

# THE GREEN LIGHT

The official newsletter of ATA Comp Fund



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## NEW YEAR, SAFE START

The beginning of a new year gives us a chance to start fresh with our safety initiatives. Take some time to refresh your team on general safety, hazard awareness, and safety goals for the coming year. Implement training tools such as the ATA Comp Fund Monthly Safety Training Calendar and take advantage of the resources our team has put together to take the headache out of planning company trainings.

# THE REAL RETENTION STRATEGY? A CULTURE DRIVERS CAN TRUST

**Abby Greer** February 10, 2026

*Drivers stay where they feel valued, respected, and protected. That's why a behavior-based safety culture does more than prevent incidents... it creates an environment where people feel seen and supported every day. When safety becomes part of the company's identity, not just a compliance requirement, it builds the kind of trust and connection that keeps drivers (and employees) committed for the long haul.*

Driver retention remains one of the trucking industry's toughest challenges. As highlighted in a recent [article](#), fleets are hiring more drivers each year, but most of those hires are simply replacing those who leave; true workforce growth isn't happening. Even during an ongoing freight recession, carriers continue to struggle with keeping drivers on board.

But retention doesn't depend solely on huge pay raises or budget-heavy initiatives. It depends on culture, especially one centered on communication, recognition, and driver experience. Companies who focus on a driver-centric culture see stronger morale, more stability, and better retention.



## WHERE SAFETY CULTURE & RETENTION INTERSECT

The ATA Comp Fund program has long emphasized a behavior-based safety culture by building an environment where safety is practiced, talked about, and modeled daily. Companies that elevate communication and recognition as core values see lower turnover and stronger commitment from drivers. This kind of culture naturally strengthens retention in several ways:

- **ENGAGEMENT:** When drivers have a voice in safety discussions, they stay more connected to their work.
- **TRUST:** Clear communication and consistent follow-through show drivers they're valued, not just for productivity, but for their well-being.
- **CONSISTENCY:** When every level of leadership prioritizes safety, employees feel supported throughout the organization.

# THE REAL RETENTION STRATEGY? A CULTURE DRIVERS CAN TRUST

CONTINUED

## LEADERSHIP BUY-IN DRIVES EVERYTHING.

Just as safety culture requires visible leadership commitment, effective retention strategies do too. One of the challenges is that leadership often sees retention programs as costly or unnecessary, mainly because turnover costs have been internalized as “normal.”

But the companies that outperform others are those that:

- Treat drivers as central to operations
- Build culture intentionally, not reactively
- Maintain consistent messaging from executives to frontline supervisors

This mirrors our Risk Management program’s long-standing philosophy: when leadership models the behavior and values they expect, employees feel it... and they stay.

## SAFETY AS A RETENTION STRATEGY

Hiring drivers isn’t the challenge... keeping them is. The path to retention is the same path that leads to safety excellence. When drivers see that the company invests in their well-being, listens to their concerns, and values their contributions, they stay longer, perform better, and build stronger careers.

Drivers want more than compliance checklists; they want a workplace where their safety, time, and contributions matter. Shaver’s article makes clear that a driver-first environment improves retention by making every driver (and employee) feel recognized and supported.

That is exactly what a behavior-based safety culture does. It transforms safety from a requirement into a shared identity. A strong safety culture extends beyond just drivers and leadership – it applies to every employee within the organization. And when employees feel connected to a company’s identity, they are far more likely to remain part of it.



[Click here to discover our Risk Management team’s Resources, including tools to help your company build a safety culture worth staying for.](#)

# NEED SAFETY TRAINING IDEAS?

**Abby Greer** February 10, 2026

Coming up with fresh, new content for monthly safety trainings can be tough. Our Risk Managers have been working hard to provide an easy tool that can assist in safety training for our members... and helps to alleviate some of the stress that comes with scheduling these very important meetings. The MONTHLY SAFETY TRAINING CALENDAR provides topics for each month and includes a one-page handout, relevant videos from our archives, and a quick game to reinforce the message and be used for prizes!

## JANUARY

**New Year, Safe Start.** Let's take a moment to refresh our team on general safety, hazard awareness, and safety goals.



## FEBRUARY

**Impaired Driving** is still a major concern. There are plenty of hazards on the road while *not* driving impaired. Just don't do it.



## MARCH

**Slips, Trips, and Falls** remain one of the most frequent causes for workplace injuries. Step up the concept of situational awareness.



## APRIL

**Distracted driving** is 100% preventable. Don't let any call, text, email, or other distraction put you and others at risk.



This resource is available exclusively to members of the ATA Comp Fund program and is also available in our [Online Portal](#) under the Resources tab. Contact your Risk Manager today to learn more about how you can incorporate this useful tool in your safety trainings!



# SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

**Abby Greer** February 9, 2026

*The "Safety Spotlight" feature of The Green Light shines the spotlight on safety professionals to gain insight into their background, and their thoughts and ideas on safety in our industry.*

Meet Cody McClain, Chief Safety & Human Resources Officer for Tucker Freight in Dubuque, Iowa. Cody started his career at Tucker in 2018 in Operations, but realized quickly that driver safety and education was his passion...

## **How did you get started in Safety?**

I worked as an Elementary Special Education teacher for 5 years before joining Tucker Freight Lines in July of 2018. I grew up with family in and around trucking, so I felt more of a pull to the industry once my sister and brother-in-law started Tucker in 2018. I joined the Operations department dispatching Open Deck and planning. After about a year of seeing steady organizational growth, we needed more focus on safety.



I learned so much in Operations, but Safety and educating drivers fit my background, skillset, and my personality. So, I approached the owners of the company, Sauny and AJ Tucker and told them I thought I could help the company by taking on the Safety department and focusing there. They trusted me and my ideas that were different than other Safety departments I had researched at that time.

## **What advice do you wish you had received early in your career that you would pass on to someone just getting started in Safety?**

Ask as many questions for clarification and understanding as you can from the drivers. I grew up with my grandfather, father, and brother-in-law as truck drivers, so I knew enough, but I needed to learn so much on how to best coach all our drivers. Along with that, I would tell a new safety professional not to try to fix every problem on day one. Develop a plan and process that works for you and your organization!

## **What would be your "safety quote or message" you would like to share?**

*Control the control-ables.* We cannot control the weather, other people's actions, shippers/customers, etc... But we can always control our own actions, behaviors, and (especially) our attitudes.

# SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

CONTINUED

## **What do you view as the main duties of a Safety Director?**

Creating and upholding a culture of safety across all parts of the organization and in the community. Everything from writing new policies to educating the most recently-hired person. To accomplish a culture of safety, you must be able to see the big picture and how it relates to the entire organization. You need to try to understand the problem from others' perspectives. This helps you to get buy in from everyone when you listen to their pain points and work with them towards the safest solution.

## **What has been the most challenging task in your career as a Safety Director?**

Since I started, we have grown as an organization. We have grown from around 35 total people to around 500 people today. We have added different positions and safety sensitive roles, so the complexity of how we operate has changed across the country. During that growth we have stayed true to our core values and pushed it to every corner of the organization. This can be challenging, without continuous and repeated focus on being proactive and preventive. It has been challenging but also something we have been very successful with.

## **Why is safety important to you and how do you (or would you) improve your company's safety culture?**

Safety is important to me because of my father. I saw him work so hard to provide for my family in a dangerous job. He hauled HazMat for many years and had some close calls. It can be scary for drivers and their families because they live and operate in such a dangerous profession every day. I want to make sure to provide the resources and strategies for every one of our drivers to complete each trip the way they started it.

We improve our Safety culture by having a Growth Mindset. Every day, everyone can get better and improve. This starts in orientation and exists through our most tenured employees. Reflect, learn, and grow everyday through wins and losses.

## **If you could give any message to the general public about the trucking industry, what would it be?**

*Put your phones down while you drive.* Our drivers give this feedback constantly. Also, if possible, go for a ride along with a truck driver. See the road from their perspective and it will surely help you drive in a different way!

## CLAIMS CORNER - ASK THE DIRECTOR

**Abby Greer, Suzy Baker & David Balades** February 10, 2026

*In this feature, we will highlight some of our most Frequently Asked Questions regarding the claim process. These will be answered by none other than ATA Comp Fund Director of Claims, Suzy Baker (with some help from her Claims, Risk Management, and Underwriting friends)! If you have any questions, please submit them via email [HERE](#).*

### THE KEY TO BETTER RETURN-TO-WORK OUTCOMES? HUMAN CONNECTION.

To keep with our retention theme, employers are learning that one of the most powerful retention and return-to-work tools isn't administrative at all... it's human connection, especially after an injury. Maintaining open, consistent communication with injured workers significantly increases retention, boosts loyalty, and fosters trust while reducing the likelihood of litigation. Proactive, empathetic engagement during the recovery process keeps employees connected to their team, reduces anxiety, and ensures they feel valued, which increases the probability of a successful return to work.

A recent [Business Insurance panel](#) highlighted how simple gestures, like sending get-well cards to injured employees, reduced legal costs by 16% for one large school district. Injured workers often face stress, anxiety, feeling isolated, confusion, and personal hardships that complicate recovery and delay return-to-work. In several instances, we have had injured workers' repeatedly miss medical appointments, not from noncompliance, but because they didn't have a car or it was broken down.

Addressing emotional and practical barriers by listening, asking genuine questions, and communicating clearly helps keep workers engaged in their recovery. Best practices for maintaining communication include starting immediately, using multiple platforms (phone call, emails, cards, and even personal visits), focus on well-being to cover physical and emotional recovery, and set a regular/predictable schedule for check-ins. When injured employees feel heard and supported, they're more likely to participate in treatment, return-to-work sooner, and experience better long-term outcomes related to their injury as well as their employment.



Contact our Claim Management team to learn more about our Claim Management and promoting effective (and empathetic) communication with injured workers.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING



## ATA'S SMMC FLEET SAFETY AWARDS BANQUET

The Alabama Trucking Association Safety and Maintenance Management Council (SSMC) is proud to host the Annual Fleet Safety Awards banquet. This SMMC-sponsored event demonstrates the extreme importance the trucking industry places on highway safety.

Categories are segregated by operation type and number of miles traveled. In addition, several individuals will be singled out for career safety excellence, including Driver of the Year, Maintenance Professional of the Year, Safety Professional of the Year, and Fleet Manager of the Year. Likewise, the ATA Comp Fund will recognize its top performing members for loss control and safety performance. For more information, contact Brandie Norcross at (334) 834-3983 or email at [bnorcross@alabamatrucking.org](mailto:bnorcross@alabamatrucking.org).

## ALABAMA TRUCKING 2026 CONVENTION

Join the Alabama Trucking Association April 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> for their 87<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention at the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama. Registration is open and filling up fast. Don't miss out on this educational and entertaining event. [REGISTER NOW](#).



## OSHA FORM 300 POSTING AND FILINGS HAVE BEGUN!

OSHA is reminding employers they are required to post a summary of the injuries and illnesses recorded the previous year from February 1 through April 30<sup>th</sup>. Failure to post this summary can result in fines. Filing of Form 300A is due by March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Companies with 20 or more employees that are classified within specific industries are required to submit their data electronically for the previous year. For more information on posting requirements and changes to this year's filings, visit the [OSHA Injury Tracking Application](#) page. If you have any questions, please contact your Risk Manager.





# PROGRAM NEWS

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

The ATA Comp Fund program is proud to welcome the following new members:

- **All Makes Trucking Repair** *Montgomery, Alabama*
- **H & M Trucking Co** *Daphne, Alabama*
- **American Towing LLC** *Montgomery, Alabama*
- **West Lawrence Logistics Inc** *Town Creek, Alabama*
- **Concrete Supply Co LLC** *Pell City, Alabama*
- **Meteor Express** *Scottsboro, Alabama*



## 2025 0% LOSS RATIO CERTIFICATES ARE COMING!

Each year, our team awards certificates to our Members who achieve a 0% loss ratio for the prior year. Safety is always a big deal, so achieving a 0% loss ratio deserves some recognition. We are hard at work prepping and sorting the 2025 0% Loss Ratio certificates. We have over 61% of all eligible ATA Comp Fund Members receiving certificates this year. Be on the lookout for your Risk Manager in the coming weeks to deliver yours... and don't forget to let them snap a photo for social media bragging rights!

## FAMILIAR FACES, NEW ROLES

The Alliance Interstate Risk Service & ATA Comp Fund are pleased to announce the following internal promotions:

### **Barbara Evans: Audit & Compliance Manager**

Barbara will lead our newly-established Audit & Compliance department, focusing on process oversight, software optimization, and supporting a smooth audit season for members, insureds, and staff.

### **Katie Coaker: Underwriting Manager**

Katie has been instrumental in keeping the underwriting department running effectively through a year of considerable growth and enhancements. Her deep operational knowledge and strong leadership make her well suited for this new role.

### **Rachel Bigley: Underwriting Supervisor**

Rachel has been an integral part of our underwriting growth, agent relationships, and process development. She will now utilize her significant amount of knowledge and experience to oversee and develop our underwriting support team.

### **Joan Bean: Underwriter**

Joan has excelled as an Account Manager and will now advance to the next phase of her career in our underwriting department. In her new role, she will assume the management of an existing book of business, underwrite new business submissions, and support training within the department.

