

BEFORE ACCEPTING A JOB, ASK A CARRIER THESE QUESTIONS

Before you decide to sign on with any carrier, there are a few questions that you need to ask before accepting the job. Asking questions helps to establish clear terms with a carrier and also helps you decide whether they are the right fit. This Q&A will help you decide if they are the right carrier for you.

ASK THESE QUESTIONS:



What are your strongest lanes/routes?

It is important to know where the freight is and where it goes. Additionally, will you be on these routes, or do you have to “earn” these jobs?

What is your owner-operator turnover rate?

A high turnover for larger carriers on their owner-operator rate is normal, but anything near 100% indicates you should be aware of issues with the carrier.

Do you pay lumper fees?

Find out what lumper fees are covered and your obligations in loading and unloading, as some carriers may provide a set amount to pay lumpers, and others will not.

What fees must I pay?

Ask this question about base plates, insurance, equipment, deadhead pay, and drug test fees. There's nothing worse than getting hit with fees you weren't prepared for.

Will there be multiple-stop loads?

If the answer is yes to this question, ask if you will be paid for each stop or a flat fee.

Do you have dedicated runs?

Companies with dedicated freight runs offer more predictable scheduling, but they may require you to qualify for these runs based on where you live or other determining factors. It's best to ask this question and find out more.

Do you have an owner-operator advisory board?

Carriers with owner-operator advisory boards demonstrate that they are interested in relations with owner-operators and will probably be a good working fit for you.

ASK THESE QUESTIONS, CONT.:

Do you have a purchase program for tires, parts, and other items?

You can save money with discounts offered by fleets, like at truck shop chains. Knowing these discounts before accepting the job is important as it can help you establish a business plan.

What is your policy on cash advances, money services, and fuel cards?

While it's not a great practice to ask for advances, it is good to know your carrier's policy on this before accepting a job with them. In addition, ask about the arrangements regarding money services like Comcheck and fuel cards.

How do your escrow accounts work?

The lease should clearly define what the carrier can take from your escrow and why. If you decide to leave that carrier, you will need to know what happens to those escrow funds.

What is your policy on major breakdowns?

Find out if your carrier will back you in an emergency and ask about the terms of repayment.

What are your rider and pet policies?

If you like to drive with a companion on occasions, such as your spouse, child, or pet, this is an important question.

Is there a sign-on bonus and when would I receive it?

Depending on the carrier, you can be paid your sign-on bonus when you deliver your first load. Other carriers will pay after 90 days on the job, and some may pay six months later. It's important to know this upfront.



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