



What to Expect



**Your First Year
Driving OTR with Lily**

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Contents

- 3.** The World Behind the Wheel
- 4.** Embrace the Learning Curve
- 6.** Wrestling with the Weather
- 7.** Mastering the Machine
- 8.** The Trucking Lifestyle
- 13.** Driving with Lily Transportation

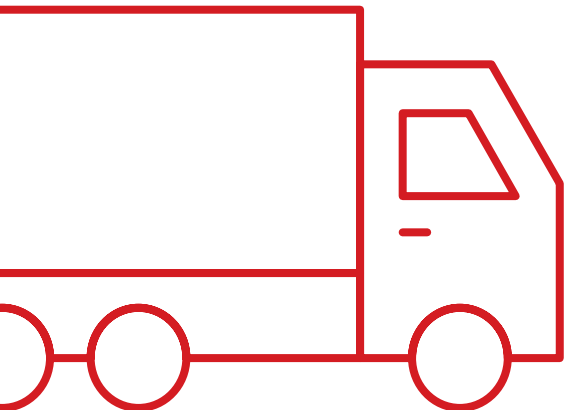
The World Behind the Wheel

Over-the-road (OTR) truckers live a unique lifestyle. Sometimes known as “long haul” drivers, these men and women will travel long-distances cross-country, cover hundreds of miles, and spend long periods of time away from home. However as demanding as the job can be, it’s also a career filled with opportunity and adventure.

This is especially true for first-year truckers, who have recently finished their CDL-training and certifications and are excited to get on the road. These younger drivers have all the education and expertise they need to thrive in an OTR trucking role, but have yet to truly experience the OTR lifestyle.

A truck driving career can be an incredibly rewarding, lucrative, and beneficial path for anyone who is looking for a career that’s not confined to a desk, but rather, to the many open roads of the country.

If you’re a new trucker looking to get started, then Lily Transportation is here to help! We want to see you succeed and thrive as an OTR driver, and have put together this eBook in order to better equip you with the tips and tricks you’ll need for your first year of over-the-road trucking!



Embrace the Learning Curve

Every new career path is going to have some kind of learning curve attached and trucking is no exception. However, with the right company at your side, that learning curve doesn't have to be steep. Lily Transportation is committed to providing its drivers with the stability, structure, and benefits they need in order to thrive behind the wheel.

As you continue to move into your first year as an OTR truck driver, here are some tips and recommendations that can help you find your footing and get comfortable in your new role.

Adjusting to the New Schedule

Truck driving can sometimes feel like it's "more of a lifestyle with a paycheck than it is a job with a paycheck. This is especially true for OTR and long-haul drivers who are away from home for extended periods of time and working close to 70 hours per week." ¹

That may sound like a lot, but since truck drivers are empowered to pace themselves at a rate that works for them, it doesn't have to be. Even if you end up spending 70-hours on the road over a week-long period—which not everyone will do—you'll be required to spend about 30-hours off-duty before getting back behind the wheel.

The trucking industry takes care of its drivers. While the job can expect a lot from its drivers, it also goes the extra mile in making sure that they're healthy, well-rested, and continually motivated to do the best work they can do. That's why there are a number of rules and regulations that require drivers to take consistent breaks and recharge their physical and mental batteries.

For example, drivers aren't allowed to drive for more than 11 hours a day, and when the day is over, "you must conclude your 'Hours of Service' with a 10-hour break."² One of the many things that makes an OTR trucking career so appealing is its flexibility, as drivers can often choose their own hours and set a schedule that works for them.

If you prefer driving at night, for example, then you can sleep during the day and hit the road after sunset. As long as you cover the right number of miles per day, then truck driving allows you to create a schedule that speaks to your unique set of skills, preferences, and attitudes. Like AllTrucking.com³ says, "Setting up a proper daily work schedule according to his or her current load, with rests and work breaks, will aid first-year drivers in making the change to an OTR driver far less challenging."



Wrestling with the Weather

When you're covering a lot of miles across a variety of landscapes and regions, coming into contact with inclement weather is inevitable. Whether it's snow, extreme winds or rain, or other conditions, the weather is a constant and unpredictable factor that every truck driver will have to learn to wrestle with. However, with the right expectations, you'll be able to navigate these situations with patience, care, and success.

Safety is always going to be the number one priority for truckers and the companies that employ them. Like an article on [TruckingInfo.com](#) says,⁴ it's important for drivers to know "that they're the captain of the ship, that they are able to make the decision and are supported by the management of the organization. If they don't feel that the operation is safe, then they don't need to complete that operation."

Here are some basic tips that truck drivers should follow when faced with inclement weather on the road:⁵

- Give yourself plenty of space between your truck and the cars around you.
- Brake, accelerate, and turn the steering wheel lightly and firmly.
- Be watchful of black ice.
- Drive extra carefully on bridges and mountain roads.
- Make sure other drivers are aware of your presence.
- If you pull over due to the weather, stay in your vehicle.
- Pay attention to your surroundings.

OTR driving careers can be demanding and come with their fair share of challenges. But the more prepared you are for whatever situations the road may throw your way, the easier it'll be to make educated and timely decisions in order to make sure you—and everyone you share the road with—stays safe.

Mastering the Machine

When it comes down to it, the biggest learning curve in the truck driving industry is the truck itself. Even after you've earned your CDL and have been hired as an OTR driver, the learning never stops. Like any skill set, driving a truck requires practice and patience to perfect.

Even industry experts need to take time to fine-tune their skills whenever possible. This can mean backing your truck into tight spaces when no one else is around, performing an extra pre-trip inspection, or simply practicing your ability to make tight turns.

Like Mike Rogers says on GreatCDLTraining.com,⁶ "When you take the time to practice during the less stressful moments, you'll excel during the stressful ones...You should always practice and learn from each experience by trying new techniques." The bottom line is this: be patient with yourself and with the learning process.



The Trucking Lifestyle

Truck driving jobs are obviously very different from a typical 9-5 office job, but for many people, that's one of the best incentives the industry can offer. Driving OTR involves being on the road for days, sometimes even weeks, at a time. But with the right attitude and expectations, this change in lifestyle can be a great experience on both a personal and professional level.

If you're unsure of what to expect from the trucking lifestyle, then try talking to an industry expert. Joe Rajkovacz—the director of governmental affairs and communications for the Western States Trucking Association in Upland, California—specializes in this, as he strives to help new drivers get established in their role as an OTR driver.

“Learning from a veteran can help avoid common trucking problems,” he says in an article on Forbes.⁷ “They’ve made every mistake you can make, but they also learned from those mistakes and moved on.”

Talking with experienced truckers can be a great way for first-year drivers to set the right expectations for their time behind the wheel. This way there won't be any surprises, and the transition into this new lifestyle schedule will be smooth, seamless, and enjoyable.

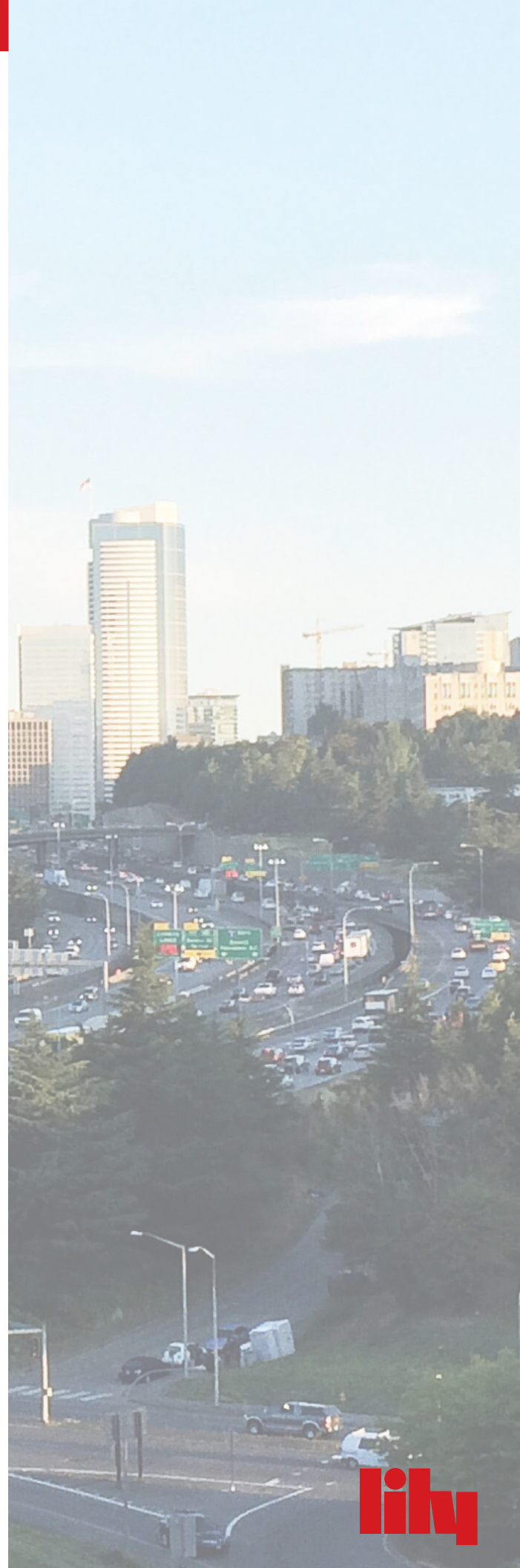
Here are just a few recommendations you can use to make sure your truck driving lifestyle is as productive and fulfilling as it can be.

Building a Budget

The truck driving industry is in need of qualified and committed employees.⁸ As such, employers are often more than willing to provide their drivers with the benefits and financial stability that will keep them driven and content behind the wheel.

While some companies will sponsor their new drivers and cover most (or all) of the training costs in order to get them on the road faster, it's likely that "you will pay for it via deductions from your paycheck for the first year or two that you are working for the company."⁹ As a result, it can be a good idea for first-year truckers to build a budget for themselves that will help keep them financially secure while they earn valuable OTR experience and pay off the cost of their CDL training.

With that said, an OTR driving job is still a financially stable environment, and companies are more than willing to support their drivers via competitive pay and additional income incentives like loyalty and safety programs that reward drivers for a job well done. Most companies also pay their drivers on a per-mile-driven scale, so the more miles you cover the more money you'll make.





Each year of driving will look a bit differently from the last. But the more experience you gain, the easier the job will become and the more income you'll be able to make. As you settle into your first year, try and set aside some money to help increase your comfort-of-mind so you can fully invest and thrive in your new career. This way, when you make a name for yourself, you'll be more than equipped with the financial stability to live your best truck driving life.

Healthy Living

When you're spending long days behind the wheel of a truck, you're going to want to make sure you're not only well-rested, but well-fed. It's not enough to simply energize yourself with coffee and protein bars; you need real meals, hydration, and nutrition in order to keep yourself (and your truck) running at peak efficiency.

To help get you started, here are some simple, healthy, and delicious meals and snacks you can easily access while on the road:¹⁰

- Pre-washed bags of lettuce and spinach
- Pre-cut vegetables
- Fresh fruit
- Trail mix (peanuts, granola, raisins, and other protein-rich snacks)
- Meat (which can be easily grilled on a portable grill)

You can also invest in some basic exercise equipment, like a folding bicycle you can ride around the perimeter of a parking lot when you stop for the day, or even some basic weights—as long as you can safely secure them in the truck—that'll help you get some blood flowing. Since trucking is a sedentary career, your body and mind will appreciate any exercise you give it.

The same mentality should be applied to your sleeping habits as well. While the day-to-day schedule of a trucker can often be in flux, setting aside time to sleep is absolutely essential. This is true for the most experienced of veterans, and it's especially true for first-year drivers, as the habits you start will likely stick with you.

Almost every truck used by OTR drivers comes with some kind of sleeping quarters—and they're usually pretty comfortable too ¹¹—so even if you don't stay at a hotel or motel you'll still have access to a bed. Without a consistent sleep schedule, your senses and general energy levels can become impaired, which will make the days feel longer and the job harder.

Even if you decide to drive at night and sleep during the day, try and find a daily routine that works for you and stick to it as best you can. Your body will adjust to it eventually and then you'll be in a prime position to go the distance as efficiently and safely as possible.



Driving with Lily Transportation

When you start your OTR trucking career with Lily Transportation, you won't only step into a whole new world of opportunity and adventure, but you'll also become part of a larger family of passionate and devoted professionals who love what they do.

At Lily, we believe that our people are our greatest asset. When you join our team, you'll have access to a wealth of benefits, such as:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical and Dental Insurance
- Paid Holiday and Vacation Time
- Matching 401K
- Safety Bonuses
- Health and Wellness Program
- Cell Phone Allowance
- 24 Hours Dispatch
- Meticulously maintained equipment
- And more!

Whether you're just thinking about starting a truck driving career, or are about to embark on your first year on the road, Lily Transportation is here to help! If you're interested in learning more, please visit the [Careers Page](#), or feel free to give us a call at 800-248-LILY. We can't wait to hear from you!



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