to go crazy. Well we have the same effect out here which can cause hypnotism. High beams not being reduced, headlights not aimed properly which blind drivers, large spotlights aimed at drivers eyes from offsite buildings, and the best one is night worker crews with their lighting of work areas, police and construction vehicles with the high intensity strobe lights blinding drivers as they come out of dark areas into road construction areas. Ever had someone at a party take a picture of you, the strobe goes off, you can not see for seconds or depending on your age and health minutes, well that is what drivers have to put up with daily. How about food and the lack of quality food and diet impact the driver's health? How does that impact the driver's fatigue levels and health, are they poisoning us to death by what we are offered to eat out on the road. And if we try to eat at places which offer better diet needs can we get access to them? How about the jarring the body takes while driving down our nations highways? Ever been in a truck to know how fatiguing that is on a body. Race drivers have to condition themselves for that race to be able to handle that stress, but truckers are confronted with those stress everyday, 8-11 hours a day, and 6-7 days a week. What does it do to the body, and how do the effects play into there over all health and conditions? Why not place life size and weighted dummies into drivers trucks to register the stress and analysis the results of those stress to see exactly what they do to the drivers and there fatigue levels. There are so many other things that need to be study, as an ex law enforcement officer, and truck driver I feel that until you have tested all the possible conditions that impact drivers you can not make a honest report on drivers fatigue and mortality issues. At anytime your people wish to experience what the trucker deal with on a daily basis, my door will always be open. But I feel that until you have done 30 days or so constantly in the trucks you can not get a full understanding of the problem, and to set up a testing or information collecting program without experiencing for yourselves the conditions and problems then you are wasting you time and the data will be flawed. Thank You for your time, please feel free to contact me at cell number \_\_\_\_\_ or by e-mail if I can be of any help in making a real effect on the problems drivers endure.

**Response:**

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. The overall objective of this project is to develop and conduct a national survey that provides information on the occupational safety and health surveillance issues for truck drivers. Through the survey we hope to:

1. Determine what percentage of truck drivers report health problems and associated risk factors
2. Characterize the working conditions, causes and outcomes of injury, and health behaviors; and
3. Explore associations among health status, individual risk factors, and occupational exposures related to organization of work.

We wish to thank you for indicating many of the factors and conditions drivers face. We have tried to incorporate input from experienced truck drivers in each phase of this study: by initially collecting input through stakeholder meetings, through public comment, and through the NIOSH science 'blog'; by conducting focus groups and interviewing drivers at a large Mid-Western truck show to get information on driver issues and sensibilities; by asking drivers to answer our questionnaire to see if questions are appropriate and understandable to them. We will be performing pilot tests during which the questionnaire is administered to drivers at truck stops. At each point the questionnaire has been modified to take into account comments from drivers. Although many of the conditions you mention are being addressed in our questionnaire, we do recognize that this questionnaire is not exhaustive, and that some of the conditions you list are not included. Work on ergonomic design of the truck cab is, for example, being done through another NIOSH project. Many of the concerns you mention also raise important issues that will be placed on our research agenda for the future. We believe our questionnaire will, however, answer questions 1-3 above.

One of the goals of this survey is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions, including factors you mention.

18. **Comment:**

Just as a thought--I feel that if you only survey truck stops, you will only be getting an over the road driver survey. It will be very limited to the type of work they do. It may be regional/long haul but you will not be getting the "local" driver. Many of these do not get to stop at truck stops, they usually will stop at a convenience store or someplace else they can park their rig. Maybe mailing the survey? maybe there would be more honesty about problems that are not wanted to be known while filling out a form from someone from the FMCSA?

**Response:**

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. Your comment that this survey will target long-haul truck drivers stopping at truck stops is correct. This study specifically aims to learn about health and safety issues in this group of truck drivers. Although we are also interested in local drivers' issues, our resources limit our ability to study the local truck drivers.

We are aware of the importance of honesty in filling out the questionnaire for collection of valid data. The survey will be conducted by NIOSH contractors and government employees will not be included in the interview process. NIOSH is not a part of the FMCSA.



19. **Comment:**

Being a professional driver for for 34 years, I'm really glad to see some interest in our (drivers) health. The job is increasingly difficult as shareholders and owners put increased demands for better bottom line figures on us. Stress levels have soared in every driver I personally know, and in a large number of others I don't personally know but have talked with. Trucking companies have free rein through the 14 hour a day federal ruling, to work us into the ground literally. And THEY DO just that. I would LOVE to see the same lawmakers that okay these insanely idiotic work hours have to work the same amount of hours per day as we do for just one year. I strongly suspect very very few would be up to the task. Just to touch on a couple of health related issues (if I may) that concern me are: #1..breathing diesel fumes.. sitting higher off the ground in the cab of a truck you are in the direct flow of the diesel fumes and smoke from the trucks in front of you. The carcinogens from diesel smoke (according to a lot of medical experts) are among some of the most dangerous known. #2..sitting for hours at a time with VERY LITTLE to NO range of motion involved. I firmly believe this has a much broader impact on muscoskeletal disorders than has been studied or verified at this date. Imagine driving a hard eleven hours with only a small 15 or 20 minute break during that time and then upon arrival at destination with no muscle stretches, or warm up of any kind, begin unloading 35-40 thousand pounds of freight by hand. I've done that so many times in my career I couldnt honestly count them. Well seasoned athletes wouldnt even attempt that on a regular basis. The long extended hours of sitting while being slammed up and down by rough roads can and will take its toll on the healthiest of people eventually. #3.. Sleep disorders..the sporadic and irregular sleeping patterns truckers face are in my opinion and the opinions of some in the medical profession, horrendous at best. Imagine day after day year after year of 14 hour work days complimented by not being able to get any appreciable,decent sleep. This in its self can and does host a variety of problems unique to our profession.I can only guess but if a study were done on the incidents of back and spinal injuries, heart attacks, cancer, muscoskelotel conditions, and kidney damage in our profession (as compared to other occupations) the results would be like a Stephen King novel. I hope my comments have not been in vain or fallen on deaf ears. Please, in the case this has reached a wrong department in error, please forward to the correct person or department. Thank you for your efforts and if I can be of any assistance please dont hesitate to contact me. Regards,

---

**Response:**

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We intend to collect information and conduct analyses on most of the factors you mention above, including diesel fumes and sleep disorders/sleep apnea, work organization and stress, injuries such as you mention, and cardiovascular conditions. Other NIOSH projects are investigating other factors you mention, such as ergonomic design of the truck cab.

We are still finalizing the protocol for this survey, so locations of truck stops to be included nor timing have yet been determined. We

hope to publicize the survey through magazines, brochures, and radio when it does take place, so that drivers will be aware of it and have increased opportunity to take part in it.

20. **Comment:**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I was an OTR driver for nearly two years after being permanently (re-engineered) laid off from a career in Occupational Safety and Health. Seems over the age of 55, there are not a lot of employers anxious to hire an individual over 55; however, the trucking industry applauds the older individual for their work ethic and does not discriminate. As a former safety professional, I had the opportunity to review trucking safety programs or lack of them as I traversed this great country week after week.

I read with interest all of the potential concerns with the proposed survey - union vs. non-union, owner operator vs. line haul, local vs. OTR; however, that is only a smattering of the issues. The survey "must" employ a group of trustworthy drivers to assist in the data preparation and collection if there are to be valued results. Fore if you have not sat in the seat of a "big rig" for periods of time and witnessed first hand, what truly occurs on the road and in the truck stops, your questions and answers will be "flawed" from the get go.

In 2002, I sent one of the owners of my employer (a major trucking firm) a QUALCOMM message on how to end the series of "rollover" events dramatically. We were doing well that year with only 42 events within the company vs. 84 the previous year. My first proposal was to "fire" the safety department since they had not set foot inside a truck in years and safety reliance was on mandatory videos. No one within the organization had any idea of the competencies, behaviors or moods of their drivers. How does a safety professional investigate a rollover from a thousand miles away. They take the work of the AI on the scene who can only relate what occurred.

I left the organization and went with a smaller firm with two dedicated runs per week from Michigan to the Northeast. I am happy to say that I drove many miles in over 1.5 years both Injury and accident free. Delivered my loads on time, had no DOT or moving violations and proved that it can be done. But then I had been a safety professional.

There are a lot of good people behind the wheels of our truck fleet, but yes there are a lot of issues. You have the right idea talking to the drivers, but you do need representatives to guide you through the questions and filter out the nonsense. Oh yes, I am now back in Occupational Safety and Health. Thanks for reading my thoughts and I would love to help prevent vehicle related injuries and illness.

Sincerely

W. Roger Huntington  
Sr. Safety Specialist / RSO

Flint Hills Resources  
2701 S. Range Road  
Marysville, MI 48040

810.434.1804

**Response:**

Dear Mr. Huntington:

Thank you for your comments regarding data collection. Your points are well taken to ensure validity of information to be collected. We have tried to ensure questionnaire results are most useful and questions most understandable to the respondents using several means: we are conducting focus groups and cognitive testing of the questionnaire, and will be conducting pilot tests of the protocol procedure. Results from each of these testing phases may result in fine-tuning the questionnaire to ensure most reliable results. We hope also to use (retired) truck drivers or others familiar with the trucking industry to administer all questionnaires, as you suggest.

21. **Comment:**

We have been in business for over 25 years of publishing magazines to the over the road drivers in the trucking industry. Please see our web site at [www.otrprotrucker.com](http://www.otrprotrucker.com) . Our distribution reaches over 1500 truck stops nationwide. We also have a sister company that has blood pressure kiosks placed in approximately 100 truck stops throughout the United States with an emphasis on educating and helping drivers with the health risks that will be addressed in your survey. This web site is located [www.healthytruckinginfo.com](http://www.healthytruckinginfo.com) .

I believe that we would be helpful in publishing advance notice and results of the survey you are planning to conduct. Also if you decide to expand survey group or decide to have participants sign up, we could likewise aid you in this process.

If any of the above interests you and you would like to discuss this further please feel free to contact me at your convenience. You may also reach my cell phone at 404-550-5929.

Merck K. Smith  
COO / Corporate Counsel  
Ramp Publishing Group  
610 Colonial Park Drive  
Roswell, GA 30075  
770-587-0311 ext. 2102  
Direct Line 678-739-0922  
800-878-0311

**Response:**

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We are currently finalizing our survey protocol and questionnaire. We intend to perform cognitive testing of the questionnaire spring 2008, followed by pilot testing of the survey summer 2008. Conduct of the survey requires approval from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We expect that data collection to occur 2009-2010.

We realize the importance of publicizing this survey to obtain maximal response rates, and appreciate your willingness to provide advance notice and results of the survey. We hope to publicize the survey through magazines, brochures, and radio when it does take place, so that drivers will be aware of it and have increased opportunity to take part in it.

One of the goals of this survey is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions in the truck driver community. We hope to do this through a variety of media, including trade publications such as yours.

Thank you for your interest. We will contact you as development of the survey progresses.

22. **Comment:**

Name  
Ken Beagley

Organization  
Prime Inc

Email  
kbeagley@primeinc.com

Address  
1205 E. Eagle Rock Dr.  
Ozark, Mo 65721  
USA

Comments

I have been a type 2 diabetic since 8/00. At the time i was a driver at Prime. I now teach orientation training classes as well as other classes.

I have become more aware of the health issues facing, not only pro drivers , but society as well. I beleive the primary cause of so many health issues in society from birth to the grave are related to lack of proper nutrients in todays food. The drive for bigger money has caused farming practices to weaken the quality of our foods, increasing the risk for (Diobesity) diabetis realated to weight gain, autoimmune definciencys such as lupus, phybromialgia. Mental disorders like bi-polar, ADD,ADHD, and autism .Heart attack, stroke, cancers of all types. our bodys are miricals in them selves, they desire to heal on their own. Yuo dont have to make a cut heal, it wants to heal on its own.Ive so much to provide you. Look forward to hearing from you . I have what i beleive are the solutions. Since 12/06 im down from 4 diabetic drugs to 2, am no longer on blood pressure meds,and am off cholesterol meds. Im down from size 40 pants to 36 and down 40lb and have not been on a diet. Let me know how i can help, i do teach a health segment in one of my classes here at Prime

**Response:**

Dear Mr. Beagley:

Thank you for your comments. In this survey we will be asking about drivers' lifestyle and health, including many of the issues you mention such as obesity and diabetes.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We believe comments such as yours point to the importance of obtaining and disseminating health information such as is to be obtained through this project.

23. **Comment:**

Docket Officer:

Please accept the attached comments on the proposed truck driver health and safety survey. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters commends NIOSH for undertaking this effort to evaluate health, safety, and lifestyle factors among truck drivers and appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed survey.

Michael W. Watson, CIH, CSP  
International Brotherhood of Teamsters  
25 Louisiana Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20001  
(202) 624-6960

**Response:**

Dear Mr. Watson:

Thank you for your comments on our proposed survey of long-haul truck driver injury and health. These comments from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) will be helpful in framing both the questionnaire and protocol for conduct of the survey. Responses to issues included in the IBT comments are attached. We are currently in the process of conducting focus groups among truck drivers and formulating the survey questionnaire. This will be followed by revision of the protocol, pilot testing, and preparation of submissions to NIOSH HSRB and OMB for data collection. We are very appreciative of the opportunity to receive input from the IBT and hope to work further with you and other stakeholders as we revise our protocol and questionnaire.

IBT comments, submitted as a PDF file to NIOSH docket and inserted as a PDF in this document:

Response to Comments Follows:



# THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

COMMENTS

ON

THE PROPOSED SURVEY OF TRUCK DRIVER SAFETY AND HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

DECEMBER 2007

PREPARED BY  
LAMONT BYRD, CIH, DIRECTOR  
MICHAEL W. WATSON, CIH, CSP  
AZITA MASHAYEKHI, MHS  
SAFETY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT



## Response:

### Response to Comments from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters: NIOSH Proposed Survey of Truck Driver Safety and Health (NIOSH Docket 110)

We wish to thank the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) for providing comments on the content and conduct of NIOSH's proposed survey of long-haul truck driver safety and health (NIOSH Docket 110). NIOSH investigators have developed an initial proposal detailing preliminary survey plans in order to secure funding for the survey. The purpose of requesting stakeholder input through NIOSH Docket 110 and a stakeholder meeting held November 1, 2007 was to gather input which would be helpful in further developing the final survey protocol. The comments received during the November 2007 meeting and in NIOSH Docket 110 will be very helpful for this purpose.

The IBT listed seven concerns in their comments to NIOSH Docket 110. Some of these concerns were addressed in the initial funding proposal, which was not completely presented in the 2007 stakeholder meeting in order that we could obtain maximal input on the proposed content and conduct of the survey. We thank the IBT for bringing up other considerations in developing a survey of long-haul truck driver injury and health. This document responds to the IBT.

#### A. NIOSH has not adequately evaluated the existing literature.

IBT comments stated that "several stakeholders [at the November 2007 public meeting in Chicago, Illinois] raised concerns that the information NIOSH is seeking to obtain through the proposed survey may already be readily available in the literature, along with methods for conducting the research." The 2003 NIOSH conference report on truck driver occupational safety and health<sup>1</sup> IBT referred to contains more than 150 references to studies mentioned by presenters at this conference. Not all of these references are appropriate to the planning and conduct of a survey of long-haul truck driver safety and health and so were not used in support of the survey proposal. The initial proposal NIOSH prepared to secure NIOSH intramural funding for the long-haul truck driver survey included 110 references, including references on sample design based on previous truck

stop (intercept) surveys conducted by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and others, as well as pertinent references on the topics proposed to be included in the survey (health, non-fatal occupational injuries, fatigue, sleep disorders and apnea). The list of references from our initial proposal is included in Appendix A. We are continually updating our literature review with recent reports, journal articles, Transportation Research Board (TRB) syntheses, etc. We do thank the IBT for pointing out additional references concerning diesel, coronary heart disease (CHD), and violence. We are aware of research being done by the organizations mentioned in the IBT comments and have contacted them. Representatives from each of those organizations also attended the November 2007 stakeholder meeting so that additional input on content and conduct of the study could be solicited from them. We hope to continue our contact with them.

Stakeholders at the November 2007 meeting also expressed the need for obtaining nationally representative prevalence data for truck drivers' health and wellness. Obtaining such data is a primary goal for this project and was indicated by stakeholders as a research need in the conference report on truck driver's occupational safety and health<sup>1</sup>. The need for such data was also included in the November 2007 meeting handout (Appendix B). Such information may best be collected from a national sample of truck drivers such as is planned in this survey rather than in individual research projects. Additional research needs to be addressed by the survey are stated in the conference report<sup>1</sup> and discussed in a recent TRB Circular<sup>2</sup>:

1. The development of more systematic data on morbidity on truck driver occupational safety and health.
2. Research to construct validated and sensitive measures of fatigue to demonstrate effective fatigue management
3. Research to determine the relationship between sleep debt and other physical and job-related factors in transportation and other industries where extended work and habitually restricted sleep are common.
4. Situational factors and non-fatigue-related situational stressors risk factors for crashes and injuries.

The IBT recommends that NIOSH focus research efforts on four areas mentioned in the 2003 conference report<sup>1</sup>: fatigue, occupational stress, violence, and chronic disease. We wish to thank the IBT for bringing these topics to our attention. Questionnaire content in the truck driver survey was not discussed during the November 2007 stakeholder meeting, since at that time the questionnaire was in a very early stage of development. Fatigue

and chronic disease are addressed in the questionnaire. Questions on occupational stress and violence have been added to the questionnaire. The need for information on sleep disorders was clearly indicated in the 2003 conference report<sup>1</sup> and recent TRB synthesis<sup>2</sup>. Participants in the 2005 International Truck & Bus Safety & Security Symposium<sup>3</sup> and the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) town hall meeting for the Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities industry sector<sup>4</sup> (December 5, 2005), called for improvements in injury and illness data collection so that effective interventions to promote driver health and reduce injuries could be developed. Collection of injury and illness information from long-haul truck drivers at truck stops (or other locations where the questionnaire might be administered) as proposed for this survey addresses coverage limitations in the long-haul truck driver population found in other surveys, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII). This survey would represent improved data collection methodology for this population.

#### B. Confidentiality of Medical Information

NIOSH has a long history of conducting ethical research while protecting the sensitive information of both workers and companies. We propose to collect information in the long-haul truck driver survey anonymously. We will not collect any personal information for NIOSH research or linking purposes unless absolutely necessary, and then only after we obtain full informed consent of the driver. If personal information is collected, it will be legally protected from forced disclosure by a Certificate of Confidentiality<sup>5</sup>, and the personally identifiable information will be destroyed at the earliest opportunity. Our final protocol must be approved by our Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB), which will review it for potential risks to the participants. Collection of medical screening information (such as from blood pressure measurements or blood tests) is not included in our protocol. In addition to the above, NIOSH has an established data security program under which the data for this project will be maintained.

We are currently re-evaluating the collection of sleep apnea information and feasibility of using sleep monitors as originally called for in our protocol. We will take the IBT's comments regarding this issue into consideration, and will consult the NIOSH HSRB and with legal counsel concerning collection of such data. We are also aware that drivers may refuse to participate in the study as they consider any risks involved, and that such considerations may make this part of the study untenable. Should sleep

monitor information be collected, one possible scheme to maintain anonymity would be to assign identifying numbers (known only to drivers) to participating drivers. Individual drivers could then accept or refuse to receive results using their identifying number. Notification of results would be done anonymously through the identifying number as individual drivers could then accept or refuse to receive results.

The possibility mentioned by the IBT that the NIOSH HSRB solicit participation from employee representatives for truck drivers has been brought up with the HSRB chairperson.

### **C. Using Truck Stops to Administer Surveys**

NIOSH thanks the IBT for pointing out the need to administer surveys at locations such as trucking terminals or drop-off points, in addition to privately-run truck stops as originally proposed. This is most important to obtain a representative sample of long-haul truck drivers for determination of national prevalence data. NIOSH would like to obtain nationally-representative data for percentages of long-haul truck drivers stopping at different locations, in order to determine numbers of different locations/truck drivers to interview there in order to obtain a sample most representative of the U.S. truck driver population. We are currently working with the American Trucking Research Institute (ATRI) and our contractor (Westat) on this, but hope to work with the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) to identify motor carriers who might be interested in participating in the study. Any participating motor carriers would be advised that any personal information obtained from drivers will be protected from release by a Certificate of Confidentiality<sup>5</sup>. Prior to conducting this survey procedures in place for the protection of participants will be reviewed and approved by the NIOSH HSRB.

### **D. Concern of Use of Sleep Apnea Monitors**

The use of sleep apnea monitors in this study is being reviewed. The use of various types of monitors and alternative approaches, including not assessing sleep apnea, is being investigated. NIOSH has also contacted other sleep researchers who have conducted sleep apnea studies in trucking populations (such as Dr. David Dinges and Dr. Allan Pack) to determine useful approaches<sup>6,7</sup> for collection of such data. We hope in this part of the survey to obtain reliable data on sleep disorders which could be used to determine prevalence of sleep disorders among long-

haul truck drivers. Certainly the possibility mentioned by the IBT and other stakeholders of underestimating the prevalence of sleep apnea is a valid concern. Other considerations such as the length of sleep time during which the monitor should be worn to obtain reliable information, collection/return of monitors, or training of individuals to suitably use the monitor will also affect any decision to use sleep monitors.

We recognize that using the sleep monitors only on individuals that fit the description of a 'high risk individual' would bias the study, and that it would not be a suitable approach.

#### **E. Use of Traditional Self-Assessment Questionnaires**

Difficulties in the use of self-assessment questionnaires are well documented in the survey and epidemiological literature. Most questions to be included in the truck driver questionnaire have been validated in the general adult population through inclusion in other national surveys or questionnaires or scales such as the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Nordic Musculoskeletal Questionnaire<sup>7</sup>, Task-Induced Fatigue Scale<sup>8</sup>, Berlin questionnaire<sup>9</sup>, and Epworth Sleepiness Scale. These questions will be supplemented as needed with ones from other surveys of truck drivers<sup>10,11</sup>. We also intend to have these questionnaires reviewed by experts who have previously designed truck driver questionnaires, to collect information on questionnaire administration and content in focus groups, and to conduct cognitive testing of the questionnaire with truck drivers.

As a result of stakeholder comments received at the meeting, the possibility of interviewer or computer-assisted questionnaire administration is being investigated in place of self-administration. Such methods are advantageous if response rates and data quality are to be improved, or if reading levels or written vocabulary comprehension impede the survey. Considerations with such methods include costs, software availability, and performance. We are unfamiliar with other researchers who have used computer-assisted data collection with truck driver questionnaires.

Although some stakeholders recommended a survey no longer than 8-10 minutes in length, others indicated their truck driver surveys had taken longer. One mentioned surveys up to 45 minutes duration<sup>10</sup>. There appears to be no single guideline for questionnaire length. In one literature review on the effect of questionnaire length on response rates, it was found that "Results are still confusing and contradictory, conclusions are still not clear, and questionnaire designers still aim for shorter questionnaires with little more justification than the assumption that longer interviews will result in

higher nonresponse”<sup>12</sup>. We will address questionnaire length in focus groups and through cognitive testing. In addition, once the questionnaire and protocol are finalized, we will be testing all survey procedures in pilot tests.

#### **F. Incentives**

We are aware of the use of incentives to increase participation in the survey. One possibility is use of a cash incentive or gift card. Belman<sup>10</sup> used a \$20-\$30 incentive for his 45-minute personal interview. For 2-hour focus groups, we are planning to give a \$75 gift card to participants since other focus groups are being held at the same time and location. Another possibility discussed in the initial proposal was providing coffee/breaks or use of a gift card or voucher for use by drivers at the truck stop. This last approach might have the added benefit of increasing cooperation at the truck stop or location of questionnaire administration.

#### **G. Work Organization and Stress**

Work organization risk factors, such as drivers' working conditions, scheduling, and compensation will be collected from each participant as part of basic demographic information. Questions are currently being formulated. We are revising the questionnaire from a 4-component format to one single questionnaire which will permit more thorough analyses since questionnaire data on all areas of interest will be available from each participating driver.

We wish to thank the International Brotherhood of Teamsters for their thoughtful comments on the proposed survey of long-haul truck driver injury and health. They will be helpful in framing both the questionnaire and protocol for conduct of the long-haul truck driver survey. We are currently in the process of conducting focus groups among truck drivers and formulating the survey questionnaire. This will be followed by revision of the protocol, pilot testing, and preparation of submissions to NIOSH HSRB and OMB for data collection. We are very appreciative of the opportunity to receive valuable and thoughtful input from the IBT and other stakeholders, and plan to work with the IBT as we revise our protocol and questionnaire.

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## APPENDIX A

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## APPENDIX B

### **NIOSH Survey of U.S. Truck Driver Injury and Health (slide 5 of Nov. 1 stakeholder meeting initial presentation)**

#### **Study Purpose**

##### **Research needs cited by stakeholders:**

- ❖ **Prevalence data for selected health conditions and risk factors specific to trucking operations.**
  - **Chronic disease**
  - **Fatigue**
  - **Sleep debt**
- ❖ **Data on working conditions, injury causes and outcomes, and health behaviors.**

24. **Comments:**

I blame the companies themselves for asking and often demanding that truckers live their lives for their jobs and when those lives end early and/or tragically because of it, oh well we'll just hire on another driver.

When do most truckers have time off - REAL time off (at home with family) not time spent in a sleeper??

When are they given ample time off for necessary medical appointments without jumping through hoops??

And how many earn a decent living wage without having to wonder if there will be money enough for food and bills???

Many companies (not all) expect their drivers to "fudge" their log books to meet the company's needs. Shippers and receivers eating up hour after hour of a driver's time while he sits and waits and waits and waits while lumpers sit around. Companies don't penalize those shippers and receivers so our drivers sit around not making ANY money and then are chastized for not making appointments on time because they refuse to drive against DOT HOS regs. It doesn't matter that a driver has been waiting to be unloaded for 7 hours out of his 14, driven 2 hrs to his pickup then sat for another

4 hours waiting to be reloaded, dispatch expects him to make a 1500 mi run in the next 24 hours. WHAT?? With the possibility of losing his job hanging over his head or getting pulled in by the DOT for driving illegally, is there any wonder why the stress level for truckers is over the top or that they suffer heart attacks at an alarming rate, high above the national average?? And please don't forget that many of these drivers have families with young children at home that they are attempting to provide for.

All of this lends to STRESS...stress that brings with it high blood pressure, which ushers in heart attacks and strokes at an frightening rate.

Yes, I believe the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the companies who use and abuse our truckers every day!! Maybe our drivers would have the time and energy to worry about taking better care of themselves properly if they were treated with a bit of respect and dignity instead of like a machine. A machine that turns their wheels to haul freight with no regard to the fact that they are indeed human beings with the same wants, needs and concerns as anyone who works a monday thru friday, 9-5 job....probably moreso.

Go after the trucking companies who use and abuse our drivers everyday and one more thing. Educate the public to the safety issues concerning big rigs and the fact that if not for those "big trucks" on the road, there would be nothing on the shelves in the stores they love to spend their money in. It wasn't until my husband became a driver that I realized just how much people actually revile truckers....they are treated like lepers by the general public. I've seen it with my own eyes....say you're a trucker and people ease away. Pretty sad and it

can be a pretty big issue for a trucker who already has low self-esteem.

I'm sorry to go on and on but this is a real problem and I worry for the health of my trucker husband (and ALL truckers) everyday. I am of the sincere hope that something can be done within the industry to help our truckers live a healthier lifestyle but it HAS to start with the companies themselves treating our drivers as human beings, not chattel....they are NOT personal property nor machines.

Sincerely,

Proud to be married to a trucker.

**Response:**

Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments. We intend to collect information and conduct analyses on most of the factors you mention above, including work organization/lifestyle and resultant stress, sleep, fatigue, and health conditions such as you mention.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We believe comments such as yours point to the importance of obtaining and disseminating health information such as is to be obtained through this project.

25. **Comment:**

CNIOOSH Truck Study:

I read with interest the study that you will be conducting. In 2005-2006 we conducted an extensive study on Canadian truck drivers at truck stops as well as interviews of carriers. Though the issues were on labour standards, some of the methodology and findings may be of interest to you and therefore I attached the detailed executive summary for your use.

Sincerely

Garland Chow  
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Director, Bureau of Intelligent Transportation Systems & Freight  
Security - Sauder  
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**Response:**

Dear Dr. Chow:

Thank you for making us aware of the Canadian survey. It was also a pleasure to meet you at the recent Transportation Research Board (TRB) meetings in Washington, D.C. and find out more about this survey. Although, as you mention, your survey findings had to do with labor standards rather than health conditions proposed for the NIOSH survey, the methodology used at truck stops is of interest to us. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.



26. **Comment:**

With regard to the proposed NIOSH Survey on Truck driver Safety & Health, I believe the questions are valid but do not go deep enough or in the right direction. I can say, having driven OTR for 10 years, that a lot of driver fatigue and stress starts at the dispatcher and may be extended to the commerce delivery system as a whole. I realize the consumers needs for products and no survey is going to change that but considering a typical OTR driver has to travel large distances but is given a very short time to get there, a restrictive time frame that dictates he/she must violate hours of service regulations in order to make his/her delivery on time.

Since the money to the driver stops when the truck wheels stop, maybe part of your survey should include a look at the mechanism under which the driver works. We've come a long way in upgrading truckstop food, some drivers exercise more than they used to, we've become more health conscious, but the need to get cross country in an unreasonable time still exists.

**Response:**

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your comments. We intend to collect information and conduct analyses on most of the factors you mention above, including work organization and resultant stress, sleep, and fatigue, as well as information on health conditions. We have included questions on dispatcher policies, time frames, and payment policies.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We believe comments such as yours point to the importance of obtaining and disseminating health information such as is to be obtained through this project.

27. **Comment:**

Name

Rick Hunter

Organization

Alabama Trucking Association, Workers Comp. Fund

Email

rickhunter1@charter.net

Address

P.O. Box 241605  
Montgomery, Alabama 36124-1605  
USA

Comments

I'm a safety engineer with the Alabama Trucking Association Workers Compensation Fund, We have 378 trucking companies we work with on accident prevention, compliance (OSHA and DOT), training and education for drivers, shop and office, if their is a way we can help. Please fill free to contact me.

Thanks

Rick Hunter

**Response**

Dear Mr. Hunter:

Thank you for your comments and interest in this survey. We are currently finalizing our survey protocol and questionnaire. We intend to perform cognitive testing of the questionnaire spring 2008, followed by pilot testing of the survey summer 2008. Conduct of the survey requires approval from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). We expect that data collection to occur 2009-2010.

An important goal of this project is to provide information to drivers, the trucking industry, and the transportation research community that will guide health and safety promotion, interventions, and future research directions. We would also hope that results to be obtained through this survey would be important for the dissemination and understanding of injury and health information in organizations such as yours.

We welcome the possibility of cooperation with the Alabama Trucking Association Workers Compensation Fund. Thank you for contacting us about it. We will contact you as development of the survey progresses.