

NEWSBREAK

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Minnesota Professional Towing Association



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Towing and Recovery Industry Strengthens Support for Survivor Fund at Annual Wall of the Fallen Name Unveiling Ceremony



Chattanooga, TN – On November 25th, the towing and recovery industry came together in a show of solidarity and compassion at the Wall of the Fallen Name Unveiling Ceremony, held Saturday, October 11, 2025, at the Wall of the Fallen Memorial in Chattanooga, Tennessee. During the ceremony, three major industry leaders—AAA, GEICO, and Jerr Dan—presented significant contributions to the Survivor Fund, underscoring the ongoing commitment to providing immediate financial support to the families of towing operators who tragically lose their lives in the line of duty.

As part of this year's annual event, the contributions made by these respected companies were presented to the Survivor Fund, a crucial initiative dedicated to offering financial relief and assistance to the loved ones of towing professionals who face the heartbreaking loss of their family member. The Survivor Fund is designed to help alleviate the financial burden placed on families during an incredibly difficult time, covering funeral costs, medical expenses, and other urgent financial needs that can arise after such an untimely loss.

“The Wall of the Fallen ceremony is a poignant reminder of the risks that towing operators face every day in order to keep our roads safe,” said Jeffrey Godwin, Co-Chairman of the Survivor Fund Committee and vice president of the International Towing Museum board.

“We are incredibly grateful to our partners at AAA, GEICO, and Jerr Dan for their generous contributions to the Survivor Fund. Their ongoing support plays a vital role in ensuring that the families of fallen heroes are not left to face these challenges alone.”

(continued on page 4)

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If you would like to make a contribution to help with the legislative efforts, please send your donations to:

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Message From Executive Director, Lance Klatt

Wishing everyone wonderful Holiday Season!

Wishing to take time and thank members of the MPTA for another great year and your support! I always say, our industry would be more difficult without great members like you and hope you feel the same about the MPTA. Another great year with our training classes, MPTA's Annual Meeting and Hall of Fame inductions.

We wished for a snow-filled winter, and our wishes came true considering the past two years have been very interesting to say the least. Will not be long and the spring will be here and so will MPTA events. As discussed last year, MPTA is planning on hosting its annual picnic at a local indoor go-kart track. Originally planned for December, however, we know how unpredictable December can be. So, April will be the month for MPTA "Smash for Cash" go-kart picnic. (More information forthcoming)

MPTA board of directors are currently planning Western National's training sessions and be on the lookout for those dates and events. The Legislative session begins mid-February as this may be the year we strengthen our slow down-move over legislation and secure dealer's licenses for those smaller towing members.

Of course, we must not forget about the implementation of the Family Medical Paid Leave program beginning this past January 1st. MPTA sent out new/updated labor posters and communications ensuring all employees are aware of their labor rights and programs.

Please be safe out there! I have seen many postings of drivers not slowing down or moving over creating an unforgettable adventure on our roadways for our towing community.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year and excited for what 2026 will bring!

Lance Klatt
Executive Director
Minnesota Professional Towing Assoc.



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Through the growing contributions from industry leaders like AAA, GEICO, and Jerr Dan, the Survivor Fund continues to expand its reach and increase the support it offers to families. The industry's response to the Fund has been overwhelming, with many companies stepping forward to contribute year after year. The program's success is a testament to the towing and recovery community's deep sense of camaraderie and commitment to supporting the industry.

About the Survivor Fund:

The Survivor Fund, managed by the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum in Chattanooga, TN, was established in 2006 to provide financial assistance to families who have lost a loved one while working in the towing and recovery industry. Since its inception, the Fund has helped hundreds of families through these tragic losses.

Brokers can be held liable in trucking accidents if they fail to properly vet carriers or if their negligence contributes to the accident.

MPTA members and the towing industry in some circumstances find difficulty in recovering the cost of recovery, clean up and tow. If struggling with insurance companies, a towing operator may be able to try and collect from a broker.

Understanding Broker Liability

Brokers act as intermediaries between shippers and trucking companies, coordinating the transportation of goods. While they do not operate the trucks themselves, they have a responsibility to ensure that the carriers they hire are safe and qualified. If a broker fails in this duty, they may share liability in the event of an accident.

Key Factors in Broker Liability

Negligent Selection: Brokers can be held liable if they hire a trucking company with a known history of safety violations or inadequate insurance. Courts often examine whether brokers exercised reasonable care in selecting carriers.

Contractual Obligations: If a broker has contractual terms that relate to safety and fails to adhere to them, they may face liability if an accident occurs as a result.

Monitoring and Oversight: Brokers are expected to monitor the safety records of the carriers they hire. If they neglect to do so and an accident occurs, this can be grounds for liability.

Legal Theories: Legal claims against brokers often involve theories of negligent hiring or negligent selection, focusing on the broker's own carelessness rather than vicarious liability for the actions of the driver.



Recent Developments

Recent case law has highlighted the increasing scrutiny on brokers regarding their liability in trucking accidents. For instance, a case in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has raised questions about whether brokers can be shielded from liability under federal law when they fail to ensure the safety of the carriers they hire.

Conclusion

In summary, brokers can be held liable for trucking accidents if they do not fulfill their responsibilities in selecting and monitoring carriers. Victims of trucking accidents may have grounds to pursue claims against brokers, especially if it can be shown that the broker acted negligently in their hiring practices. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for anyone involved in a trucking accident case.

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DVS SPECIAL UPDATE- IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

New regulations for issuing non-domiciled CDLs and CLPs

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced new regulations for issuing non-domiciled commercial driver's licenses (CDL) and commercial learner's permits (CLP) that started Sept. 29.

Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS) is evaluating how these regulations will impact CDL and CLP drivers and applicants, including the documentation we can accept. Due to these regulations, we are not currently allowed to accept new non-domiciled CDL and CLP applications. This includes renewals, duplicates, address changes, upgrades and transfers

MNDRIVE update

We updated MNDRIVE to stop non-domiciled CDL and CLP applications depending on the supporting documentation provided.

If a supporting document is not accepted, you will get the following error: The selected document is not currently accepted for CDL or CLP issuance due to new USDOT regulations.

Applicant questions

We recognize some people may become upset or frustrated by the new regulations. We've included some talking points to help with those conversations.

If you are getting other questions frequently, please let your regional supervisor know so we can provide guidance on how to respond.

When will I know which documents I need to apply for a non-domiciled CDL or CLP?

Driver and Vehicle Services is reviewing the new regulations as quickly as possible. They will be providing information, including which documents we can accept, to ensure compliance with federal and state law. Keep checking dps.mn.gov/CDL for updated information.

I'm a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Can you accept my application?

We can accept CDL and CLP applications if you use one of the following as supporting documentation: U.S. passport, birth certificate, certificate of birth abroad, certificate of citizenship, certificate of naturalization or permanent resident card.

Driver and Vehicle Services will be providing additional information, including which documents we can accept, to ensure compliance with federal and state law. Keep checking dps.mn.gov/CDL for updated information.

I am authorized to work in the U.S. Can you accept my application?

Due to the new regulations, we are not currently accepting non-domiciled CDL and CLP applications.

If you need to update your address or make other changes, you will be required to change (downgrade) your CDL to a regular (class D) license.

Please know we are reviewing the new regulations as quickly as possible and will provide additional information, including the documentation we can accept, as it becomes available. Keep checking dps.mn.gov/CDL for updated information.

Can I update my non-domiciled CDL or CLP?

Due to the new regulations, we are not currently accepting new non-domiciled CDL and CLP applications. This includes renewals, duplicates, address changes, upgrades and transfers.

Questions?

More information, including what documentation we can accept for non-domiciled CDL and CLP applications, will be shared as it becomes available. Visit dps.mn.gov/CDL for the latest information.





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TRAAC's Legislative Action Workshop & Hill Day 2026

Registration is now open for TRAAC's 8th annual Legislative Action Workshop & Hill Day! Next year's event will take place on **Tuesday, February 24 to Wednesday, February 25, 2026**.

This premium event is the Towing and Recovery Industry's only National "Hill Day". Each year we focus on particular topics that align with TRAAC's legislative priorities to improve the Towing Industry. We work collaboratively during constituent and group meetings with Members of Congress, regulators, and staffers to secure essential support for legislation and regulations that impact the towing and recovery industry.

This is your opportunity to make real, substantial change for the whole towing community and have fun with industry friends while doing it.

Early Bird Pricing*

TRAAC Member: **\$699** (\$200 Member Discount)

Non-Member: **\$899**

The event will again be held at the Royal Sonesta Washington DC, Capitol Hill! Steps from the U.S. Capitol Building, Senate office buildings, Union Station, National Mall, and local restaurants

The discounted room rate is **\$379/night** plus applicable taxes (the nightly amenity fee is also waived). We only have a limited number of discounted rooms, secure your room via the reservation form now.

(Registration Form is on next page)

Tentative Event Schedule

Tuesday - February 24, 2026

- Registration & Breakfast
- Legislative Workshops on Policy Priorities and Hill Day Meeting Prep Session
- Panel of Capital Hill Staff to discuss Transportation Priorities
- Lunch
- Panel of USDOT Officials
- State Association Sharing
- National Hill Monuments Night Bus Tour

Wednesday "Hill Day"

- Constituent Meetings with Members of Congress (meetings facilitated by TRAAC's federal lobbying team)
- Members of Congress Meet & Greet on Capital Hill
- TRAAC Dinner - Hill Meeting Report Out



2026 Legislative Action Workshop & Hill Day

February 24-25, 2026

Event Registration and Hotel Deposit Form

Please complete and return the form via fax (888) 392-9300 to the TRAA Office for processing. A confirmation email will be sent to the email address(es) listed below. The deadline for registrations is 1/31/2026 and hotel reservations is 1/15/2026.

TRAAC's Legislative Action Workshop Event Registration

The event registration includes all 2-days of meetings facilitated by Tremont Strategies Group, events and group meals as indicated in the event schedule*. Registration fees are non-refundable. Visit <https://traaonline.com/hillday> for more details.

Company Name: _____

Early Bird Discount (register by December 31, 2025)

TRAAC Member Pricing (subject to verification) _____ # of attendees x \$699.00

Non-Member Pricing _____ # of attendees x \$899.00

Standard Registration (January 1-January 31, 2026)

TRAAC Member Pricing (subject to verification) _____ # of attendees x \$799.00

Non-Member Pricing _____ # of attendees x \$999.00

Please list attendee(s) information below:

Name: _____ Email: _____ Cell #: (____) ____ - ____

Name: _____ Email: _____ Cell #: (____) ____ - ____

*Required to schedule meetings - Home Zip Code: _____ Office Zip Code: _____ (if different)

*Preferred Constituent Meeting Format: _____ In-Person _____ Virtual/Zoom (best for those w/mobility concerns)

*Distribution of attendee contact information to event participants: Please check to Opt Out

Royal Sonesta Washington DC, Capitol Hill Hotel Reservation (deadline 1/15/2026)

The room rate is \$379/night plus applicable taxes for a King or Queen/Queen room. **Savings of 30% off of rack rate and no nightly amenity fee.** Credit card information will be submitted to the Royal Sonesta Washington DC, Capitol Hill Hotel for processing the required room deposit. Hotel booking is being made on your behalf, hotel reservation subject to Royal Sonesta's own terms, policies, and conditions. Please note that you will be billed by TRAA for the cost of any cancellation or modification to your hotel reservation made any time after January 15, 2026. By submitting this registration, you accept this term and condition.

Name on reservation: _____ # of Rooms: _____ # Guests per room: _____

Check In: _____ Check Out: _____

Hotel Opt Out: I am not staying at the host hotel. If looking for other hotel options, please email: contact@traaonline.com.

Event schedule: From Tuesday at 8:30AM (2/24/2026) to Wednesday at 9:00PM (2/25/2026)

**Limited room block available to check in on Mon (2/23/2026).

Credit Card Authorization

The credit card listed below may be billed for the authorized charges.

Cardholder's Name (as it appears on the card): _____

Credit Card Billing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Fax: _____

Email Address: _____

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Authorizing Signature: _____

Please fax the completed form to (888) 392-9300. By submitting this form, I confirm that I have read the details and authorize the Towing and Recovery Association of America, Inc. to charge my credit card as noted for event registration and room deposit.

- Event schedule subject to change
- Disclaimer: Any constituent meeting handouts or distributed materials must have pre-approval
- TRAA Member Pricing subject to verification
- Limited number of rooms available in each room block category.

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Minnesota Risks Millions Over CDL Audit

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) is warning that Minnesota could forfeit more than \$30 million in federal highway funding after a federal audit found widespread problems with how the state issued non-domiciled commercial driver's licenses (CDLs).

In a December 1 letter to Governor Tim Walz, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) discovered that roughly one-third of the non-domiciled CDLs it reviewed in Minnesota were granted improperly. According to USDOT, the state issued licenses that extended beyond a driver's lawful presence, granted CDLs to Mexican nationals who were not present under DACA, issued non-domiciled CDLs to lawful permanent residents who should have received regular CDLs, and in some cases failed to verify lawful presence at all.

USDOT has given Minnesota 30 days to pause new non-domiciled CDL issuances, identify all noncompliant licenses, revoke and reissue them when appropriate, and complete a full internal audit of state procedures.

Federal officials said the funding threat is part of a broader nationwide review. Since mid-2025, FMCSA has also flagged concerns in Pennsylvania and California over similar CDL-issuance issues.

Source: <https://cdllife.com>

AAA: Year-End Holiday Travel on Track to Break Records

AAA expects a record 122.4 million Americans to travel at least 50 miles from home during the year-end holiday period from Dec. 20 to Jan. 1. The projection marks a 2.2% increase over last year and surpasses 2024's record of 119.7 million travelers.

Road trips will dominate holiday travel, with 109.5 million Americans driving—about 89% of all travelers. Lower gas prices are helping fuel the trend, with the national average dipping below \$3 a gallon for the first time in four years. AAA urges motorists to stay safe during one of the most dangerous travel periods of the year and reminds drivers to Slow Down and Move Over for roadside workers. Last holiday season, AAA responded to more than 860,000 roadside emergencies.



Air travel is also expected to hit new highs. AAA projects 8.03 million people will fly domestically, the first time that number has exceeded 8 million. Average fares are up 7%, nearing \$900 roundtrip.

Another 4.9 million travelers are expected to take buses, trains, or cruises—an increase driven largely by strong post-pandemic demand for cruising.

Source: AAA



Hacker or Tow Professional?

Are you a “Hacker” or a “Professional” tower? “Hacker” is street slang that’s tossed around when towers don’t follow time-worn guidelines that support operations and industry safety.

For towers who identify as a “Misfit,” this narrative may stir some emotions. One of the industry’s self-proclaimed influencers shared his collection of dislikes against annoying tow truck drivers based on behaviors he’s witnessed on a day-to-day basis. To protect his online identity, let’s call him “Mr. Influencer,” a self-acclaimed expert of the industry’s Tow Police.

While I don’t support internet influencers and their antics, I found one post especially entertaining and complete with enough substance to share with you. Mr. Influencer didn’t speak highly of certain tow operators. His complaints (not mine) pointed out a list of annoying tow operator behaviors. Here’s what he had to say about fellow towers — what he didn’t like were:



1. **“Call chasers and speeders”** — his biggest complaint, saying, “Around here tow truckers drive like fools on highways and city streets.” He noted it was especially true of towers who expedite and chase calls.
2. **“Tailgaters”** — listed as a close second, saying towers use a tow truck’s size to intimidate motorists and make traffic move over. Obviously, tailgating actions tend to cause road rage from motorists who weren’t having it.
3. **“Tow trucks who drive the shoulders”** — upset him, noting that, in attempts to get somewhere quick, “They’re always driving too fast on the shoulders.” Note: Shoulder response isn’t illegal in some states when authorization is provided by law enforcement.
4. **“Lights on all the time”** — saying, “Towers drive with emergency lights ‘on’ everywhere they go.” Note: Depending on the state tow companies serve, it may be legal to drive with lights ‘on’ when vehicle code law authorizes it, or when a tow or transport impedes traffic.
5. **“Tow trucks have circus lighting”** — citing carriers and wreckers where, “A little bit of emergency lighting goes a long way!”
6. **“If it fits, it ships”** — complaining that wreckers and carriers are constantly overloaded and over-length. Note: Overloading is a dangerous practice that affects braking and steering that can lead to collisions. Sorry — just because “it fits” doesn’t make it safe or legal.
7. **“One-Hook Wonders”** — towers who don’t comply with tie-down and safety chain requirements. “You see ‘em with maybe one J-Hook chain... that’s it.”
8. **“Escaping debris”** — describing towers who don’t secure loose items from vehicles, only to drop into a following vehicle’s path. Towers are reminded to secure carrier items before tow or transport commences.
9. **“Asinine road ragers”** — where out-of-control towers commit road rage once angered at another party’s driving actions. Road rage could be the result of items one through four. For example, a 2017 flatbed operator fired shots into a semi-truck, resulting in an intentional homicidal death. The tower was charged with first-degree murder and sentenced to 50 years.
10. **Final dislike:** “Tow truck drivers think they’ve got some kind of authority.” Note: Tow operators have zero authority under law and this mindset may result in violence.

Hackers Versus Professionals

I submit that Mr. Influencer makes valid points in his post that seem correct. While I’ll take the “middle of the road” approach here, consider what personality you choose to be: “Hacker” or “Professional?”

(continued on next page)

Because the industry sees little to no enforcement, it's easy for towers to fall into one of these two categories. For the "Hacker," laziness, short-cutting, and a brazen disregard for industry teachings create many of Mr. Influencer's "dislikes."

The Hacker personality may be driven by an "It'll never happen to me" mentality, or "I've been doing it that way for years and I ain't been caught yet." And for towers who attend the "Internet University of Tow Operator Training," the tricks you apply in the field may result in an unintentional injury or death to you or an innocent person.

For professional tow operators, following vehicle code law and working within industry expectations is an easy process. Professionalism is a practiced behavior that conforms to industry expectations.

In that mindset, what personality defines you?

By Randall C. Resch

TOW INDUSTRY WEEK

College-Educated Oversupply Crisis Worsens

The widening mismatch between an oversupply of college-educated workers and a deepening shortage of talent for non-degree, hands-on jobs has grown even more pronounced.

Bloomberg reports that the latest delayed BLS data shows a sharp deterioration in white-collar jobs, especially those holding four-year degrees, now making up a record 25% of all unemployed - or about 1.9 million folks, the highest level since 1992.

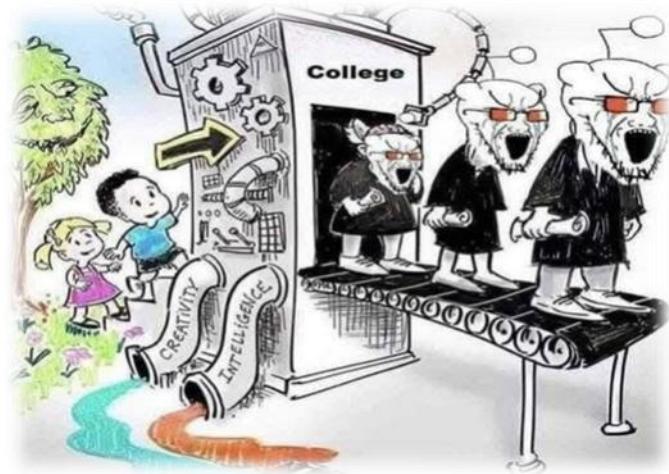
The unemployment rate for bachelor's degree holders climbed to 2.8% in September, while joblessness for other education groups remained relatively the same. Young degree-holders are getting squeezed the most: unemployment for ages 20 to 24 jumped to 9.2%, an increase rarely seen outside recessions.

There currently is an alarming shift in the labor market: an oversupply of college graduates and a shortage of non-college-degree technical workers.

Palantir CEO Alex Karp recently had an epic quote about this emerging labor market mess :

"The education industrial complex has spent more time transforming kids into Marxist activists than preparing them for future labor market shifts. Now, these purple-haired degree holders are entering a shrinking labor market, and companies view these kids as giant liabilities."

It's time for young people to consider avoiding overpriced college. Perhaps time to learn an actual skill that makes you valuable, one that lets you remain productive before automation and AI sweep the labor market, such as building data centers or working on natural gas turbines.



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St. Anthony	Twin Cities Transport & Recovery, Inc. 651-642-1446	Ashland Tomlinson's Inc. 715-684-3359	Insurance Subrogation
St. Cloud	Andy's Towing 320-251-5691	Baldwin Day & Nite Towing, LLC 715-684-3359	Corrective Action Recovery Solutions, LLC (C.A.R.S) Greg Schafer 507-530-5032
St. Paul	Twin Cities Transport & Recovery, Inc. 651-642-1446	Balsam Lake Lake Services Unlimited 715-857-5753	Management Consulting
	PLC Recovery 651-247-9783	Hixon Jensen Towing and Repair 715-963-3431	Professional Transport Management Company Steve & Sue Schmit 612-366-0525
St. Charles	Whitewater Wrecker Service 507-718-9669	LaCrosse Goldbeck Towing Service 608-781-4869	Uniforms
Virginia	Armory Shell Towing & Service 218-741-6050	Roberts Star Equipment 715-749-4450	Cintas Kevin Gaskins 763-391-5266
Waseca	Bocks Service Inc. 507-835-5407	Superior Lake City Towing 218-722-7781	Vehicle Data Information
	Tesch Service Center 507-835-4610	ASSOCIATE	Auto Data Direct Parker Devenney 773-771-9910
White Bear Lake	Twin City Transport & Recovery, Inc. 651-642-1446	Accounting/Towing Software	
Willmar	City Line Towing 320-231-3869	Towbook Kendall Smith 810-320-5063	
	Ed's Service Center & Sales 320-235-5945	Auto & Equipment Sales	
		Twin Cities Wrecker Sales Rod Pellow 651-488-4210	
		Worldwide Equipment Sales Jeff Irr 815-725-4400	
		Zip's Truck Equipment Paul Rottinghaus 1-800-222-6047	
		Banking/Financial	
		Customers Commercial Finance Josh Johnson 952-484-0882	



UPCOMING EVENTS

MPTA Board Meeting

January 27, 2026

Dinner: 6:00 pm

Meeting: 6:30 pm

MPTA Office
Little Canada, MN



Meetings may be cancelled due to weather please
check <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mnprotow> for all
event updates.