



TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSING

Top 5 Facts Trucking Companies Want to Know About You

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Whether you submit a resume or not, a trucking company will definitely want to find out a few facts about you when considering hiring you as a driver. "There are black-and-white qualifications," says Brett Terchila, recruiting director for national trucking firm Celadon.

Here are the top five questions a reputable company will ask and trucking experts' advice on how to answer:

For How Many Years Have You Been Driving?

It's not that you won't be considered if you have no experience. "If you are a good driver, there are always jobs -- even for inexperienced drivers," says Michael Gaffin, who has been a truck driver for more than 15 years. But it's useful for the company to know whether you're fresh out of driving school or have many years of experience on the road.

Adds transportation careers consultant Craig Robins, "Each company has its own experience requirements. Many offer free schooling for inexperienced drivers to get their commercial driver's license -- with the agreement that the applicant will work for the carrier for a specific period of time, usually a year." If you've attended driving school, have your certificate of completion and grade sheets available to show a prospective employer.

What Types of Operations Have You Driven For?

Do you know how to navigate a tanker full of hazardous materials, or are you more comfortable with less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments? This kind of information helps both you and the company find the best fit. The trucking company needs to know what kind of driving you're willing to do.

For example, Gaffin hauls LTL shipments between Rhode Island and Maine. "I'm home every night, with 11-hour weekdays," he says.

What Is Your Driving Record for the Last Five Years?

Do you have any DWI convictions, speeding tickets and/or accidents on your record? Roland Brown, an expert trucking safety witness and consultant, says that if a driver has more than two moving violations within the past two years, he won't be a desirable candidate for most driving positions. Attending a defensive driving class offered by the National Safety Council, [private schools](#) or state trucking associations can help improve your prospects.

"Be honest about your driving record," Robins adds. "All trucking companies use DAC Services to [check backgrounds](#)." Terchila says Celadon, for example, will verify your driving experience of the past five years, including accidents. A million miles of accident-free driving, for instance, will work in your favor.

What Is Your Work History?

"You must have prepared and ready to immediately present the company names, addresses, names of supervisors and types of jobs you held for the past 10 years," says Brown. "It is a US Department of Transportation requirement. If it was not a driving position, it still must be listed." Robins stresses that a big employment gap in your work record is a red flag to employers, so be prepared to explain such a gap. If you were self-employed or in the military, have tax forms or military documents ready.

Why Did You Leave Your Last Driving Job?

If you have experience, your potential new employer will want to know why you left your last trucking job.

At Celadon, your first questions will be: "Why did you quit your last company? What do you want in a company?" says Terchila. Brown emphasizes the importance of being honest. "If you have had a bad experience with a former employer, you should give details and be honest about what happened," he says.

Gaffin says your answer could be a benign one. For instance, you can say that you have "worked for many companies where the next day, they're gone," adding, "in trucking, the ultimate goal is to find a company and stay with it."

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