



FOR THE TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONAL

Elite FLEET® MAGAZINE

Special Issue

**Trainees,
Trainers,
ELD Mandate
and more inside!**



VIEW FROM THE WINDSHIELD



JIM FRANCK

President

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Driver Appreciation Week is here already. How time flies!

This week officially recognizes the hard working folks who literally keep the American economy moving. Without you we wouldn't have food on our tables or clothes on our backs. So thank each and every one of you for your hard work, diligence, safe driving and of course putting up with all of us that are trying to support your efforts. We know we don't always get it right but I hope you know we will always work hard to make it right.

This issue is dedicated to our Driver Training program. We started this at the beginning of 2015. The process has had its ups and downs but overall has exceeded our expectations. We currently have 105 seated trucks with graduates of the program. Overall these Drivers have performed exceptionally well. They sometimes make rookie mistakes and that is to be expected. But I'll put their safety performance and retention up against any fleet in the country. This is absolutely a team effort involving every department at NCI. But the real kudos go to our Driver Trainers. They are the key to a successful program. Every one of these Trainers do it for the right reason. That is to help create the next generation of Truck Drivers - the most honorable profession in the country.

*Thank you for all you do every day (not just this week)
and Please be Safe out there.*

JILL MASCHMEIER

**Director of Safety
and Compliance**



Our new driver training program has been a win/win for our company and drivers. It has been a wonderful opportunity to bring on drivers that are excited about the adventure of driving and seeing new places. Teamed with our professional trainers, drivers new to our industry learn from the elite of the “*Elite*” Fleet. Safety, load securement, and on-time deliveries are prioritized during this instructional period. Since our training program has been implemented we have grown our fleet with quality drivers filled with excitement for the industry.

If you are interested in teaching the next generation of drivers there is always a need for great trainers. If you are interested in becoming a trainer please contact James White at ext. 2516 or JD Jackson at ext. 2576.

The end of September NCI will abide by the new ELD mandate. Here is a quick overview for our drivers.

What? The office can make edits, but the process itself is changing. Safety can’t change any drive movements, however we will be able to edit logs. Changes must be approved by driver prior to updating a log.

Why? To be compliant with FMCSA upcoming rule changes.

When? We will begin the transition in late September.

Who? All drivers at NCI who have a Blue Tree system installed in their truck. Our livestock drivers are the only exception at this time.

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JOHN McCARTHY

**21-Year-Old
Solo Driver**

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“One of the most valuable things my driver trainer taught me was time management techniques. Once you are operating a truck as a solo driver, you have to learn to take care of it all. There is no one to do it but you. I was taught to always be prepared, so I could keep my truck moving,” shared Josh McCarthy, who began his NCI training at 21 years old.

As a child, Josh wanted to drive a truck. As a teen he enjoyed computer based games, especially the Windows 98 version of Eighteen Wheels of Steel. He played the game relentlessly, getting hooked on the idea of driving a semi-truck. Even today you will find him during his break in his bunk playing American Truck Simulator on his gaming system.

Josh prefers to drive from two a.m. through the morning to avoid heavy traffic. He has found the early start makes it much easier to find a parking spot when he has reached his maximum hours for the day. By early afternoon most truck stops have openings for tractor parking. Avoiding crowded areas gives him a greater choice of parking and less parked vehicles to maneuver around.

“I enjoy the independence of being out on the road on my own. I keep everything organized just the way I like it in my truck. I take advantage of my free time while traveling. I believe you will only get out what you put in, so when I’m not driving my truck, I’m polishing it,” Josh said with an enthusiastic grin.

DANA SEGURA

Trainee to 48 State Expediter



Why choose National Carriers over other opportunities? Because of the reputation NCI has in the industry. They are very family based, have plenty of freight, and provide newer equipment. I have great support at home allowing me to concentrate on driving.

Has the job met your expectations? Yes. I have traveled all over the United States. I came to NCI willing to work, including taking loads anywhere. I have driven from Connecticut to California to Florida and everywhere in-between. When I need home time, my driver manager has been able to work me back to my family.

What do you like and dislike most about your current career choice? First, there is nothing I dislike. I do enjoy getting to drive in the different states and observing landmarks along my routes. There are many things I was not aware of.

Something you learned once you began driving over the road? Watching out for cars! I now realize the mistakes they make without knowing. I made the same mistakes when I drove a four wheeler. The Atlantic Ocean bordering Connecticut was not as pretty as I thought it would be, and the New York City area not as great as it looks in the movies; however, I had no struggles in the northeast.

How was your NCI training experience? Debra Brown was my trainer. She was EXCELLENT. She allowed me to do as much driving as I possibly could, so I could have the experience. Deb would let me know if I was doing things correctly or not. I was her first trainee.

Where did your first load as a solo driver deliver? I was terrified when I pulled out with my first load. My freight was going to a customer in Connecticut. I was nervous, but determined. I left the Irving, Texas yard headed to the northeast. During my first day as a solo driver, one of my drive tires blew out. The tire debris ruptured an air bag, destroying it. I was upset knowing my first load would be late; however, the NCI truck breakdown operator got my truck fixed, and customer service rescheduled my shipment.

Do you like your company Kenworth T-680 tractor and if so, why? Yes, I do. My truck has a twelve speed automatic transmission which I like. It makes mountain driving easier. I use my Jacob brake as I descend, avoiding braking issues. I appreciate my new 2020 KW with its driver assist tools, such as the Bendix mitigation system and the Smartdrive on-board camera. The camera recorded a hit and run involving a mini-van that cut me off. I made a report to our safety department, and the camera confirmed I was not at fault.



SCOTT BOSTON

Trainee to Trainer

Long-term friendships develop between trainers and trainees. During his first year as a trainer with NCI, Damon Bowlby trained NCI driver Scott Boston. Scott had attended college as a computer programmer, but could no

longer afford the costly tuition. While working as a security guard, a friend from college, involved in trucking, encouraged Scott to look into driving as an occupation. He followed his friend's advice, earned his CDL and chose to drive for an Oklahoma based company. Once there, he felt uncomfortable with their trucks. They suggested National Carriers might be a better fit due to the fact that all NCI trucks feature automatic transmissions. In November of 2015, Scott began his training with Damon.

Scott explained, "Training was awesome. Damon was great. He did not use me as a team driver. He let me do most of the driving, as he critiqued and helped me learn. The one exception was a trip into New York City. He took us in. We talked constantly about trucking issues. He was very hands off, letting me learn, answering my questions, and advising as needed. I felt so good about my training that I invited Johnny Motley, a friend from driving school, to join NCI. That was back in February of 2016."

"I bleed NCI blue through and through. They are big enough to offer consistent freight and small enough to know everyone by name. When my grandmother passed away, they had me home the same day which was incredible. Smaller companies would struggle to do that, and larger companies might not care. All doors in the office are open to drivers if they need to visit. A good example is my driver manager Barbara Armstrong. She is an absolute doll, always on the phone helping someone. She has learned she can rely on me, and she doesn't have to worry about me. She has confidence I will pick up and deliver on time or let her know if I have an issue. It is very comforting to know she trusts me and doesn't feel the need to micromanage," he shared.

Scott's computer background is evident in his sleeper berth. Multiple gaming systems can be found in his spacious Kenworth T-680 cab. Featuring a swivel desk, a flat screen mount and more, a driver can configure the bunk area as they wish. He feels this is an important benefit as drivers are allowed to make their area very personal.

"The truck is our home away from home. They let us set it up as we wish, making it easier to stay out on the road for extended periods. I have my Bluetooth hooked up to the radio and my videos. When I go home I actually get bored. All my bills are paid and I find myself looking for something to do. I'd rather be on the road. I love my T-680 tractor," Scott said.

Trucking is not what Scott thought it would be... it's actually better! Using the Rider Policy, his friend Everett Juarez rode along as he criss-crossed the nation, giving Everett the opportunity to decide if trucking might be a career option. After completing school, Everett also joined NCI where Scott became his trainer.

DEBRA BROWN

Training the Next Generation



Debra recalls, “Dana Segura and I talked about all aspects of driving during her training period. She was nervous going over the road, but confident in her driving abilities. Dana insisted on driving as much as possible during the training period to maximize her learning experience. I wanted to make sure she understood our Blue Tree communications system, the required paperwork, working with customers and most importantly how to drive safely. She had attended Seward County Community College CDL School, where they did a really good job preparing her.”

Safety on the road is very important to Debra. When parking her truck, she keeps to the front of the parking areas. She seeks out well-lit locations to improve visibility and her safety. Debra constantly stays aware of her surroundings. She avoids things like talking on the telephone while walking, and she continually scans her surroundings both near and far.

“In some ways, being a solo driver is a good thing. You don’t have to worry about a team driver, but sometimes it does get lonely. I have taken my nine-year-old grandson with me. We both enjoy it. Last summer he visited twenty-one states in a three week period. He found it to be very educational. My brother rode with me during the Christmas through New Year holidays last year. He was recovering from lung cancer. It was a whole new experience for him. He saw states he had not been in before and he loved it,” Debra exclaimed.

She listed the features which are most important to her on National Carriers Kenworth T-680 tractors.

1. Auxiliary Power Unit with wrap around curtains for privacy, while keeping the cabin temperature comfortable.
2. Power Inverter and Refrigerator adds convenience which allows her to cook in the truck, cutting her costs.
3. Swivel desktop to eat meals, complete paperwork and for entertainment purposes.
4. Blue Tree communications is the easiest tool she has used for logs, directions and to contact the office.
5. Automatic transmission is great for descending down mountains while using the Jacob brake, allowing the driver to stay in control.

Debra concluded, “Many women don’t know there are opportunities available for them to drive at National Carriers. I am involved in an online community where I constantly encourage women, whether they have experience or not, to contact our offices if they are interested in driving. I have found it is not a ‘good old boys’ club here. Someone has always responded quickly if I have had an issue. It is family oriented, really good place to work.”



CARLNACI PETE

Former Driver of the Year Enjoys Helping Others Succeed

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2015 National Carriers, Inc. Driver of the Year Carl Naci Pete finds fulfillment in helping new drivers succeed. Whether teaching them during their initial training period or following up with them after they begin solo driving, he is dedicated to the overall success of the driver training program at the “Elite” Fleet. We asked him to respond to a few questions.

Why are you a trainer? To help others learn to be successful drivers. It gives me a good feeling to know I am helping someone learn how to drive safely and properly.

What do you enjoy most about training? My former trainees calling later telling me they are grateful for what I was able to teach them.

What do you share with your trainees when they get into their own truck? Call me if you need anything. I give my phone number to all my students to call anytime they have a question or a concern. Letting a former student call me for advice is a good thing. If they get in a jam or come across something we did not experience in our training, they know they have someone to call that they can depend on.

In your opinion, does National Carriers offer a good training program? Yes. Any trucking company can give new drivers a chance to learn the ropes, but it is more than that. Students have to be paid a fair wage while learning, and National Carriers pays trainees a fair wage.

Have any of your students went on to be trainers? Yes, and two quickly come to mind. Kaon Scott and Cleavon Ward both are excellent trainers.

DAMON BOWLBY

Devoted to Teaching New Drivers

“When you see one of your former trainees successfully driving at NCI, it is very rewarding. I enjoy working with new drivers, especially when they are learning to back up their truck and trailer. I like comparing how well they are doing to how well I did when I was a trainee,” NCI driver trainer Damon Bowlby shares his excitement in helping new drivers succeed.

He continues, “The economy in Florida crashed in 2008-2009. My opportunities for work were between nursing and truck driving. I have several relatives who drive, so I decided to get my class A CDL. I find I enjoy the freedom, and I have less wear and tear on my body than working outside in the heat. My health has actually improved due to the new DOT health regulations.

“I went through a local trucking school in Florida then began working for a large company that provided training. My trainer was verbally abusive and taught me very little. He used me to run his truck more miles to make extra money, and that was all he was interested in. That happens a lot in larger companies. Because of my experience, I go out of my way to be patient with new drivers.”

There are many facets to training a new class A driver. One is constant monitoring of changing weather conditions. Many new drivers have little to no experience driving in winter weather conditions. Knowing what is ahead in the form of rain, ice or snow and knowing how to drive or when to drive is critical. Another is navigating mountains or hilly terrain. Doing so for the first time in a semi-truck and trailer can be daunting. Knowing when to brake and how to brake is critical, because burning up or locking up brakes can be life threatening. A final area he is sensitive about is discussing how new drivers can learn to handle time away from home. Damon takes gifts home so his wife can share where he has been. He encourages his trainees not to go home empty handed. He also suggests that trainees wait to call home after their driving shift is over, so they have a clear mind while behind the wheel.

“Customer care is an important step in servicing our customers. I suggest drivers learn what is expected in different regions around the country. What is expected in the southern states is not the same as expectations in delivering to the northeastern states. Sometimes having thick skin can help. Treat people well, no matter the mood they are in,” he summarized.





MOHAMMAD MAHDI AHMADI

In Search of a Better Life

Iranian born Mahdi Ahmadi left his home country as a refugee seeking religious asylum in neighboring Turkey. As a 26 year old Christian he feared for his life and safety in his homeland.

After four years in a crowded camp in western Turkey, he was granted a green card to immigrate to the United States. Settling in Texas, Mahdi immediately focused on finding the best paying job possible.

“English is my fourth language”, stated Mahdi. “I’ve only spoken English for the past four years. I am fluent in Turkish, Arabic, and my native Persian. I will soon begin the process of becoming a citizen of the United States. That is very important to me.”

Examining job opportunities with the greatest earning potential Mahdi selected truck driving. After receiving his CDL, he found National Carriers was one of a few transportation companies willing to give him a chance to drive without experience. He will quickly tell you how appreciative and grateful he is to National Carriers for offering him a driving job.

Mahdi exclaimed, “Damon Bowlby was assigned as my driver trainer. He was a very good trainer who taught me well, and I will appreciate him all my life. Even though my English is not very good, he was patient with me.”

Three things he was taught during his training period stand out in his mind. The first is to scan the road in the far distance to give yourself time to react. Accidents happen fast, and waiting too long to react can result in a catastrophe. Number two was how to back his truck and trailer with confidence. Damon taught him to go slow and be patient while backing. The third and possibly most important thing he focuses on is never using his phone while driving. Mahdi remembers that Damon never had his phone out while driving and it made a very memorable impact.

When he is not driving you will find Mahdi working out in a gymnasium. He is very diligent in his workouts making time wherever he travels. Next year he hopes to compete in the Lone Star Classic, an event for natural bodybuilding participants held in Dallas, Texas.

CHANTEL DEATON

Former Equine Trainer Turned Trucker

“Like many people, I came to trucking in an indirect way. I owned and operated Deaton Horse Training in southeastern Kansas. I worked with rescue horses and with other equine owners who needed my services. I enjoyed the work; however, in 2018 I was thrown from a horse and broke my back. I knew I needed to find a new line of work. Many of my family members are truck drivers, and they encouraged me to go to a CDL school. I choose a school in Topeka, KS that offered high quality training and instructors. As I was completing the course, I shared with my teacher my needs and concerns. “I wanted to be able to take my dog and son with me; I wanted to drive newer equipment that was safe; and I wanted good home time,” explained NCI driver Chantel Deaton.

Her instructor shared that a former student, Paula Miller, had attended his driving school then joined National Carriers to drive a company truck. He reported Paula seemed very satisfied and suggested she call the NCI recruiting team. When she did, James Rampy answered her call. He was quick to answer her questions. Over the next four days, they worked together to get her in the next scheduled orientation. He provided her a ride to Irving, TX, and she began her training immediately.

Even when orientation was a few days longer than expected, Chantel said she was compensated and her room was provided. Learning the on-board Blue Tree Communication System was easy watching the training videos during orientation. Once she was assigned a trainer, she began her three week / 7500 mile training period. During this phase safety was emphasized. Everything from in-depth pre and post trips inspections to safe following distances were taught. She watched YouTube videos in her off-duty time to become more aware of and familiar with commonly asked questions.

Chantel exclaimed “I love driving solo. I am confident in my skills and I love the job. I appreciate my driver manager Kenny Scott. When I have had issues with loading and unloading, he stayed late and came in early to help resolve them. I use the Workhound reporting system to let NCI know how things are going for me. I feel great about what I do, it’s like being in the army, and I am serving our nation!”





RHYMON “BLUE” LEWIS

Time for a Change

Prior to joining National Carriers as a driver trainee, Blue Lewis, was a professional house painter. Always a perfectionist, he painstakingly made sure everything was done to the highest level. Producing work at an elevated standard requires premium pay for premium work. Unfortunately, many customers would claim to want premium work until it came time to pay.

“As my frustration mounted with my painting business, I decided to look around and see what was available as income options. My daughters are both in their twenties and my wife wants to retire in the next year or so. I wanted a job that offered good pay, home time with my family, and something new that was challenging. I did research and decided truck driving could meet those needs. It was important to find a company that would allow my wife to ride along once she retires,” Blue explained.

Researching trucking companies online, he felt National Carriers would be a good fit for him. He attended orientation in our Irving, Texas, terminal and was assigned Wayne Stratton as his driver trainer. Recognized as May 2019 Driver of the Month, Stratton provided excellent education during the following three weeks. From training on how to use the NCI Blue Tree system for communication to route planning while considering weather patterns, Blue took advantage of the paid training opportunity.

“Wayne would always ask me situational questions on what I would do. He emphasized being aware of my surroundings while driving. Another area he focused on was doing my paperwork correctly and promptly. My first load out, I picked up a half load in Amarillo and was sent to live load the second half in Liberal. We had not done anything like that during training, so Wayne talked me through it on the telephone. Training doesn’t stop when you get your own truck,” he concluded.

JANE DE LOS SANTOS

Over-the-Road Driver at 21 years old



“I have thought semis were really cool since I was a kid. Our family would travel, and I would watch for the trucks as we met them on the highway. Before I earned my CDL, it seemed when you are in a truck you are the boss of the highway. It appeared that trucks got a lot of respect. Lisa Kelly, Ice Road Trucker, inspired me to learn to drive. She takes a dangerous job and exhibits no fear. Like her, my confidence has grown over the past year,” shared twenty-two year old National Carriers driver, Jane De Los Santos.

Jane continued, “NCI gave me a chance when no other company would. I lived in the Lubbock, Texas area. For young drivers just out of school, the opportunities are limited, especially for women. I searched for driving opportunities; however, other companies were not willing to take a chance with me. I noticed an online ad for NCI, and then I called the recruiting department. Dena Moore answered my call, and within a week I was attending orientation. Once I left orientation, training required 3 weeks or 7500 miles, whichever came first. Former driver and current driver manager, Amanda Taylor, was my trainer. She provided me with the necessary skill required to become a solo driver. After I went out on my own, I called her constantly asking questions. Amanda was both helpful and patient.”

In closing Jane exclaimed, “I feel by showing kindness on the highway it seems to be paid back further down the road. Not everyone has been given the opportunities that I have. Not every company treats each driver as an individual by personally investing in their drivers and getting to know them. My driver manager, Aaron Dunbar, knows me well and what I am able to achieve. He motivates me and encourages me when I have new challenges and opportunities. Potential drivers ask me what is required to be successful in trucking. I tell them they must love to travel, they must have thick skin, and they must be flexible. Driving works for me, because I love challenges and I have a sense of adventure.”



Director of Driver Services Shares Helpful Hints to Optimize DCLIMATE APU

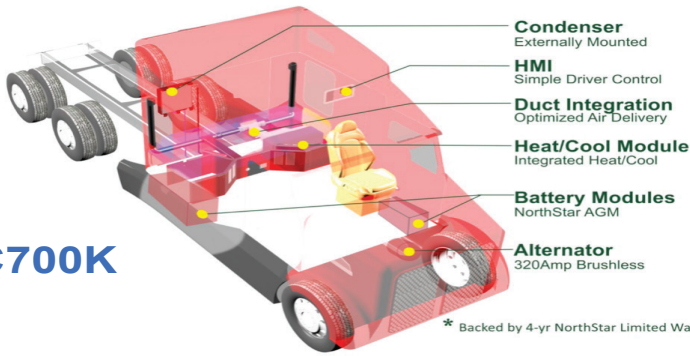
By James White

To optimize your DClimate experience, the truck's main HVAC system should be used to heat or cool the cab to the desired temperature before the tractor is shutdown. For optimum performance on sunny days we recommend the truck is parked in the shade or with the windshield facing away from the sun when possible. A reflective windshield sun-screen and close your curtains should also be used on sunny days. Here is a quick how to on you DClimate system.

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1. Ignition has to be off
 2. Enable the auto start
 3. Turn the APU on at the controller located in the sleeper. There is a status light on the top right side of the controller. Once system is turned on the status light should be a solid green light. Solid green means Normal operation.
 - a. The controller has 3 knobs. The far left knob is where you turn the APU on by selecting between A/C mode, Heat mode, and Fan mode.
 - b. Middle knob is your fan speed.
 - c. Third knob is you temperature control. Left being COLD and to the right being HOT
 4. The system is up and running. The system will run for 14 hours before it times out and has to be reset. Battery voltage is the main source for running the electric APU. If the truck senses the voltage going below 11.6 volts than the auto start feature will kick in and start the engine to bring the batteries back to charge. This process usually take 1 to 1.5 hours to complete. Once the recharge has completed the engine will turn off and the APU will resume its normal operation.
 5. If the engine is running to recharge the batteries you will be able to use the trucks A/C or HEATER during the charging process.
- With any system there are things to not to do. I will provide a short list of things not to do to help with your APU's performance.
1. Make sure all fresh air return vents are not blocked. These vents are located at the bottom of the bunk. Please keep bags or any big items from blocking these vents. The supply vents in the AC

HC700K



system push air into the truck after cooling it. All this air needs to go somewhere to keep the air pressure from building, and the return air vent helps maintain this balance.

2. Auto start feature. If auto start is enabled and you turn the ignition to the on position or start the truck you will have to reset the auto start feature. Fuel level plays a big part in the auto start feature. If you're primary fuel is low and or is displayed on the instrument cluster than the auto start feature will not work. When fuel is low the auto start will not start because it does not want the truck to run out of fuel. The DCLIMATE WILL STILL WORK.
3. If you turn the APU on and it has a green flashing status. Shut the system down and try to restart the system after 5 minutes. If you still are getting the green flashing light than you will need to call Road Breakdown for assistance.

IDLE REDUCTION

- Fuel savings have long been the primary component of ROI calculations for APUs. For diesel systems this is the difference in fuel burn of the APU vs the tractor engine, for battery systems it is based on runtime before tractor starting. DClimate's game changing combination of Rapid Charge, Battery Capacity and Runtime means that fuel burn is minimized even in the most extreme conditions.
- Reduced tractor maintenance costs are also an important factor, particularly on emissions systems. Again, the unique combination of Rapid Charge, Battery Capacity and Runtime guarantees that idle time will be kept to a minimum.
- Regulatory compliance, in particular CARB, is not possible with diesel systems without the addition of an expensive DPF. DClimate's system not only delivers on compliance, it takes environmental stewardship to new levels!

LOW MAINTENANCE

- No diesel engine, no diesel engine PMs!
- Battery terminal checks, return air filter changes and non-intrusive diesel fired heater cycling cover the preventative maintenance requirements.
- Onboard diagnostics and prognostic capability built in to minimize downtime

TO DATE 2019 DRIVERS OF THE MONTH

Stephen Dixon
February

Ryan Wilson
March

Debra Thornton
April

Wayne Stratton
May

Kevin Vroman
January

Richard Digman
16 July

Jason Price
June

Criteria for 2019 Driver of the Month Selection

1. Must have driven uninterrupted the past 365 days for NCI - vacation is exception or excused illness
2. Must have no preventable accidents or incidents in past 365 days
3. Must have 0 or negative safety points
4. No hours of service violations in past 365 days
5. Must have attended a safety meeting the current or previous quarter
6. Minimal Blue Tree violations in past 365 days
7. Selection to be based on overall performance and not the particular month of selection
8. Cannot have won Driver of the Month in the past 18 months or Driver of the Year in the last 60 months