



## **Assessing and Addressing the Lack of Truck Parking**



**Whitepaper Safety & Harassment Series**



## **Assessing and Addressing the Lack of Truck Parking and Amenities *(including Bathroom Facilities)***

### **Introduction**

The Women In Trucking Association (WIT) is America's leading industry association for women in the trucking industry. With nearly 7,000 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 ensuring companies adopt best practices to ensure proper recruitment, training, and safety protocols, to educating women about the benefits of becoming a truck driver, 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.

A key learning from this study was to open dialogue about the professional drivers' access to safe truck parking and adequate amenities, including bathroom facilities. This whitepaper will explore the various challenges and safety risks that are generated as a result of the lack of driver access to adequate parking and amenities.

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## 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/Latino, 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 profession, 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 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.

## The Problem Defined: Lack of Truck Parking

Specifically, the lack of adequate truck parking has been ranked as a top critical issue in the trucking industry by truck drivers in recent years, according to the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI). Many trucking industry associations, including WIT, the American Trucking Associations (ATA), and the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) claim the nationwide shortage of truck parking has plagued America's motor carriers and professional truck drivers for decades, with a wide range of consequences for highway safety, driver health and well-being, supply chain efficiency, and the environment.

**The pervasive truck parking problem can be defined with simple math: With 3.5 million professional truck drivers in the U.S. and approximately 313,000 truck parking spaces nationally, for every 11 drivers there is only one truck parking space.**



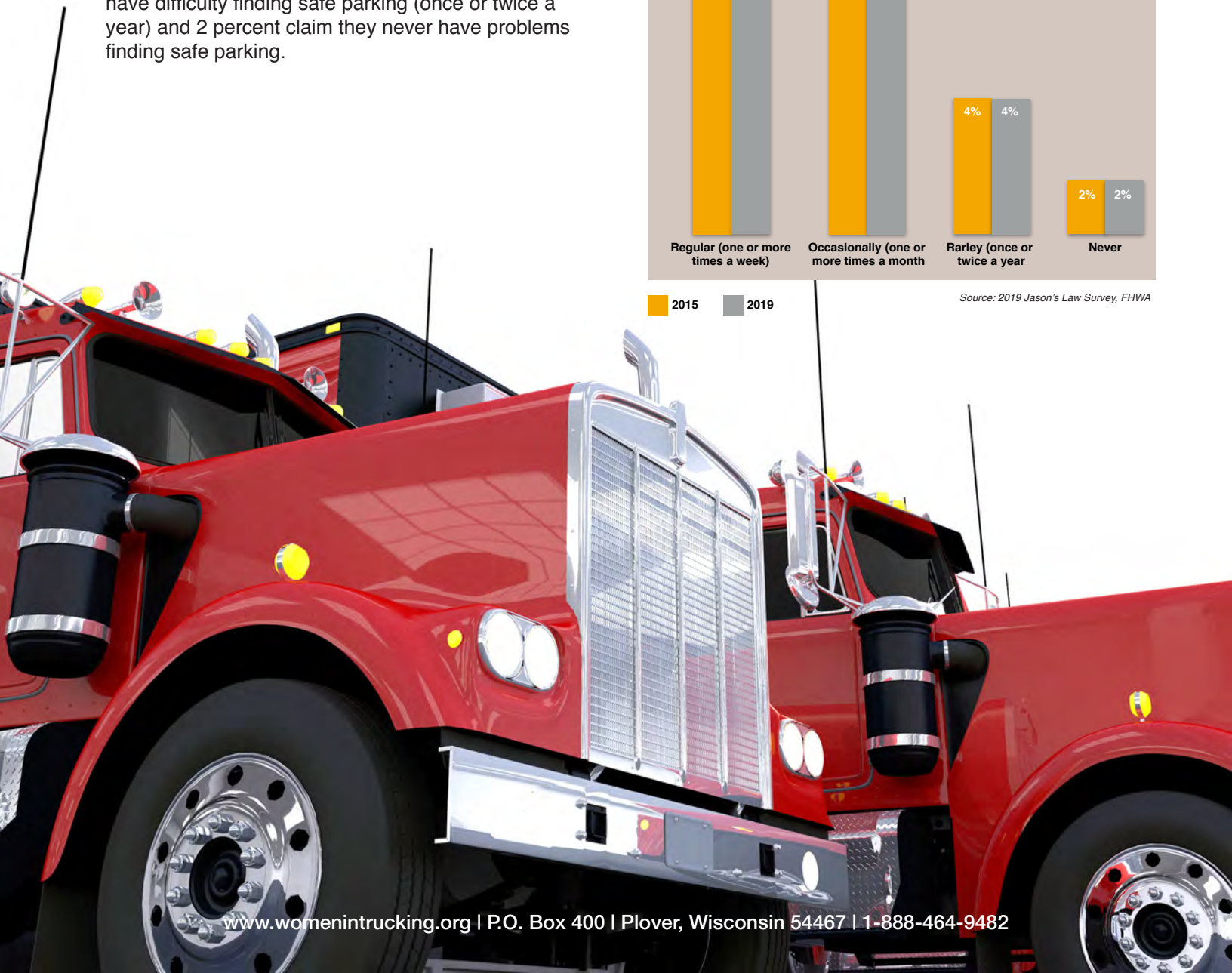
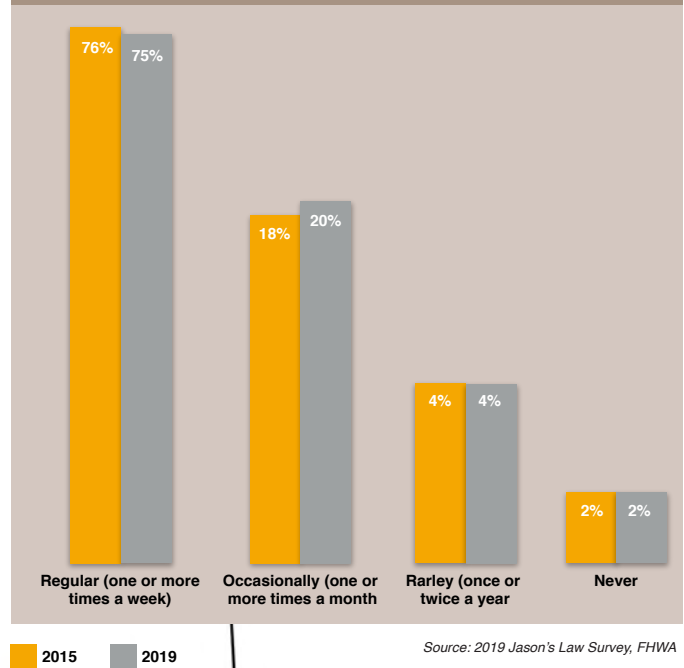


Despite a major awareness campaign following the 2009 murder of Jason Rivenburg while he slept in his cab at an abandoned gas station after being unable to find safe parking, the shortage of safe truck parking in the United States continues to grow.

Major freight corridors and large metro areas have the most acute shortages, with shortages existing at all times of the day – but mostly overnight and weekdays. In the landmark 2015 Jason's Law Survey by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 27 state Departments of Transportation reported problems with truck parking, notably in congested freight corridors in the Northeast, up and down the East Coast, the Mid-Atlantic, and out west in the freight lanes of California and the Pacific Northwest.

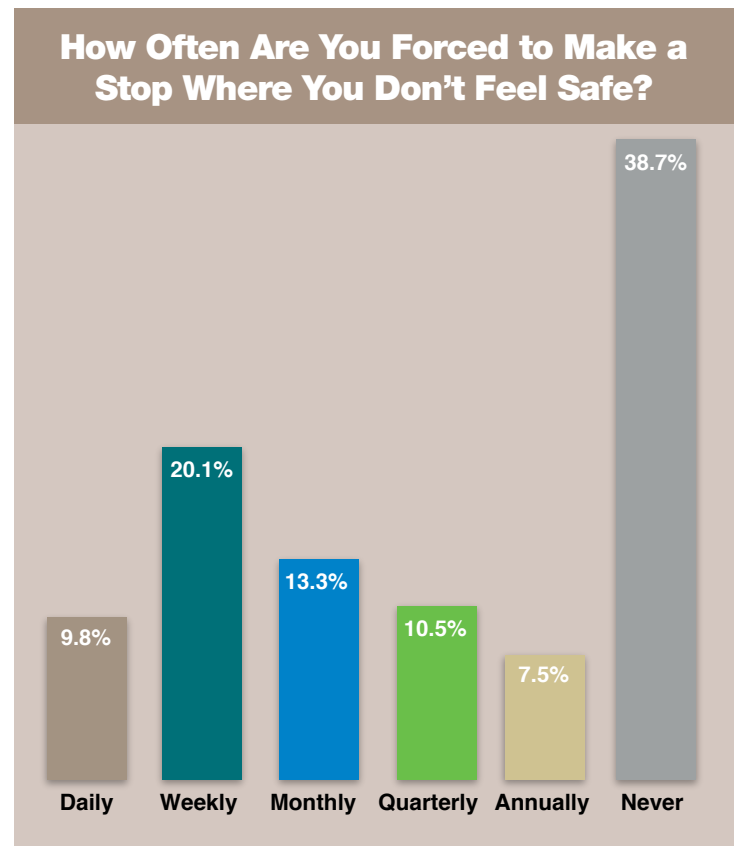
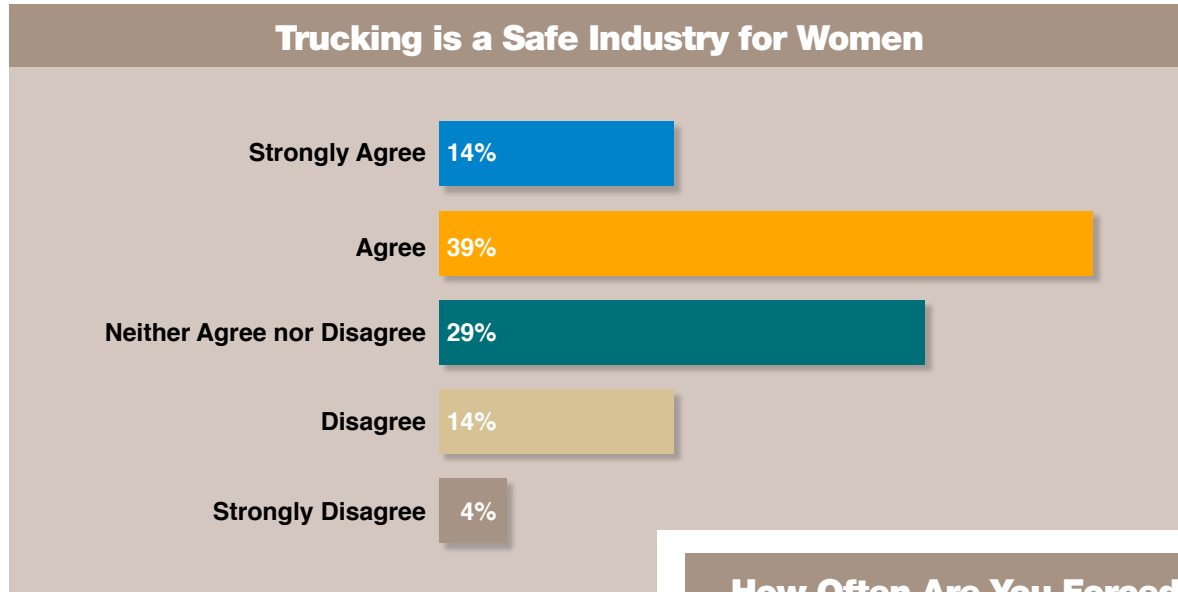
According to the 2019 Jason's Law Survey conducted by the FHWA, 75 percent of professional drivers report problems finding safe parking weekly and another 20 percent report occasional problems (one or more times a month), while only 3 percent report they rarely have difficulty finding safe parking (once or twice a year) and 2 percent claim they never have problems finding safe parking.

### Percentage of Drivers Reporting Problems Finding Safe Parking



## Lack of Truck Parking is a Significant Safety Issue for Women Drivers

Do women drivers perceive that trucking is a safe industry in which they 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.







## **Additional Problems Created by Lack of Truck Parking**

Along with safety, there are additional problems driven by a lack of large truck parking. For example, there can be legal implications, according to some respondents to the WIT Safety & Harassment Survey. When truck drivers cannot find parking and are confronting driving limitations due to Hours of Service rules (HOS), they find themselves in a “no win” situation because they are forced to either park in unsafe or illegal locations or violate federal HOS regulations by continuing to search for safer, legal alternatives. According to the ATA, 70 percent of professional drivers have “been forced” to violate HOS rules due to a lack of truck parking.

The shortage of truck parking also creates a decrease in productivity and has economic implications. According to an American Transportation Research Institute study in 2016, professional drivers need to “surrender” an average of 56 minutes of available drive time per day, as they’re parking earlier than they need to because they’ve found available truck parking and they don’t want to pass up on the opportunity. The economic impacts of the inefficient use of the driver’s time are profound and the practical impact of productivity losses create issues through North American supply chains.

Of course, when there are few places for drivers to safely and legally park their trucks, professional drivers will find places to park that may not necessarily comply with federal requirements. That can make professional drivers a target of crime. When drivers are forced to find non-traditional or unauthorized truck parking areas, it can turn to tragedy. The significant economic impact of siphoned diesel fuel, and theft of equipment and cargo when it is hijacked in unsafe, unsecured parking locations also is of major concern.

## **Seeking Solutions to the Truck Parking Shortage**

Why is it so critical to find solutions to this issue? Undoubtedly, if more large truck parking is available, professional drivers will be safer and healthier, for-hire and private fleets will be more productive, the driver workforce will be more resilient, and tractor/trailers will reduce their fuel needs and emit fewer emissions into the environment.





**So what are some solutions that can help improve the truck parking shortage?**

***Educate your local and state partners, agencies and law-makers.*** With trillions of dollars passed in recent legislation for infrastructure, it's shocking that there is little momentum to set aside financial investment to address the lack of large truck parking. Trucking industry stakeholders can educate state and local partners about the eligibility of allocated money for

transportation projects in the infrastructure law that could include parking. Encourage state and local partners, agencies and law-makers to prioritize funding for grants that would increase truck parking capacity and include truck parking in their plans.

It's important for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to understand this issue so they're not leaving money on the table. There are funds from both federal and state. If you see an opportunity to influence local or state agencies or law-makers, build a case on how detention can impact the local community and their constituency. Sign petitions, write letters, make phone calls, and visit those with decision-making authority who can make a difference. Use this WIT Whitepaper as a resource to help educate others.

***Seek Creative Alternative Solutions Beyond Truck Stops.*** While the lack of truck parking movement had limited momentum to influence truck stop chains to expand their parking options, there's little indication that this will happen. According to the 2019 Jason's Law Survey, 79 percent of truck stop operators do not plan to add any more truck parking.

Local governments can require new commerce parks and warehousing districts to include set-aside land for ancillary truck parking. Otherwise the case can be made that local business requiring truck traffic will likely force drivers to park in unsafe, unauthorized areas near these locations.

Existing paved areas (such as vacant warehousing, nearby vacated shopping malls, or other unused real estate) can be rezoned and repurposed to generate revenue for local private enterprises and MPOs.

***Encourage Shippers/Receivers to be Part of the Solution.*** In addition, because the root cause of a lot of truck parking issues are tied directly to detention, supply chain leaders who are responsible for local facilities and operations also need to help develop solutions to the issue. When the professional driver picks up or delivers a shipment involving a shipper or receiver, they are expected to adhere to strict appointment windows, yet oftentimes when the driver arrives for the appointment, the shipper isn't ready. Shippers and receivers need to ensure efficiencies in their scheduling and dock operations to get the driver in and out as quickly as possible. And these operations also should provide temporary parking and access to facilities for the professional drivers, if necessary.



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