

LABOUR MARKET SNAPSHOT

JUNE 2021



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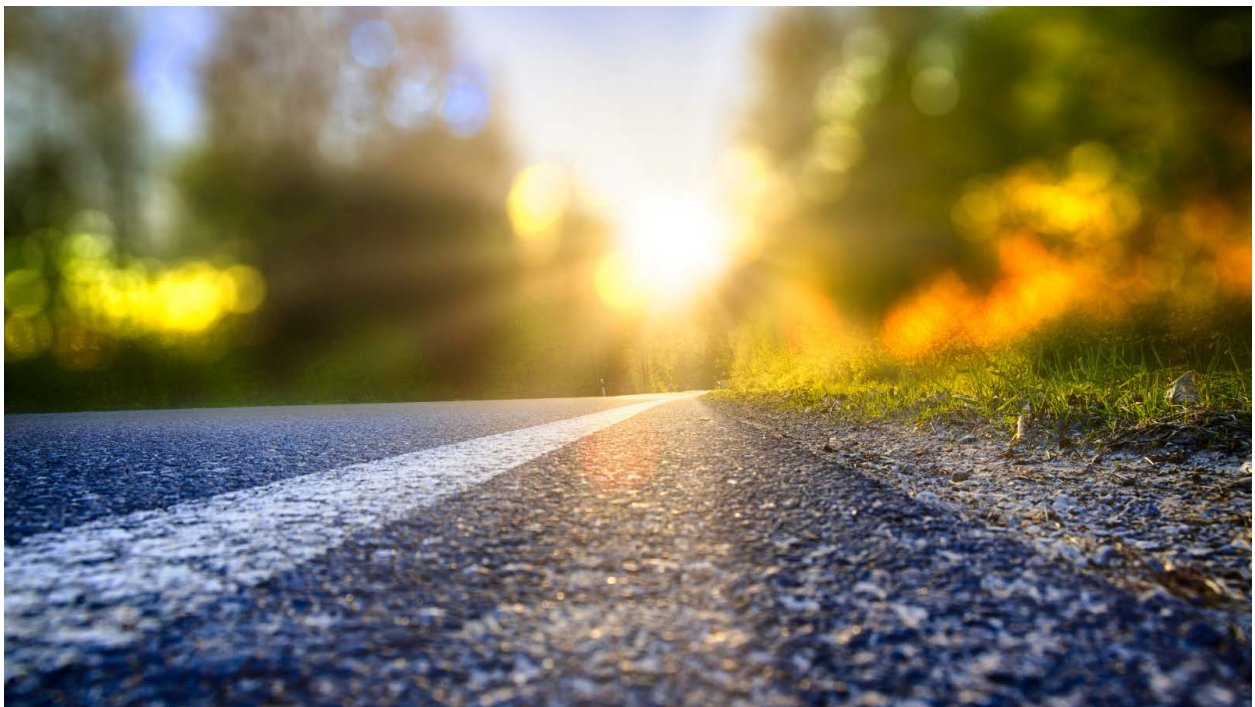
Canada 

We also want to recognize our partner The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA).



Labour market information (LMI) is actionable intelligence pertaining to the supply and demand of labour. It puts raw data into context and **facilitates better, evidence-based decisions** by employers, workers, job seekers, policymakers, educators, career practitioners, academics, students, parents, and more.

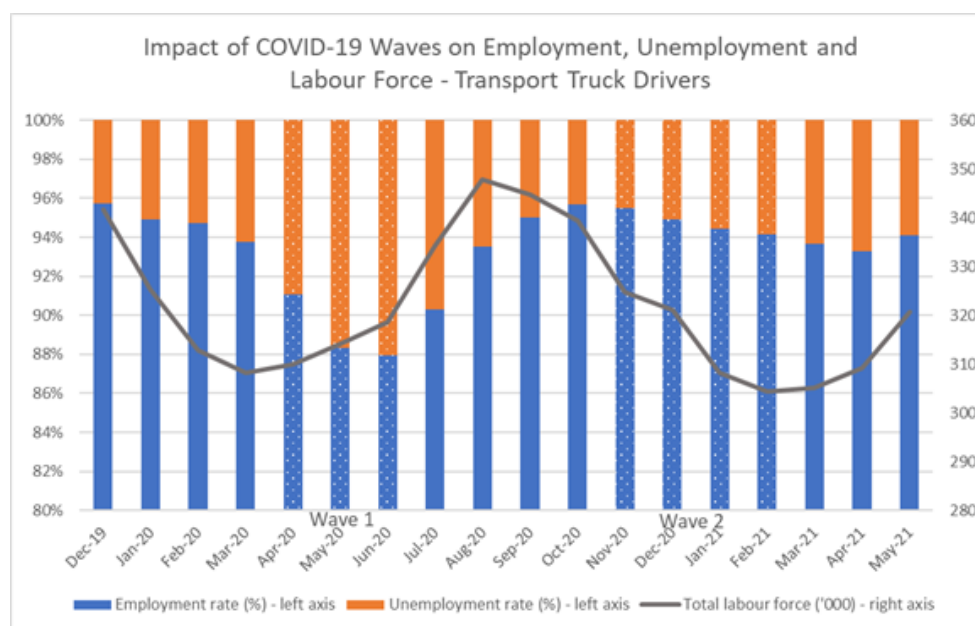
LMI at Trucking HR Canada not only includes publicly available sources, including Statistics Canada's census and other labour force surveys, but also qualitative research and quantitative data directly from employers to fill in the gaps that are lacking.



Researchers around the world will be assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social and economic well-being for years to come. For our part, Trucking HR Canada has been monitoring the performance of the trucking and logistics sector and closely following the effect the pandemic has had on our labour market.

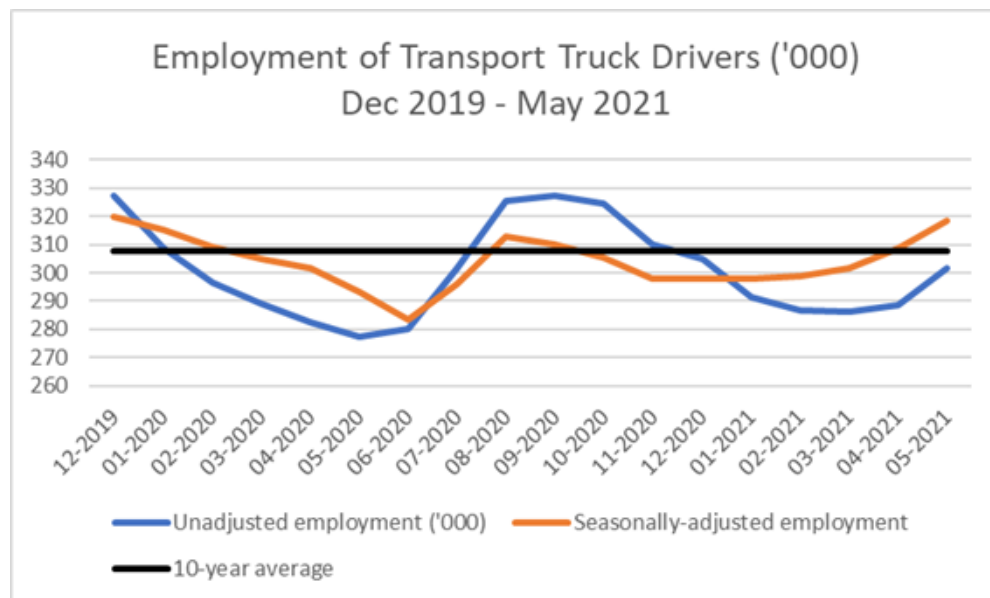
In April and May 2020, following the declaration of the global pandemic by the World Health Organization, the Canadian economy experienced an unprecedented decrease in economic activity, with real GDP declining by almost 18% between February and April with the onset of the first wave. This drop in GDP translated into historically high job losses across all sectors of the economy: 2.9 million people lost their jobs and the country reported record high unemployment levels, with the unemployment rate nearing 14% in May of 2020. As we experienced multiple pandemic waves, unemployment in the Canadian economy remained high, peaking again in January 2021 at close to 10% in response to the second wave.

Among Transport Truck Drivers, employment also declined significantly during the pandemic's first wave, with the occupation shedding just over 28,000 jobs in April of 2020 and unemployment rates soaring to 14.3% in May. However, the occupation recovered quickly as the first wave subsided, adding back over 74,800 employed truck drivers between May and August with the unemployment rate dropping to an average of 4.3% over this period (well below the national average). With the onset of the second wave, truck driver employment began to decline again in November 2020, with the loss of some 25,000 jobs. Interestingly, the second wave was not accompanied by the same spike in unemployment as the first – the unemployment rate averaged 5.5% during the months of November, December and January, only slightly higher than the 5.1% observed during the same period in 2019-20 (pre-COVID).



Source: Trucking HR Canada, Statistics Canada, Labour force survey, custom data request, May 2021

It is important to note, however, that this labour market data is not adjusted to account for the seasonal variations normally observed in the Canadian trucking and logistics sector. Truck driver employment shifts significantly from month to month based on their support of industries whose activity fluctuates from season to season. To better understand the direct impact of the pandemic on employment of drivers, Trucking HR Canada, with support from the Conference Board of Canada, has developed seasonally adjusted employment data for the Truck Driver occupation.



Source: Trucking HR Canada, Conference Board of Canada, Statistics Canada, Labour force survey, custom data request, May 2021

The seasonally adjusted employment data shows that while the first wave had a dampening effect on the employment of truck drivers, more than half of the reduction observed in April and May are attributable to normal seasonal fluctuations. Furthermore, the rapid recovery following the first wave was led by seasonal gains in truck driver employment.

Nearly all the fluctuation in employment during the second wave is attributed to annual seasonal factors. According to data from the May 2021 Labour Force Survey, employment of truck drivers has rebounded to pre-COVID levels with the seasonally adjusted employment of drivers higher than the occupation's 10-year average by about 11,100 jobs. As a result, although the pandemic had an initial impact on employment during the first wave, employment has rebounded and the second and third wave has not resulted in a similar drop in employment.

Finally, based on the most recently available vacancy data, there were some 15,995 vacant truck driver positions in the last quarter of 2020, with a vacancy rate of 5%. In comparison, the vacancy rate across all occupations in Canada was 2.7%. This indicates the occupation has already returned to similar shortages that were experienced before the pandemic.

The data is clear – the pressure and stress on trucking and logistics' companies' recruitment, training, and retention initiatives is not going away anytime soon. And even more importantly – this will put added pressure and stress on Canada's economic recovery.

Trucking and logistics supports key economic sectors from retail/wholesale trade to construction, agriculture, forestry and mining, and more.

One fact remains: the longer it takes to better address driver shortages – the longer it will take for full economic recovery.

Looking for more:

Trucking HR Canada's labour market information initiative has the following reports available:

- 1) [Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on Trucking and Logistics Employment](#)
- 2) [Covid-19 Briefing Employer survey results](#)
- 3) [Covid-19 Impressions of the Trucking and Logistics Industry report](#)
- 4) [Covid-19 and Truck Driver Employment in Canada report](#)
- 5) [Labour Market Snapshot: September 2020](#)
- 6) [Labour Market Snapshot: November 2020](#)

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