



Competing for Drivers: Workforce Trends, Satisfaction and Retention in Transport

Executive Summary of Driver Wage Report 2025 by Truckers Life

Introduction

Understanding the factors that influence driver satisfaction, retention, and long-term commitment to the profession has become a strategic priority for the transport industry. In a market characterised by persistent driver shortages, rising labour costs, increasing regulatory requirements, and growing competition for qualified employees, a comprehensive understanding of drivers' expectations, concerns, and workplace experiences is essential for building effective workforce management and retention strategies.

Drawing on data collected from 777 drivers and transport companies as part of the Truckers Life Driver Wages Report 2025, this publication examines remuneration trends, employee satisfaction, working conditions, employer-employee relations, recruitment challenges, and the broader labour market environment affecting the profession in Poland.

Although the findings presented in this report are based on data collected from the Polish transport market, many of the challenges identified are not unique to Poland. The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report have relevance beyond national borders and may serve as a useful reference point for transport companies, industry associations, and policymakers operating in other markets facing similar workforce challenges.

The purpose of this analysis is threefold. First, it aims to provide transport companies with practical insights into the key factors influencing driver retention and employee engagement. Second, it identifies areas where employers can improve their competitive position in an increasingly employee-driven labour market. Third, it offers policy makers, industry organisations, and market observers a data-driven perspective on the structural challenges facing the road transport sector.

The findings presented in this report can be used to support strategic decision-making in human resources, compensation policy, recruitment, working conditions management, and employee well-being initiatives.



Drivers' wages and job satisfaction

Evolution of remuneration and earnings structure

Analysis of market data from 2025 indicates a clear increase in nominal wage levels in the transport sector in Poland. The average net earnings of drivers amounted to PLN 8,838, representing a 13% increase compared to the previous edition of the report (from 2023). A similar level of growth was recorded for the median net wage, which reached PLN 9,000—an increase of 12.5% compared to 2023.

These wage levels place drivers significantly above the national average in Poland, which in 2025 amounted to approximately PLN 8,900 gross. A detailed income distribution shows that slightly more than one-third of the 777 respondents in the Truckers Life report earn over PLN

10,000 net. Moreover, as many as 83% of respondents currently reach the threshold of PLN 7,000 net, which represents a sharp increase compared to 2023, when this share stood at 63%.

Despite these overall increases, the dynamics of change at the individual level in 2025 have clearly slowed down. As many as 59% of respondents declared that their remuneration remained at the same level as the previous year, while only one-quarter (25%) of respondents received a pay rise in 2025. The most concerning phenomenon is that as many as 15% of drivers recorded a decline in real earnings compared to 2024.

Assessment of Earnings and Benefits

Despite relatively high earnings by the standards of the Polish economy, fewer than 4% of respondents declared full satisfaction with their monthly income. At the opposite end of the spectrum, 25% of respondents expressed extreme dissatisfaction with their financial standing. In total, more than 61% of participants in the study demonstrate a negative attitude toward their current wage situation. The data show that the turning point lies at a relatively high level—

only within the earnings range of PLN 12,000 to 14,000 net (more than twice the national average) does the number of satisfied individuals begin to exceed the number of dissatisfied ones.

The deficit of appreciation

Equally concerning are relations between employees and their supervisors in the non-financial dimension. As many as two-thirds of surveyed drivers declare that they do not feel appreciated by their employer. Even in situations where management attempts to express recognition, such actions are usually limited solely to verbal communication. Approximately 14% of drivers indicate that they receive verbal praise and positive feedback from their superiors.

However, tangible financial signs of recognition are much rarer. Only one in ten respondents declared that they received a bonus in recognition of their work, and fewer than 8% could count on various social benefits. These data clearly confirm that the transport industry still lacks systemic and tangible tools for employee motivation.

The paradox of satisfaction: light and shadow of the profession

As a result of the interaction of these factors, we observe surprising and seemingly contradictory findings regarding overall job satisfaction. On the one hand, as many as 60% of surveyed drivers declare that they like their job, while only 14% clearly state the opposite. Although high earnings positively influence the perception of the profession among truck drivers, they are not the only, nor even the primary factor—fewer than 30% of respondents indicated this aspect. Among the greatest advantages of the profession, respondents most frequently mentioned the opportunity to visit new places. This was followed by contact with new people (24% of indications) and flexible working hours.



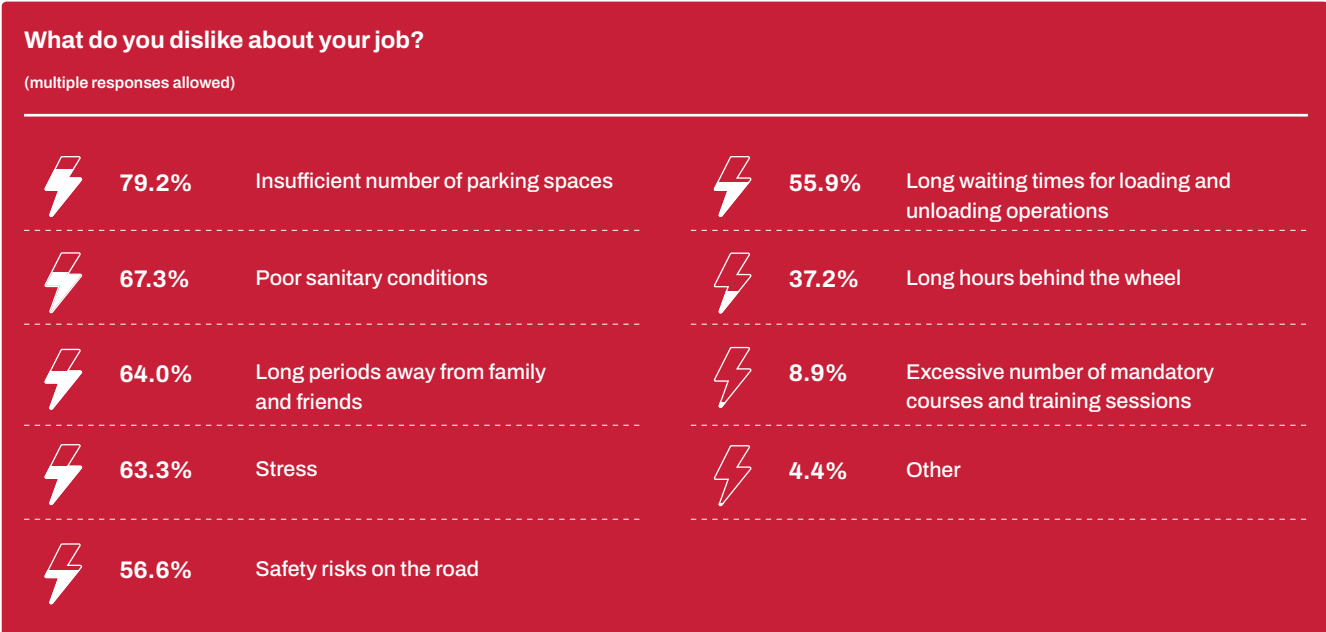
What do you like about your job?

(multiple answers could be selected)

✓	Opportunity to visit new places	42.7%
✓	High earnings	29.2%
✓	Opportunity to meet new people	23.7%
✓	Flexible working hours	20.6%
✓	High demand for employees in the labour market	12.6%
✓	Additional benefits	2.7%
✓	None of the above	23.9%
✓	Other	11.6%

Interestingly, the fact that drivers are rarely fully satisfied with their earnings does not directly translate into a lack of appreciation for the profession itself. Across all income brackets, drivers declaring that they like their job account for more than 50%. Notably, even among the lowest-earning group, this proportion reaches as much as 80%.

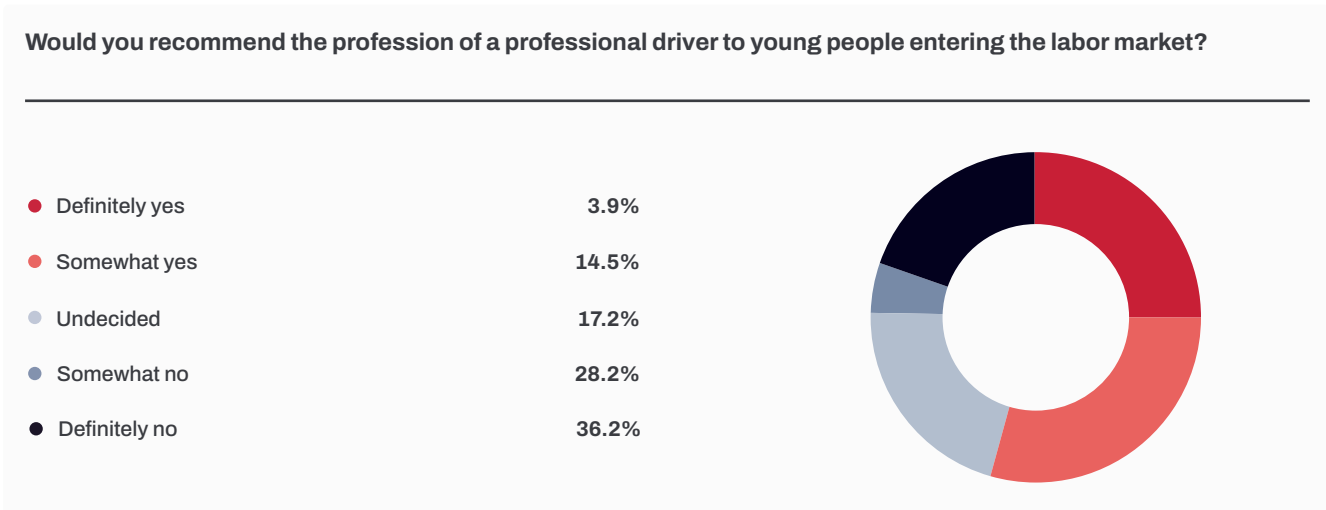
On the other hand, however, the sympathy for driving is confronted with harsh organisational realities. The survey results clearly show that the most significant burdens relate to infrastructure and safety. Nearly 80% of respondents identified insufficient parking capacity as a key problem, while stress and separation from family consistently rank among the main negative factors.



Lack of recommendations and the prospect of a workforce crisis

This deep duality—positive attitudes toward the job combined with fatigue caused by working conditions—generates critical consequences for the future of the industry. Although 60% of drivers declare a positive attitude toward the profession, they would not recommend it to individuals

entering the labour market. Nearly two-thirds of respondents would refuse to recommend their profession, while only 18% would encourage the younger generation to take up driving.



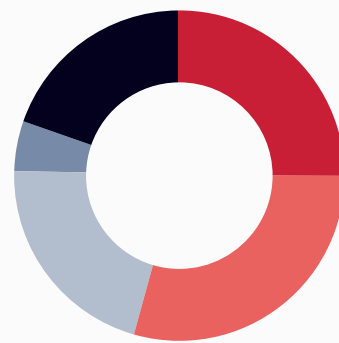
Among the main reasons for this stance, wage-related issues, described as “inadequate” or “too low”, accounted for the largest share (18.5% of indications). Drivers also cited separation from family (over 11%), lack of respect (10%), and pervasive stress as reasons for discouraging others.

The most alarming finding of the study is that more than half of respondents are actively considering a career change. The number of drivers who “often” or “very often” consi-

der retraining and starting a new professional path exceeds the group of those who think about such a step “rarely” or “not at all.” The scale of workforce determination is confirmed by the fact that as many as one-third of all respondents would be ready to change their profession within the next year or even sooner.

Are you considering changing your profession?


● Very often	25.1%
● Often	29.2%
● Rarely	20.9%
● Very rarely	5%
● I do not plan to change my profession	19.8%




What are the main reasons why you are considering changing your profession?


(multiple-choice question)

 **68.2%** Inadequate compensation

 **44.5%** Poor sanitary and social conditions at loading/unloading zones


 **63.9%** Lack of work-life balance

 **40.3%** Health issues related to the nature of the job (e.g., sedentary lifestyle, back pain)

 **63.2%** Poor sanitary and social conditions at parking areas (e.g., lack of access to toilets, showers, secure parking lots)


 **40%** Lack of career development perspectives

 **56.7%** Long separation from loved ones

 **38.3%** Long waiting times for loading/unloading

 **53.8%** High stress levels

 **3%** Other

 **52.0%** Poor treatment (e.g., by dispatchers, warehouse workers)

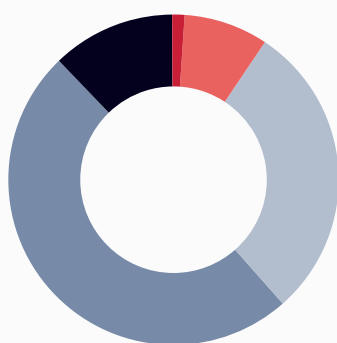
Infrastructure and Loading Conditions

Parking infrastructure and safety: Poland in the European context

Safety issues on the road represent one of the most frequently recurring negative aspects in the structure of complaints from professional drivers. It should be emphasized, however, that this problem primarily concerns those engaged in international transport operations. Data analysis reveals an almost shocking disparity in the assessment of the safety of rest areas in Poland compared to those abroad.

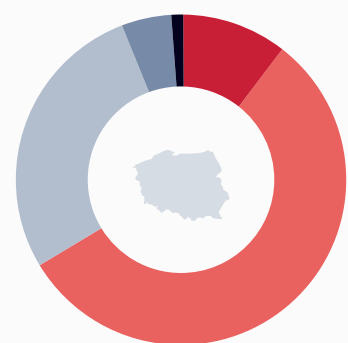
While as many as two-thirds of respondents feel safe stopping at facilities in Poland, fewer than 10% consider parking areas in other European countries to be safe. The reverse comparison of negative assessments confirms this trend unequivocally—while as many as 61% of respondents consider parking infrastructure in Europe to be unsafe or very unsafe, only 6% share a similar opinion about Polish parking facilities.

How do you rate the level of safety at parking areas in Europe?



1.2%	●	Very safe
8.2%	●	Safe
29.1%	●	Undecided
49.3%	●	Unsafe
12.2%	●	Very unsafe

How do you rate the level of safety at parking areas in Poland?

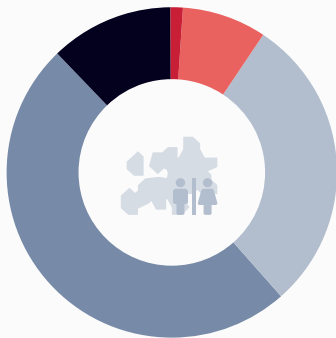


10.5%	●	Very safe
55.9%	●	Safe
27.5%	●	Undecided
4.9%	●	Unsafe
1.2%	●	Very unsafe

A similarly striking contrast is visible in the assessment of sanitary conditions along routes. According to respondents, the quality of hygiene facilities at European parking areas is significantly worse compared to domestic standards. Only 7% of parking sites in Europe were assessed

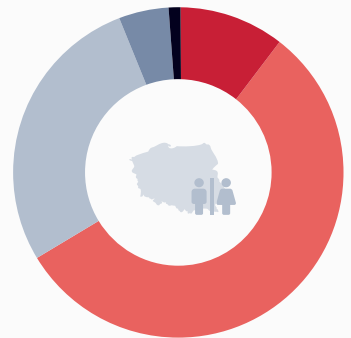
positively, with approximately 55% receiving negative ratings. By comparison, more than two-thirds of drivers consider the sanitary condition of rest areas in Poland to be good or very good.

How do you rate the sanitary conditions at parking areas in Europe?



1%	●	Very good
5.9%	●	Good
37.5%	●	Average
36.7%	●	Poor
18.9%	●	Very poor

How do you rate the sanitary conditions at parking areas in Poland?



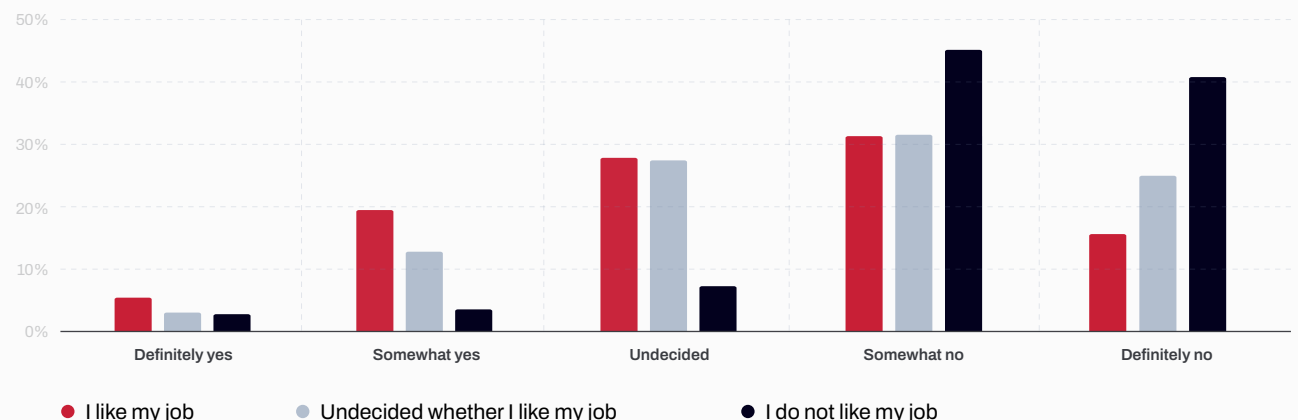
16.2%	●	Very good
51.5%	●	Good
26.3%	●	Average
5.1%	●	Poor
0.9%	●	Very poor

Support during loading as a key factor in driver retention

A significant challenge and source of tension between drivers and employers are standards at loading and unloading sites. Only 20% of respondents positively assess their employers' actions and engagement in improving conditions at loading docks. More than half of respondents express a clearly negative opinion on this matter. Active employer support for drivers in disputes and warehouse processes directly translates into the latter's loyalty and satisfaction with the profession.

Among drivers whose employers actively strive to improve conditions at logistics points, 76% reported overall job satisfaction, and 74% like their profession. In companies described as "rather neglecting" improvements in loading standards only 56% of employees in this group reported job satisfaction. In organisations seen as completely disregarding issues at loading docks, the proportion of drivers declaring job satisfaction drops to only 44%.

Employer's commitment to improving the standard of driver service at loading zones versus driver job satisfaction



The employee market in times of rising costs



Managing feedback and monitoring employee needs

In the face of such clear discrepancies in perceptions of working conditions, a key element of retention strategy becomes the way employers monitor the needs and complaints of drivers. Data analysis shows that traditional, direct forms of communication dominate the Polish transport market. The most popular tool (75% of indications) consists of regular one-to-one conversations. Additionally, more than half of companies declare maintaining constant,

direct contact with drivers currently on the road.

Far less frequently do companies use more formalised and systematic human capital management tools. Solutions such as dedicated feedback officers, special channels for reporting problems, or periodic satisfaction surveys were indicated by only a small percentage of surveyed entities.

How does your company monitor and respond to drivers' needs regarding working conditions?

(e.g., parking conditions, access to toilets, waiting times during loading and unloading operations), (multiple responses allowed)

 75%	Regular one-to-one discussions with drivers	 14%	Dedicated channel for reporting issues
 53%	Direct contact with drivers during trips (e.g., via dispatchers)	 13%	No formal procedures – issues are addressed on an ad hoc basis
 32%	Telematics solutions monitoring drivers' driving behaviour	 9%	Employee satisfaction surveys or opinion polls
 30%	Analysis of complaints and incidents reported by drivers	 3%	Cooperation with driver representatives (e.g., trade unions, works councils)
 20%	Designated staff responsible for collecting feedback (e.g., coordinators, HR personnel)	 2%	Don't know
 18%	Team meetings involving drivers	 2%	Other
 17%	Monitoring opinions expressed on social media and industry forums		

Drivers' expectations versus employers' operational barriers

Meanwhile, the catalogue of drivers' expectations remains consistent and unchanged for years. It includes, above all, higher wages, shorter time spent away from home, access to safe parking with adequate social facilities, modern vehicle fleets, and reduced stress at logistics points. However, the confrontation of these demands with companies' operational capabilities reveals deep economic and market barriers.

As many as 73% of employers explicitly admit that the greatest challenge is meeting rising wage expectations. However, limitations are not confined to financial issues alone—one in three employers declares a lack of real ability to provide more flexible working hours, while one in four indicates structural difficulties in reducing driver waiting times at loading and unloading points, which largely depend on external entities.

Which of the following driver expectations are the most difficult for your company to meet?

(multiple responses allowed)



73%

Higher compensation



19%

Newer / more comfortable fleet



39%

Shorter waiting times for loading/
unloading



10%

Additional non-wage benefits



32%

More flexible working systems
(e.g., shorter routes, more time at home)



9%

Better communication with dispatchers
/ the office



24%

Improvement of social and sanitary
conditions en route



6%

Increased support from the company
(e.g., assistance with formalities, quick response
to problems)



22%

Matching route destinations with
individual preferences (e.g., avoiding specific
countries, domestic-only routes)



2%

Additional non-wage benefits

Non-wage retention strategies and the benefits gap

The contemporary employee market in the transport industry is, however, forcing employers to adapt. In a context of high demand for labour, money alone is no longer the sole competitive advantage, as drivers can expect satisfactory wages from nearly any carrier. Awareness of this fact is gradually growing among managers: half or slightly more than half of surveyed companies declare efforts to adapt work schedules to drivers' preferences, invest in improving working conditions (from fleet modernisation to interventions in loading standards), and build a positive team atmosphere.

Negative wage sentiment is deepened by a substantial gap in the perception of non-wage motivational systems. As many as 64% of drivers claim that they do not receive any additional benefits. However, a completely different picture emerges from employers' declarations—only 20% of them claim that they do not offer such perks.

The source of this conflict lies in a fundamental difference in the understanding of what actually constitutes a benefit. The most frequently indicated additional perk by employers (51%) is a company mobile phone. For drivers, however, this is an obvious work tool rather than an additional benefit. Meanwhile, employees' real expectations diverge significantly from market offerings:

- **Additional insurance:** 46% of respondents would like to receive it, while fewer than 15% actually do.
- **Private medical care:** desired by 43% of employees, actually received by only 6%.
- **Subsidies for commuting to work:** expected by 43% of respondents, implemented in only 8% of cases.

This represents a clear area for optimisation of HR policy for companies seeking a competitive advantage in recruitment.

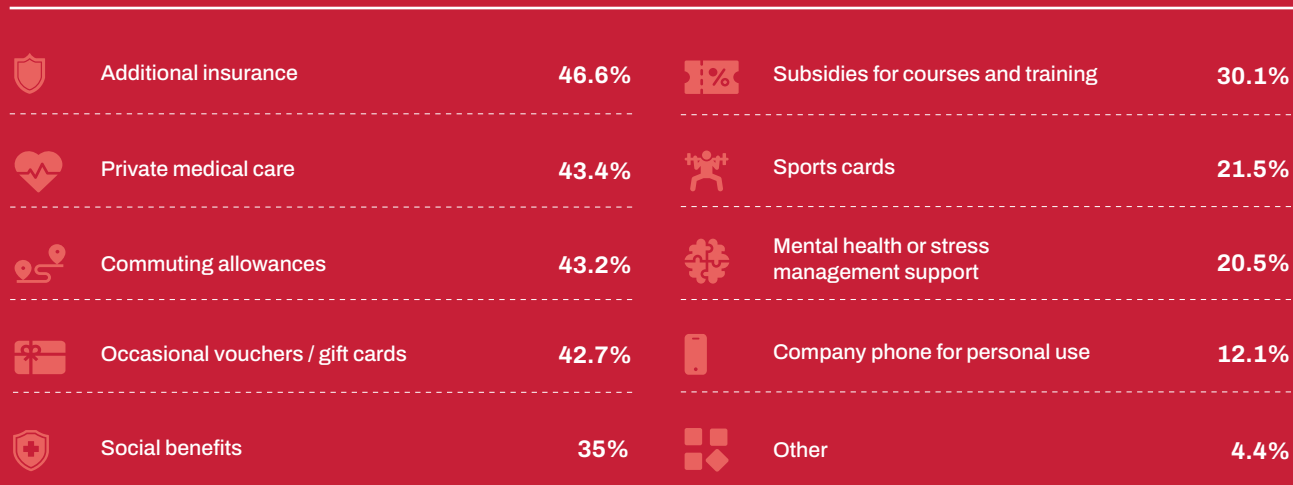
What employee benefits do you currently receive from your employer?

(multiple responses allowed)



What benefits would you like to receive?

(multiple-choice question)



What strategies does your company implement to retain experienced drivers and reduce staff rotation?

(multiple-choice question)

	Attractive compensation	64%		Training and development programs	13%
	Fostering a positive work environment	57%		We do not implement any specific retention strategies	10%
	Flexible work schedules tailored to driver preferences	55%		Career advancement opportunities (e.g., promotion to instructor or dispatcher positions)	8%
	Improving working conditions (e.g., modern fleet, air conditioning, parking heater)	50%		Psychological support (e.g., well-being programs, assistance in difficult situations)	5%
	Loyalty programs (e.g., seniority bonuses)	18%		Others	4.4%
	Non-wage benefits (e.g., private medical care, life insurance, sports cards)	14%			

The grey zone of remuneration: cost pressure and unethical practices

The most alarming and destructive phenomenon in the industry remains the issue of payment transparency. Persistent driver shortages combined with severe cost pressure mean that many companies still resort to unfair remuneration practices. Importantly, this problem has not disappeared even after the implementation of the Mobility Package regulations.

This view is shared by as many as 60% of surveyed employers, which closely aligns with employees' perspectives, as 62% of drivers reported experiencing unfairness in wage payments. Awareness of market pathologies is high within the sector: only 12% of surveyed companies believe this issue is not significant. However, it is concerning that more than one-quarter of respondents (28%) chose a neutral "no opinion" response, suggesting that transparency in remuneration within transport remains a strong taboo in Poland.

Have you experienced any of the following practices related to remuneration during the past year?

(multiple responses allowed)

✓	I have not experienced any of the above practices	38.1%
✓	Failure to pay for annual leave or sick leave	29.3%
✓	Payment of part of the salary "off the books" / in cash	25%
✓	Incorrect calculation of overtime pay or allowances	22.4%
✓	Delays in salary payments	18.4%
✓	Unjustified deductions from wages	16%
✓	Changes to remuneration conditions without prior agreement	14.9%
✓	Other	3.3%

Driver shortages, generational gap

Driver shortage

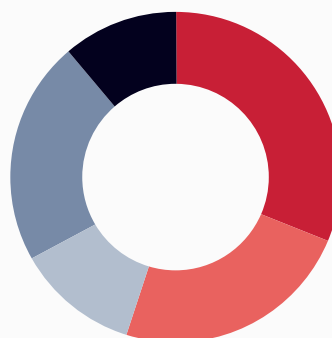
The issue of driver shortages remains one of the most pressing challenges in the transport sector, not only in Poland and Europe but also globally. Although the phenomenon is less noticeable during periods of economic slowdown, it still constitutes a significant challenge for transport companies. This is confirmed by Truckers Life survey results, according to which as many as 55% of employers report difficulties in filling driver positions.

An interesting finding is that larger companies experience greater difficulties in recruiting employees than micro and small enterprises.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that the current driver shortage has not yet reached dramatic levels. Slightly more than half of respondents indicate that their organisations lack no more than 5% of drivers relative to total staffing needs. A further 20% of employers estimate the shortage at 5–10%.

Is your company experiencing difficulties in filling professional driver positions?

● Definitely yes	31%
● Somewhat yes	24%
● Undecided	12%
● Somewhat no	22%
● Definitely no	11%



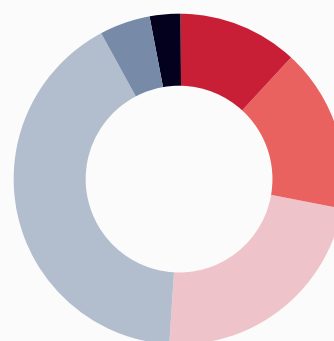
Employee rotation and company operations

More than half of employers confirm the existence of driver rotation; however, at present it does not significantly affect the functioning of most companies. Only 28% of respondents believe that the rotation negatively impacts the number of acquired and completed orders. At the same time,

41% of companies declare a complete absence of problems related to workforce continuity.

Do you experience driver rotation issues in your company? If so, how does it affect business operations?

● We experience staff rotation, and it results in lost revenue due to a lower volume of completed orders	12%
● We experience staff rotation, and it negatively affects order fulfillment	16%
● We experience staff rotation but it does not disrupt day-to-day operations	23%
● We do not have a problem with staff rotation	41%
● No opinion	5%
● Other	3%



Negative demographic trends in the driver profession

Nevertheless, the current situation may change in the coming years. Survey results confirm an unfavourable demographic structure of the driver profession in Poland. Individuals under 25 years of age constitute only 1.5% of the respondents, while drivers aged 25 to 30 account for

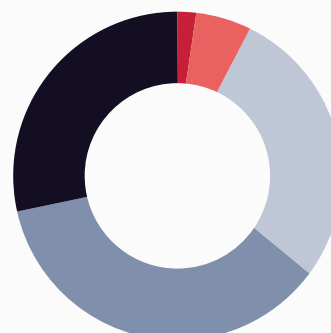
only 5.5%. On the opposite end, nearly two-thirds of respondents are over 40 years old, and 28% are over 50. This indicates a progressive ageing of the professional driver workforce and a limited inflow of young employees into the sector.

Driver age

Percentage of drivers*

● Less than 25 years old	1.5%
● 25 - 30 years old	5.5%
● 31 - 40 years old	28%
● 41 - 50 years old	37%
● Over 50 years old	28%

*values have been rounded



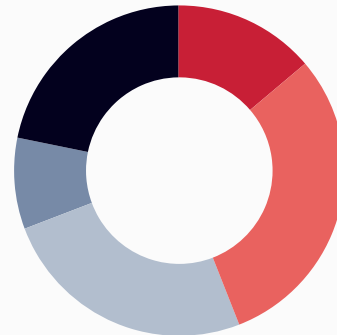
Recruitment of new employees and sources of candidates

Currently, the time required to recruit a driver is not yet particularly long. According to respondents, 44% of companies are able to hire a new employee in less than three weeks.

At the same time, one in four employers requires up to one and a half months to complete an effective recruitment process.

How much time, on average, does it take your company to find a professional driver?

- Up to 1 week 14%
- Over 1 to 3 weeks 30%
- Over 3 to 6 weeks 25%
- Over 6 to 8 weeks 9%
- Over 8 weeks 22%



Regarding recruitment channels, companies most frequently rely on recommendations from existing drivers. This method is indicated by three-quarters of surveyed companies. Almost equally popular are online job portals, used by a similar proportion of employers. Both channels clearly dominate recruitment processes.

Where do you most frequently look for professional drivers?

(multiple-choice question)

✓	Recommendations from other drivers	74%
✓	Online job boards / recruitment websites	72%
✓	Online forums	25%
✓	Newspaper / press advertisements	15%
✓	Tarpaulin advertisements (truck banner ads)	5%
✓	Other	4%



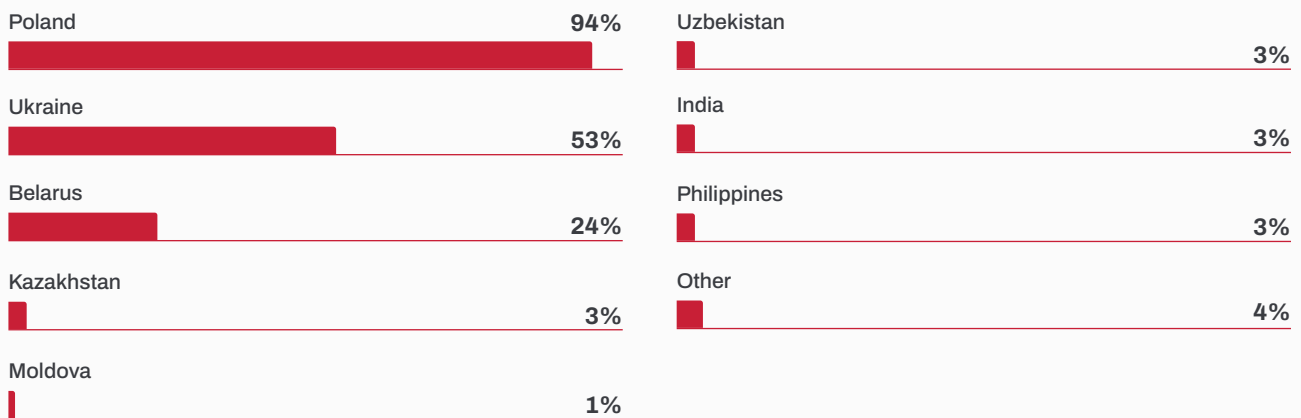
International recruitment

The deepening workforce shortage is increasingly prompting companies to hire employees from abroad. Hiring drivers from outside Poland has been declared by 55% of surveyed companies, while a further 15% are

considering such a step. Interestingly, nearly one-third of transport and forwarding companies do not plan to use foreign labour resources.

Drivers' country of origin

(multiple-choice question)



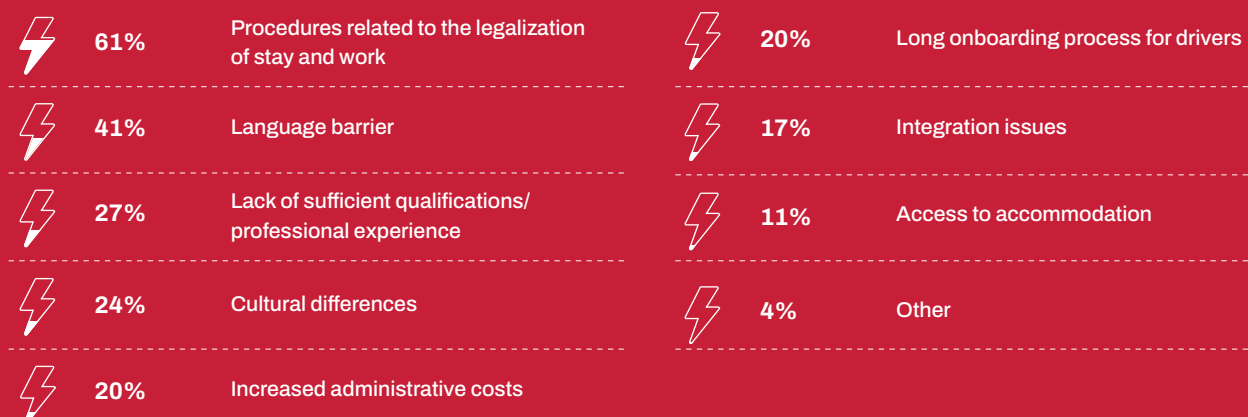
Bureaucracy as a greater barrier than cultural differences

However, recruiting drivers from abroad involves a number of challenges. Administrative procedures within the country constitute a greater barrier than cultural or language issues. More than 60% of employers indicate that the greatest difficulty lies in formalities related to legalising residence and

employment. Language barriers are a problem for one in four respondents. Additionally, more than one-quarter of surveyed companies report negative experiences related to the qualifications of foreign drivers, while a similar proportion identify cultural differences as a challenge.

What are the greatest challenges arising from employing foreign drivers?

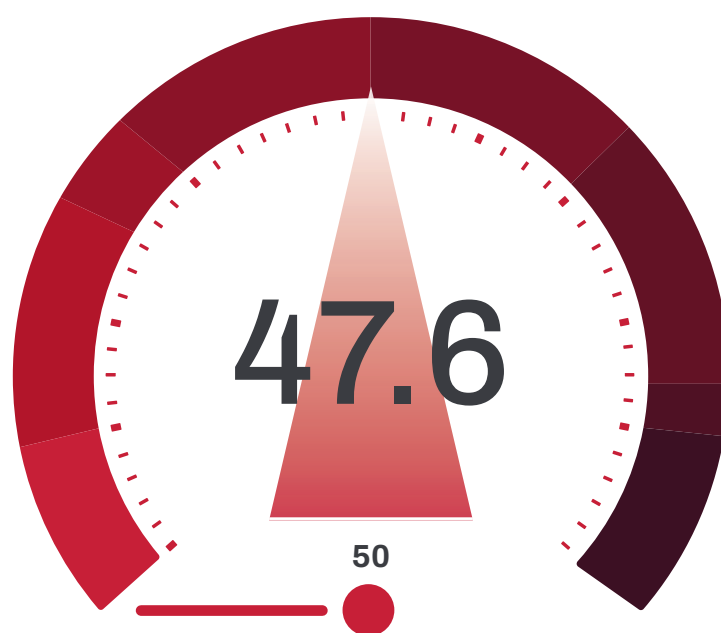
(multiple-choice question)



Driver Satisfaction Index (DSI)

But with all these responses that often contradict each other, what is the actual state of satisfaction of truckers in Poland? Based on responses from 777 professional drivers to several dozen survey questions, we have developed the first index on the Polish market measuring the actual level of satisfaction within this occupational group. Using the methodology described earlier, we developed a scale of driver

satisfaction ranging from 0 to 100 points, where 0 indicates complete dissatisfaction and 100 indicates full satisfaction. The value of the Driver Satisfaction Index (DSI) for 2025 amounted to 47.6 points, which represents a result below the 50 point satisfaction threshold.



The Driver Satisfaction Index (DSI) consists of eight sub-indices, hereinafter referred to as components. Individual components have varying degrees of influence on the final value of the main index. The most important areas were Compensation (C1) and Employer Relations (C3), which carry the highest weights (18% each) and simultaneously achieved alarmingly low results. It is precisely in these aspects of occupational satisfaction that employers have the greatest room for improvement.

The highest scores were recorded in the areas of Positive Factors at Work and Absence of Malpractice in Wage Settlements. However, their impact on the final index value remains moderate due to their limited weight.

Index Components	Weight	Result	What do we measure?
C1: Compensation	18%	42.9	Salary satisfaction and its dynamics
C2: Absence of Pathologies	12%	58.5	Whether the employer accurately and fairly settles compensation
C3: Employer Relations	18%	42.7	Communication, recognition, and support from the employer
C4: Working Conditions	12%	54.0	Vehicle quality and conditions at loading/unloading points
C5: Benefits	10%	28.8	Non-wage / fringe benefits
C6: Negative Workplace Factors	15%	52.1	Stress, separation from family, fatigue, etc.
C7: Positive Workplace Factors	8%	59.6	What drivers appreciate / like about their job
C8: Safety	7%	54.5	Conditions and security at parking areas





Publisher:

European Road Transport Institute Foundation
Raławicka 2/4
53-146 Wrocław
instytut@pitd.org.pl
www.pitd.org.pl

CEO:

Natalia Janiszewska

Author:

Michał Pakulniewicz

Graphic design:

Karolina Berger