

NEWS & INSIGHTS

How Trucking Incentives Undermine Safety

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Perverse incentives across departments are pushing trucking companies toward higher risk — and bigger liability exposure.

Each department operates with conflicting goals that prioritize revenue over risk management, creating systematic safety vulnerabilities.

The Problem, by Department

Sales teams chase loads regardless of destination risk — disregarding high-verdict jurisdictions and locations insurers won't cover.

Recruiting fills seats with questionable drivers — overlooking accident histories and violations to meet capacity demands.

Operations prioritizes delivery over safety — pushing drivers through dangerous roads, adverse weather, and risky hours without considering the impacts of detention time.

Maintenance keeps trucks rolling with broken safety equipment — allowing vehicles to operate even when cameras and telematics systems aren't operating.

The Solution: De-risk Every Function

Sales must implement risk-based pricing and exclude high-verdict corridors where insurance coverage is unavailable or prohibitively expensive.

Recruiting needs defensible driver standards — accepting only candidates with good records or documented training to remediate deficiencies.

Operations should leverage data to avoid high-risk roads, dangerous driving times, and severe weather — not just driver convenience.

Maintenance must ensure all safety systems are functional before dispatch — even if the truck can technically operate without them.

The Bottom Line

Misaligned incentives create liability time bombs. Trucking companies that fail to restructure departmental goals around risk management will pay the price in catastrophic verdicts.

For more on this topic, check out the condensed [version of my presentation, "Safety Profit."](#) If you have questions about prioritizing safety over immediate profit, [please contact me](#) at any time.

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