

# TIP SHEET

A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the trucking industry



## Managing COVID-19's Impacts on Driver Stress



Rest breaks and sleep can help ease job stress.

Even during normal operating conditions, truck drivers experience job stress from many sources. As the COVID-19 outbreak interrupts business as usual, it may intensify job stress for drivers as the uncertainty and risk it causes build up pressure. Drivers may face drastic changes in schedules, routes, workloads, and services as the disease impacts more areas. Not knowing how to protect yourself and where to get medical help can also raise concerns. As these new worries stack up, truck drivers may feel stressed out for longer periods of time. Prolonged, unmanaged stress can impact a driver's mental and physical health, diminishing their awareness and readiness on the road.

COVID-19 fears may intensify these top stressors among truck drivers:

- Extended social isolation.
- Abrupt schedule changes, long detention times, and tight deadlines.
- Hours-of-service rules compliance.
- Traffic delays and adverse road and weather conditions.
- Road rage and fear of violence.
- Vehicle noise, equipment vibration, and temperature extremes.
- Transporting hazardous freight.

Signs and symptoms of job stress include:

- Fatigue and sleep problems.
- Digestive problems.
- Weight gain.
- Anxiety, headaches, and depression.
- Memory and concentration issues.
- High blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.
- Social withdrawal.
- Workplace violence.
- Alcohol or drug abuse.



Washington State Department of  
Labor & Industries

### TIPS TO LIVE BY

#### Management:

- Make sure your safety program has a stress management and training plan.
- Share the latest coronavirus prevention and treatment information with drivers.
- Provide drivers with hand sanitizer and disinfectants.
- Foster work-life balance for drivers as much as possible.
- Encourage taking rest breaks and getting enough sleep.
- Keep vehicle maintenance program performing at top level.
- Arrange safe lodging accommodations for drivers when needed.
- Provide ergonomic equipment and well-fitting PPE.

#### Drivers:

- Stay connected with family and friends.
- Eat healthy food and stay hydrated.
- Stretch often and have a physical exercise routine.
- Meditate and take deep breaths.
- Listen to relaxing music or natural sounds.
- Maintain personal hygiene.
- Keep your doctor and management informed about any health concerns.

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[KeepTruckingSafe.org](https://www.KeepTruckingSafe.org)

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