

# NIOSH Study Looked at Safety & Health Risks Faced by Truck Drivers



Truck drivers, especially long-haul drivers who operate heavy and tractor-trailer trucks with freight delivery routes, are exposed to safety and health hazards, such as [fatigue](#). To get a better understanding of these hazards and their impact on truck drivers, the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) in the US (NIOSH) conducted the National Survey of Long-Haul Truck Driver Health and Injury.

NIOSH researchers collected data from 1,670 long-haul truck drivers at 32 truck stops across the US. The survey asked about self-reported health conditions, and health and safety risk factors. The results identified several key health risks.

For example, the research revealed that 69% of respondents were [obese](#), that is, they had a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher. Another 17% were morbidly obese (BMI of '40' or higher). In comparison, only one-third of working adults in the US were reported to be obese and just 7% as morbidly obese.

Obesity increases the chance for type 2 diabetes, sleep apnea, heart disease, cancer, joint and back pain, and stroke. (NIOSH developed an [infographic](#) to help explain these findings to truck drivers and provide helpful weight loss tips.)

The survey also found that more than half of long-haul truck drivers were cigarette smokers 'over twice the general working

population (51% vs. 19%). Smoking increases the chance for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and cancer.

In fact, the prevalence of diabetes among truck drivers was twice that of the general population (14% vs. 7%). Twenty-two percent of drivers were either taking medicine for, or had been told they had, high cholesterol. And more than half of long-haul truck drivers reported having two or more health conditions or unhealthy behaviors, such as limited physical activity, which increase the chance of developing preventable, long-lasting diseases.