



# **Labour Market Snapshot**

**Employment and Unemployment Across the  
Trucking and Logistics Sector  
JANUARY 2022**



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When referring to the information presented in this report, please cite Trucking HR Canada, or use the following reference:

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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.



## LMI snapshot – January 2022

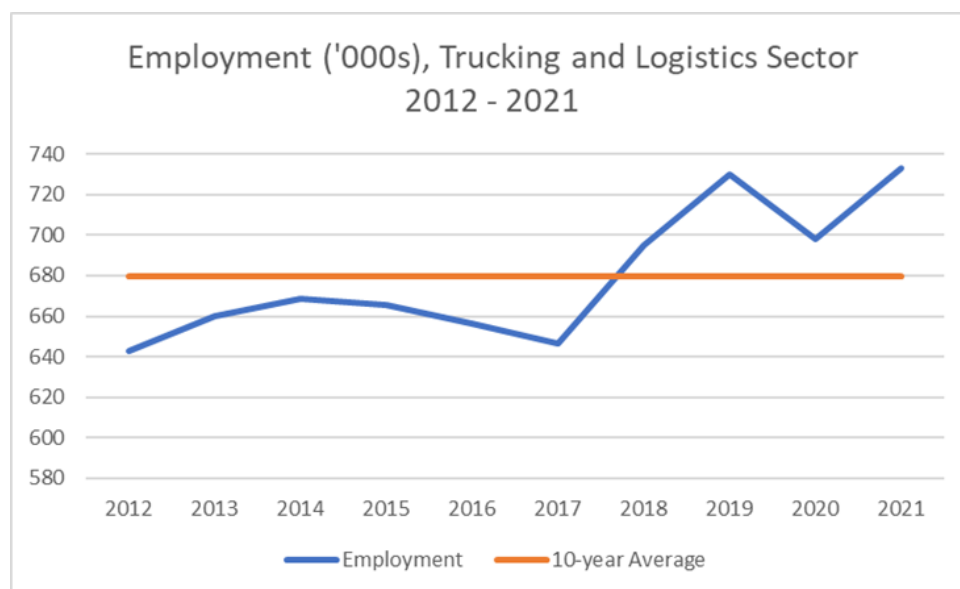
While previous labour market snapshots focused on the impact of the pandemic on transport truck drivers - this snapshot examines trends in employment and unemployment across the entire Trucking and Logistics sector in 2020 and 2021. With transport truck drivers making up 43% of the sector's workforce, there are many other occupations of concern including delivery drivers, dispatchers, shippers and receivers, material handlers, as well as management/supervisors, HR professionals and others. In fact, across all occupations in the Truck Transportation sector,<sup>1</sup> the vacancy rate was 8.0% in the third quarter of 2021, the second highest vacancy rate in the Canadian economy, next to the Accommodation and Food Services sector.

Over the past decade, the workforce in the trucking and logistics sector has grown from 642,700 in 2012 to 732,800 employees in 2021, with exponential growth from 2017 - 2019. Over the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, employment in the sector dipped by 4.4% in 2020, shedding almost 32,000 jobs. However, the sector recovered quickly in the response to the gradual reopening of the economy, and added back 34,700 employees in 2021, returning to employment levels that are well above the sector's 10-year average. Actual employment in the sector exceeded Trucking HR Canada's 2021 forecasted employment by about 3%.

In December 2021, Trucking HR Canada published new LMI research in "The Road to Recovery: Reassessing Canada's Trucking and Logistics Labour Shortage", a report that highlighted the key labour market challenges experienced by Trucking and Logistics in the face of multiple waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our research indicates that employers in the sector were feeling the impact of the pandemic from two angles. First, one half of our employer survey respondents reported that their revenues decreased in 2020 over 2019. On the other hand, more than 40% of those who carry primarily essential goods reported increased revenues. In addition, 67% of employers surveyed stated that they were still unable to find all the drivers they required to address burgeoning demand for truck transportation services as the economy entered a recovery phase. The Road to Recovery research concludes that, although there was a brief easing of the truck driver shortage during the initial onset of the pandemic, the number of vacant driver jobs were expected to surge as the Canadian economy moves into recovery in 2021. An employer's ability to find

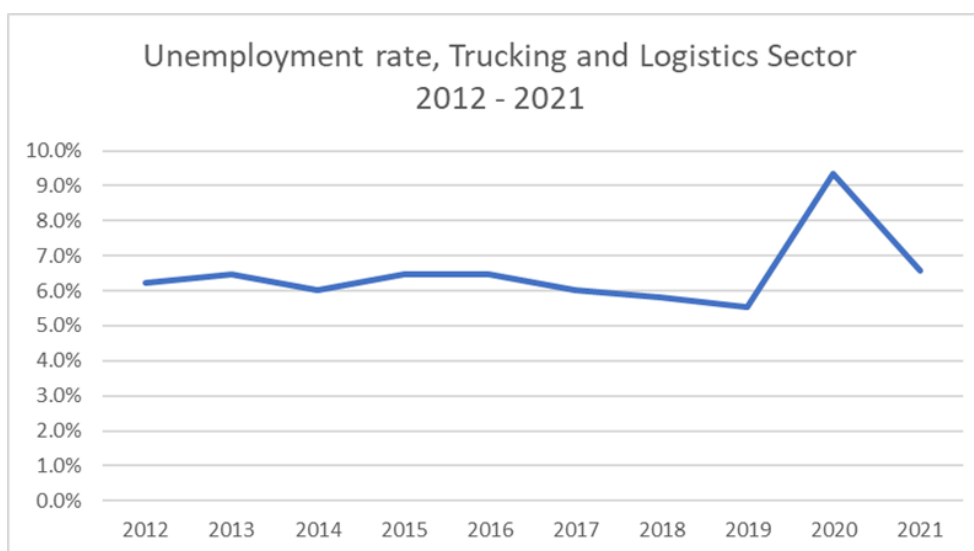
suitable candidates and to train them to fill vacant driver jobs will continue to be constrained, particularly given the high level of turnover due to both retirement and non-retirement reasons.

In early January 2022, Trucking HR Canada published a special report on vacancies based on newly available data from Statistics Canada which confirmed that the number of driver vacancies continued to climb, growing by 20% in Q3 2021 to 22,990 vacant driver positions. Employers are facing increasing challenges in filling these positions, with more than 44% of vacancies remaining unfilled after 90 days. Almost two thirds of truck driver vacancies are being constantly recruited for, which means that recruitment will continue after the current vacancies are filled. This compared to about one half of all vacancies in the Canadian labour market.<sup>2</sup>



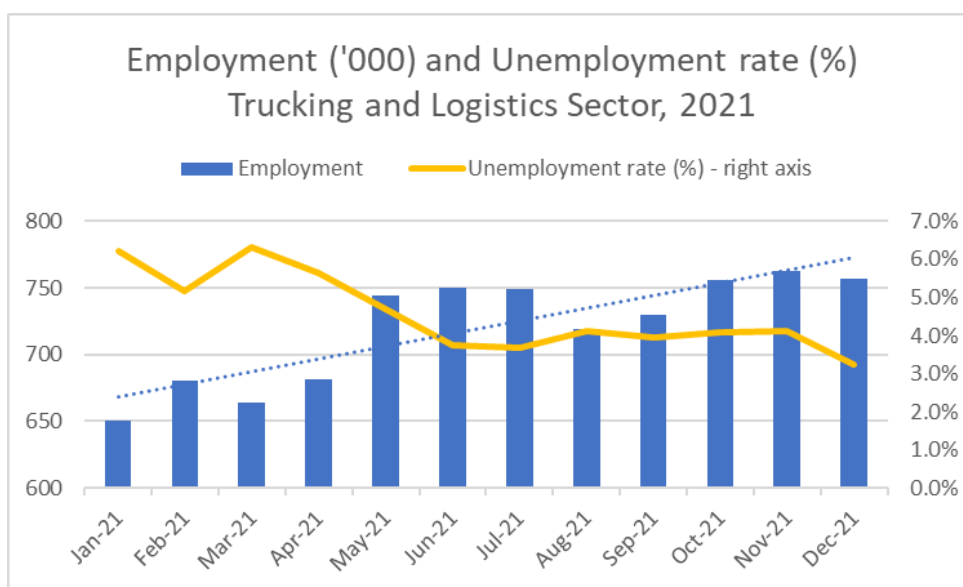
Source: Trucking HR Canada 2022, Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, custom data request

Looking at unemployment in the Trucking and Logistics sector, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the average annual unemployment rate was 6.1%. And, in 2019 stood at 5.5%. With the arrival of the pandemic-induced economic shut-down, unemployment across the Trucking and Logistics industry jumped to historic high levels with the average annual unemployment rate leaping to 9.3% in 2020. In 2021, the unemployment rate returned to near-normal levels, averaging 6.6% for the year. This pattern is repeated across all sectors in the Canadian economy, where the 2021 average unemployment rate stands at 7.5% above its pre-COVID average of 6.7%.



Source: Trucking HR Canada 2022, Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, custom data request

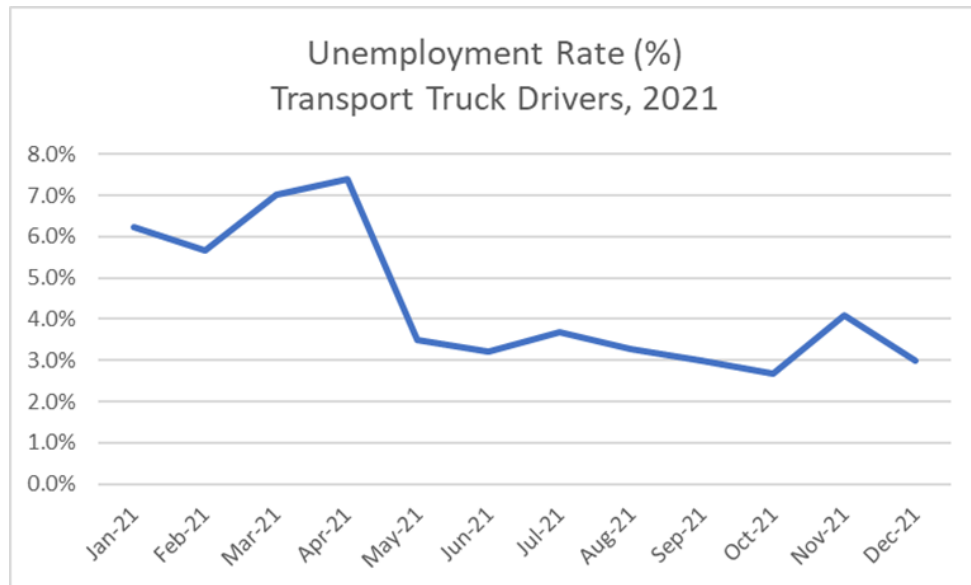
Taking a closer look at the month-over-month changes in the Trucking and Logistics labour market, employment remained relatively stable over the course of 2021, with a slight upward trend. At the same time, the unemployment rate peaked early in the year, to a high of 6.3% in March and dropping to a low of 3.2% in December 2021. Across the economy, the unemployment rate dropped steadily throughout the year from a high of 10% in January 2021 to a low of 5% in December.



Source: Trucking HR Canada 2022, Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, custom data request

For Transport Truck Drivers, the average annual unemployment rate over the past decade has been 5.4%. In 2021, driver unemployment averaged 4.4%, reaching a high of 7.4% in April but subsequently declined sharply, remaining at or below 4% for the remainder of the year. This low rate of

unemployment indicates that employers have come close to exhausting the pool of potential experienced drivers who are actively seeking work and means that they will be increasingly dependent on attracting, training and on-boarding new drivers to replace those who are leaving the occupation through retirement or for other reasons.



Source: Trucking HR Canada 2022, Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, custom data request

The employment and unemployment conditions described in this report, along with the climbing number of vacancies in the sector point to continuing challenges in the labour market for Trucking and Logistics. Trucking HR Canada's special report on vacancies highlighted the surge in vacancy rates and lengthy duration of vacancies, especially for drivers. The vacancy rate for the Truck Transportation sector stands well above those in virtually every other sector of the economy and more than 44% of all driver positions remain vacant for more than 90 days. Given the importance of truck transportation to supporting recovery and growth across the Canadian economy the call to action on supporting recruitment, training and retention of our sector's workforce remains.

Trucking HR Canada continues to seek innovative and collaborative approaches to address these challenges. We are committed to helping support a healthier supply chain and providing key programming to alleviate the Trucking and Logistics sector's labour market challenges on the road to recovery.

## Looking for more?

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

- 1) [Special Report: Vacancies in Trucking and Logistics January 2022](#)
- 2) [The Road to Recovery: Reassessing Canada's Trucking and Logistics Labour Shortages](#)
- 2) [Labour Market Snapshot October 2021](#)
- 3) [Labour Market Snapshot June 2021](#)
- 4) [Labour Market Snapshot November 2020](#)
- 5) [Labour Market Snapshot September 2020](#)

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