See Carrier Tools →

Third-Party Driver Recruiting Terms

A reference for motor carriers working with an outside recruiter or comparing recruiting proposals.

The arrangement

Third-party recruiter	An outside firm that finds and screens drivers for a carrier. The carrier remains the employer.
Direct hire	The driver is hired onto the carrier's own payroll from the first day.
Staffing (driver leasing)	The staffing firm employs the driver and leases him to the carrier, short or long term.
Placement fee	What the carrier pays the recruiter for each driver hired, if the agreement charges per hire.
Retainer or monthly fee	A fixed recruiting fee for a period, where the agreement includes one.
Replacement period	Where the agreement provides one, the time after a hire during which the recruiter replaces a driver who leaves, at no charge.
Interview capacity	The number of drivers the carrier can interview and onboard in a week.

The hiring steps

Lead	A driver who has shown interest in a job, by a click, a call or a short form.
Applicant	A driver who has submitted an application.
Pre-qualification	Checking an applicant against the job's requirements before any offer. It does not establish that the driver is qualified under FMCSA rules; that is the carrier's determination.
Recruiter interview	The recruiter's own conversation with the driver about the job, his history and his fit.
Carrier interview	The carrier's interview of a driver the recruiter has presented.

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Conditional offer (pre-hire letter)	The carrier’s offer of employment, conditional on the drug test, the DOT physical and background checks. Only the carrier makes it.
Orientation	The carrier’s onboarding before the driver’s first dispatch.
First dispatch	The driver’s first trip. Under FMCSA rules it waits for a negative pre-employment drug test.

The driver file and checks

Driver qualification (DQ) file	The records a carrier must keep for each driver (49 CFR 391.51).
Application for employment	The application FMCSA requires (49 CFR 391.21): three years of addresses, employers, accidents and violations, plus, for CDL positions, the employers for whom the driver operated a commercial vehicle in the seven years before that.
Safety performance history	The carrier’s investigation of the driver’s past three years with DOT-regulated employers, with replies or good-faith efforts placed in the file within 30 days of hire (49 CFR 391.23). A recruiter can prepare the requests; the carrier is responsible for making and recording them.
MVR	The driver’s motor vehicle record from each state where he held a license in the past three years, which the carrier requests within 30 days of hire (49 CFR 391.23).
PSP report	FMCSA’s Pre-Employment Screening Program report of the driver’s crash and inspection history.
Clearinghouse query	The check of FMCSA’s Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. A full query is required before hire.
Pre-employment drug test	Required before the driver performs safety-sensitive work (49 CFR 382.301).
Road test	The carrier’s driving test (49 CFR 391.31), or a CDL accepted in its place (391.33).
Medical examiner’s certificate	The driver’s DOT medical card.

Measures

Time to hire	Days from application to hire.

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Cost per hire	All recruiting costs for a period divided by hires in that period.
Lead-to-hire ratio	Leads needed for each hire.
Source of hire	The channel each hired driver came from.
Early retention	The share of new hires still employed at 30, 60 and 90 days.
Applicant tracking system (ATS)	Software that holds each applicant’s record, stage, documents and history.

ProHRHQ recruiting

ProHRHQ recruits drivers for individual openings and ongoing hiring. Our recruiters screen and interview applicants and organize their files before presenting them to the carrier. Ask for a recruiting proposal →

Sources

49 CFR 382.301, 391.21, 391.23, 391.31, 391.33 and 391.51, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-49/subtitle-B/chapter-III/subchapter-B/part-391

These definitions are general. Fees, replacement terms and responsibilities in any recruiting relationship are set by the agreement.

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