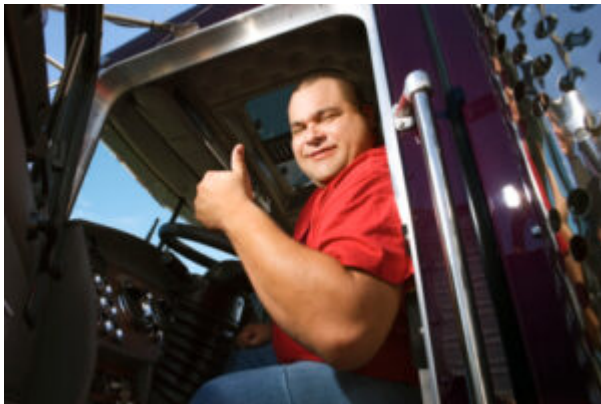


NIOSH Study Looked at Safety & Health Risks Faced by Truck Drivers



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.