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**TRUCKERS** NEWS

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# Truckers' Gear Guide

- ▶ **Shifting Gears  
in a Time of Crisis**
- ▶ **Staying Hydrated & Healthy**
- ▶ **Get Organized**

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# Shifting Gears in a Time of Crisis

By Kim McDonnell, Manager, Customer Experience, RoadPro Family of Brands

The outbreak of the COVID-19 virus has impacted this country like nothing we have seen in our lifetime. While schools and non-essential businesses were told to close to prevent the spread others had to stay the course such as the medical professionals, grocery store workers, and truck drivers.

Truck drivers immediately saw a change when many truck stops, travel centers, and rest areas closed, leaving them without a place for safe parking, food, showers or restrooms. Within a few days, there was an intervention from many trucking groups, individual truck drivers calling their local governments, and other organizations that support the trucking industry, lobbying for them to reopen and make services available to truckers.

*Truckers needed to be prepared for the lack of food options and essentials.*



While services were made available again the full-service restaurants remained closed and the fast-food options were only available by the drive-thru. Some of the restaurants offered take out and the fast-food chains revised their structure to accommodate truckers as the drive-thru wasn't a viable option, but most all food

services shut down after 9 p.m. Many drivers that have always relied on these places to get a hot meal were now faced with little to no options. Drivers who did not have a fridge, microwave or a way to prepare meals in their truck were especially impacted. While things seemed to change week to week – one thing for certain, now more than ever truckers needed to be prepared for the lack of food options and essentials. Some drivers would tell you that they were finding what they needed but it all depended on what state you were in or what place you stopped for that day.

By now we have all read or seen stories on those individuals that stepped up to provide free food to the truckers and everyone lauding truck drivers as HEROS. While many truckers appreciated the gesture most might tell you they didn't expect a handout and were just doing what they always do. "I appreciate all the gratitude," said Thomas Miller, an owner/operator who has been driving for over 18 years. "I hate being called a hero as I am just doing my job," he continued. "I would like to see people taking care of the homeless."

Al and Jenn Kohl have always cooked in their truck and decided that now more than ever was the time to share their expertise with others. "We went ahead and bought several RoadPro 12-volt portable stoves and roasters to hand out to other drivers," said Al. "This way they can prepare a hot meal in their truck so that if nothing is available they could have something to eat." Al and Jenn also manage the Cooking in the Truck Facebook group that shares recipes and tips for cooking in the truck and began providing simple recipes with food items they could easily find. The group grew by over 1200 followers within the first few weeks of the pandemic. They both stressed the importance of always being prepared by having additional food provisions in their truck at all times. "This way you know what is going in your food and understand what you are eating," said Jenn Kohl. In addition to handing out RoadPro's 12-volt appliances, they also helped by buying other drivers showers and even sharing some of their essentials and food.



*You have to adjust and be self-sufficient.*

Brita Nowak, the owner of BratCat Express, had taken some time off the road and was enjoying a lucrative career with Uber, but when businesses closed and shelter in place was established that stopped. She posted on Facebook that she had her CDL and was available to step up if anyone needed her and in a matter of hours received tons of messages. "I figured that if I could help in some way I should do it," said Nowak. She felt what better place to self-isolate than in a cab of a truck. "I could either stay at home and be confined or be confined in the cab of a truck." She pointed out the need for all truckers to be adaptable. "It's all about adapting for the situation and being prepared," she noted. "I didn't expect to find the services that we always had and I knew that finding food and essentials was going to be tough, so again you need to adapt!"

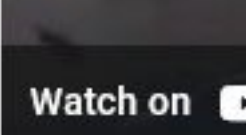
The word "adapt" came up several times with many truckers who said you need to change what you are doing at this time of uncertainty. Robert Greene, who travels cross country and has been driving since 1986 also used those words. "For those truckers that expect to stop for their meal of steak and potatoes, you need to accept that will be unlikely so you need to adapt," said Greene. "There is food out there but you have to take what you can get and deal with it."



Others like Taylor Barker, an owner-operator who drives for Heniff, commented, "At times like these you can't expect anything from anyone and you have to adjust and be self-sufficient." He noted that some truck stops were doing a great job serving the drivers and trying to implement measures and restrictions to not only protect their employees but the drivers as well. "You just have to prepare for the ones that were not open or serving limited food selections and make sure you have provisions in your truck."

Truckers, in general, had to also adapt to keep their wheels moving. What their typical load might have consisted of in January was much different in April as a manufacturer or business that was not deemed essential were no longer ordering supplies and materials and those deliveries stopped. Many drivers needed to change course and booked loads to haul those items that were keeping shelves stocked or other essential items that were needed to keep the businesses that were open supplied.

So while truckers stayed the course and were out there when the rest of us could either work remote or stay out of public places one thing is certain, they knew how to shift gears in a time of crisis. Truckers would tell you, like a popular song from musician and trucker Bill Weaver states, **WE DRIVE ON!**



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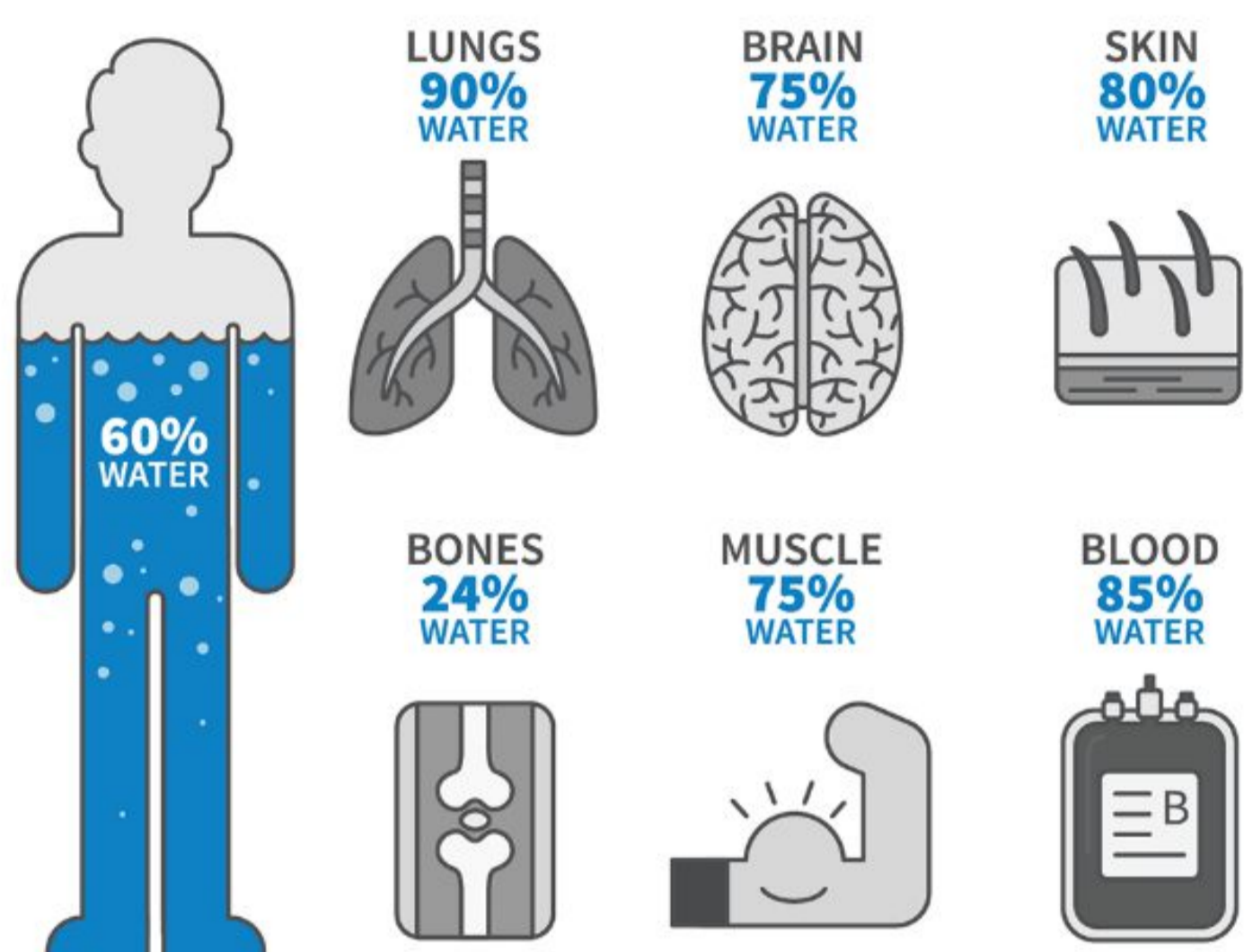
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# Staying Hydrated & Healthy

By Hope Zvara, Yoga & lifestyle expert, CEO of Mother Trucker Yoga

I often hear from truck drivers that they are living on the verge of dehydration. And I couldn't agree more. Drinking fluids often means more stops. But what if those stops could mean fewer health problems? And what if drinking more water at the right times could mean fewer stops and feeling better?



Would you ever try to move out for a long haul with little to no fuel? Heck no! Let's consider treating our bodies the same way. A lack of fuel in your truck can cause major problems to the engine and even cause a possible accident affecting other vehicles on the road. A lack of sufficient fluid in the body can temporarily cause confusion and put you and others on the road at risk for injury. When severe, dehydration can lead to a rapid or irregular heart rate, low blood pressure, fainting, and even death. Getting enough water affects every system in your body. Considering our body is nearly 60% water, it seems logical that we keep those rivers and lakes from drying up.

Knowing the signs of dehydration can be an eye-opener to making better choices when it comes to fueling with water.

## Know the Signs:

- Dry Mouth
- Thirst
- Fatigue
- Dry skin that doesn't spring back when pinched.
- Dark yellow urine (however vitamins and certain foods can also discolor urine)
- Leg cramps

The signs listed above vary from person to person and may also be caused by other underlying health issues. No matter what, it never hurts to get a little bit more water in if you can't remember the last time you drank any.

## How Much Water Do You Need?

It can vary from person to person, but ideally, we need half our body weight in ounces. Or if you like math: .6x your body weight in ounces. So if you weigh 150 pounds then you need 75 ounces of water per day. Don't be scared. When you break that down, it's really not that much. That's just over four 20 ounce water bottles each day. And if you work to get in your water before leaving for the day, you could be 10 to 20 ounces hydrated before you even head out on the road.

## Drink smart!

Keeping hydrated is crucial for health and well-being, but many people do not consume enough fluids each day. Our organs cannot function when we are dehydrated, and that includes our colon (constipation) and kidneys. Imagine if drinking more water could improve how you feel each day?

## Tips for Getting More Water into Your Day:

For those of you who just aren't on the water wagon quite yet, consider adding water to your extra sweet beverages like lemonade, juice, and iced tea. You won't miss out on the sweetness, but you'll get some extra water at the same time. Consider this as a step-down program, keep watering down your beverage more and more until you are drinking good ole' H2O straight!

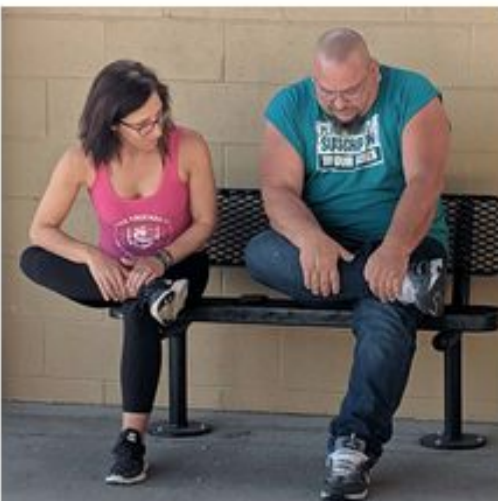
*One of the first things you should do when you wake and before you leave is to drink 8 to 10 ounces of water.*

Struggling to ditch the soda? Try fizzy water. Get the bubbles without calories and sugar. The best thing is more and more truck stops are now selling these mocktails for you to enjoy. Soda is also detrimental to your health, just one soda a day for one month leaves you consuming 455 teaspoons of sugar that's over 4 pounds of sugar. Isn't it time hydration doesn't have consequences? Plus, drinking more water instead of soda can promote weight-loss.

One of the first things you should do when you wake and before you leave is to drink 8 to 10 ounces of water. By the time you are ready to roll, you will have already used the bathroom cleansing your body and more importantly hydrating it. Even better, try drinking warm water in the morning (with lemon) which may help move your bowels as well.

Finally, if you are a coffee drinker, coffee does not count towards your daily water consumption, and if you do drink coffee consider a 1:2 ratio. Due to the caffeine, every cup of coffee requires two cups of water to replace the natural diuretic you just ingested called coffee.

Like anything drinking water is a habit. And if it is a new habit for you, start with a small addition into your day. Like swapping out a soda for a bottle of water or beginning each day with warm water or a cup of tea. Stick to that until it is a new habit. And then go from there. ■



Hope is a yoga, movement and lifestyle expert who is also a nationally recognized speaker and best-selling author and is the CEO of Mother Trucker Yoga®. She also hosts radio show titles "A Daily Dose of Hope" and focuses on the well-being of truck drivers implementing programs that speak to both the body and mind. Providing drivers with a more fulfilling lifestyle by improving their health, mobility and mental point of view. For more information visit [www.MotherTruckerYoga.com](http://www.MotherTruckerYoga.com)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MotherTruckerYoga/>  
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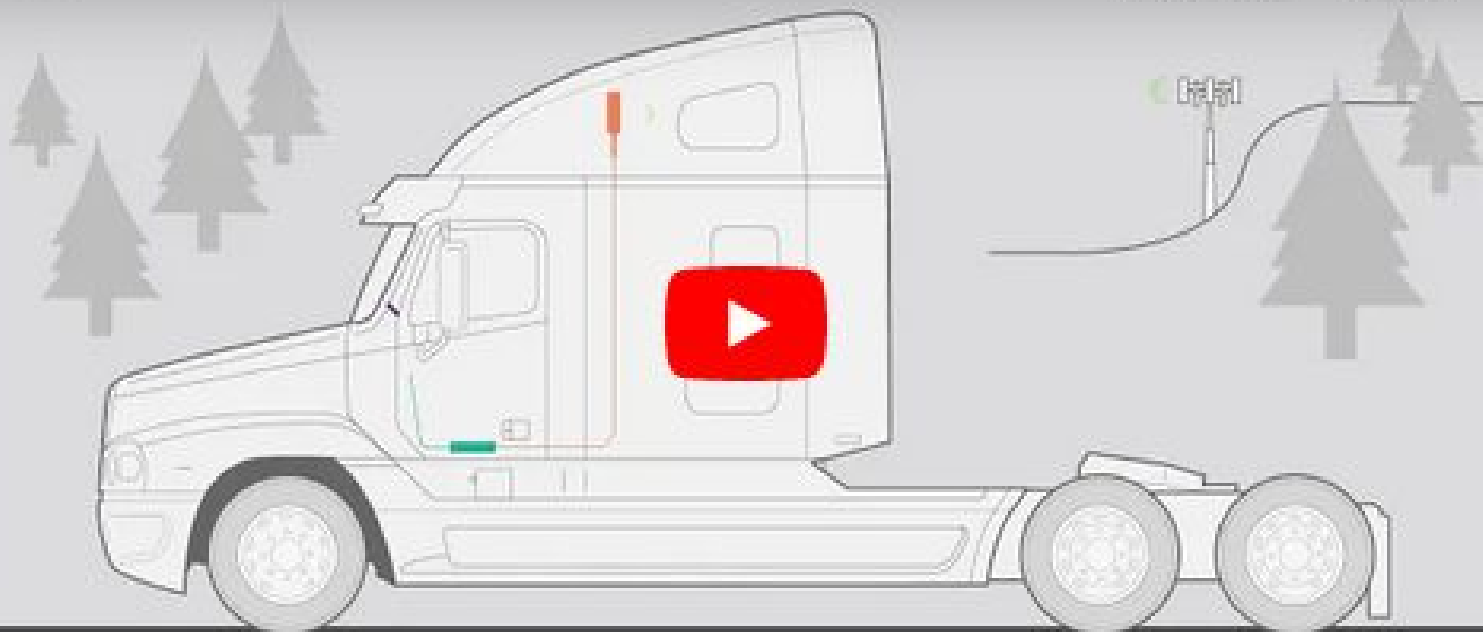
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# Ensure Year-Round Protection with Diesel Additive



By Rich Guida, Brand Manager for Howes

Today's truckers all know the benefits of treating their diesel fuel in the winter. It's a widely accepted routine to add products that prevent gelling, saving them from being stuck on the side of the road. What some drivers may not know is that it's still extremely important to treat their fuel all year-round, not just when the temperatures dip.

Since the 1990's, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has mandated an overall 99.7% reduction in fuel sulfur content to cut diesel fuel emissions and pollution. Unfortunately, reducing the sulfur content also alters the overall chemical composition of the diesel fuel, greatly minimizing its lubricity. Adding critical lubricity back into Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel (ULSD) allows truckers to combat the premature wear of their injectors, pumps, and upper cylinders. Additionally, it increases fuel economy, extends fuel filter life, and improves acceleration and performance.

Using biodiesel is one way to increase fuel lubricity. However, truckers must beware of the drawbacks of biodiesel as well. One such drawback is that biodiesel retains a far higher percentage of water than regular diesel. Water in the fuel can cause damage to the system. It also has the potential to cause algae and other microbial growth. Using an additive that safely removes water can greatly increase the benefits of biodiesel.

Other advances in technology have created certain undesired effects as well. For example, on top of conventional carbon deposits that form in and around the tips of injectors, due to extreme heat and pressure, today's High-Pressure Common Rail (HPCR) Systems are prone to Internal Diesel Injector Deposits (IDIDs). With microscopic clearances in these highly engineered components, even minimal deposits can cause sticking in HPCR injectors, leading to poor engine performance and high maintenance costs. Treating the fuel can help drivers to maintain a clean fuel system, extend the life of their engines, and save on costly repairs.

When looking for the right additive, drivers should consider some key product attributes. Questions to ask include:

## IS THE PRODUCT ALCOHOL-FREE?

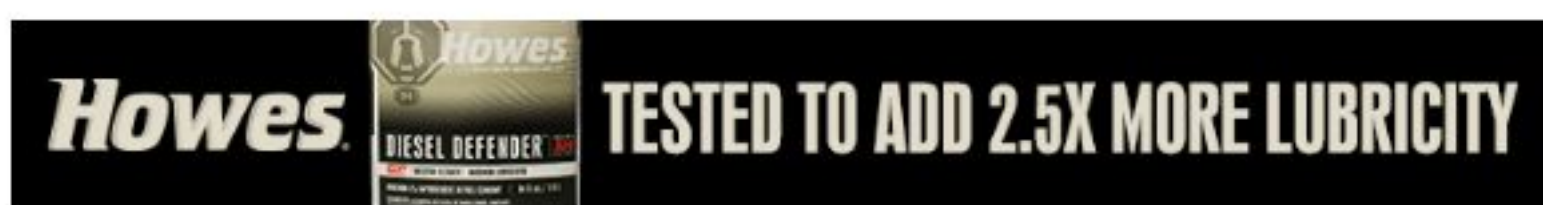
Products that are alcohol-free and made with no harmful solvents are safe to use. Alcohol is an abrasive fluid that can cause damage to vital engine parts as it works its way through fuel injectors, piston rings, and cylinders. Additives that contain alcohol should be avoided, as they may do more harm than good.

## DOES THE PRODUCTS HAVE A SOLID DETERGENT PACKAGE?

Products should contain a detergent package that is designed to clean the entire fuel system. A product that is formulated to rapidly remove IDIDs, as well as other carbon deposits, is the best for keeping diesel fuel systems clean and performing optimally.

## DOES THE PRODUCT SAFELY REMOVE WATER?

Many products emulsify or disperse water into the fuel. They may also use alcohol or solvents, which we know can cause damage to the engine. Look for premium, petroleum-based products that demulsify, safely removing water molecules from the fuel, leaving only pure fuel to burn.



## IS THERE A PRODUCT THAT DOES ALL OF THESE THINGS?

Yes! One such product is **Howes Diesel Defender**. Created by the leading developer in diesel additives, Diesel Defender is the perfect solution to help combat the shortcomings of ULSD, biodiesel, and HPCR Systems. Packed with 2.5x the amount of required lubricity and armed with IDX4 Detergent, the strongest detergent package in the industry, Howes Diesel Defender should be part of a driver's year-round efforts to keep their fuel systems treated and running at top performance. Diesel Defender is 100% petroleum-based, alcohol-free, and made with no harmful solvents. By providing maximum lubricity, Diesel Defender protects against the premature wear of injectors, pumps, and upper cylinders. Designed to clean the entire fuel system within three treatments, Diesel Defender both prevents and eliminates the toughest deposits, including IDIDs. The product safely demulsifies water, eliminating the environment that promotes algae, bacteria, and microbial growth. Defender increases power, improves performance, and guarantees a minimum 5% increase in fuel economy. So defend your diesel and your wallet by using Howes Diesel Defender at every fill up. ■





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# YOUR YEAR-ROUND SOLUTION

# Portable Power to the Rescue

By David Hollis, Editor, Truckers News

Today more than ever, the over-the-road life of the American trucker is about being safe, self-reliant, and self-contained. But, it's also about staying well informed and well connected no matter where you are. Fortunately, there are numerous devices to make both of those possible. Smartphones. GPS. Bluetooth headsets. Laptops. Gaming consoles. Tablets. Kitchen appliances.

But, all those things that provide sought after creature comforts need to be powered and/or recharged. Doing that is easier today thanks to an array of devices to keep you properly provisioned with power. **And, in today's sometimes uncertain trucking environment, having portable power at your fingertips can mean the difference between a safe and secure trip and one you'll regret.**

## Power Inverters: For When You Need More Power More Often

Recharging your smartphone at the end of the day is one thing. Having enough power to work on your laptop while you cook dinner and watch TV in your truck is something else indeed.



That's why they make power inverters. Think of them as multi-purpose power stations that convert your truck's 12 volts of DC power into AC power that can be used to power appliances. They have AC outlets and USB ports to recharge any device you might have, including your portable power bank.

*Before you buy an inverter for your truck, be sure to know how much power you need.*

Before you buy an inverter for your truck, be sure to know how much power you need. Check to see the wattage your inverter provides is enough to cover the demands of the devices/appliances you plan on plugging into it. Add up your device wattages, and then add on 10% to 20% to the total for peace of mind. (Check your devices' manuals to see how many watts they draw.)

Most inverters come with features to keep you and your truck safe. These include alarms and automatic shut-off triggers, as well as an appropriately-sized fused to protect the system. (You may wish to consult with your mechanic about proper installation. Also, if you're a company driver, check to be sure you can have an inverter installed on your own. More and more companies are specing trucks to have inverters.)



The RoadPro Family of Brands' PowerDrive makes an array of power inverters that wire directly into your trucks' electrical system. They come in various sizes: 400, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000 and 3,000 watts. PowerDrive also delivers numerous smaller inverters that plug into your truck's 12-volt power port. So does MobileSpec. Inverters by both have USB and AC ports and range from 20 to 300 watts.

Once you decide on an appropriately sized inverter you wish to wire into your truck, be sure to purchase cables that are up to the task. Be sure they are long enough and the proper gauge to handle the current you require. And, don't hesitate to ask your trusted repair technician or mechanic for help and advice before you start connecting things.

*You need to be sure the power bank you buy exceeds the needs of your device or you'll be disappointed when you are stuck without a full charge on your phone.*

## Portable Power Banks: No Need for Truck Stop Outlets Again

That trusty Android smartphone that is never out of arm's reach as you drive or when you're resting may be your faithful communications assistant, but it has an insatiable appetite for juice, the electrical kind. Fortunately, there's a vast array of portable power packs — batteries with charging ports really — available to feed even the hungriest device. Just be sure you get one that meets your needs.

The capacity of any portable power bank is rated in milliamp-hours (mAh). Devices are similarly rated, so you need to be sure the power bank you buy exceeds the needs of your device or you'll be disappointed when you are stuck without a full charge on your phone.



The market is awash in portable power banks. They range from modest ones with a USB and USB-C™ ports that will recharge your smartphone in a few hours to 50,000mAh units with six ports. MobileSpec delivers a pair of portable power banks. One's rated at 5,000mAh and the other at 20,000mAh. Both have USB and USB-C ports and will refill your phone properly.

## Fast Chargers For When You're In A Hurry

Fast charging allows you to refill your devices quickly, saving you time and worry. It does so by safely increasing the amount of current sent to the battery in your device, reducing the time it takes to recharge it. Fast chargers can refill your devices three times as fast as a normal charge.

There are a slew of fast charging devices to choose from, including many that will work well in your truck.

MobileSpec and RoadKing offer an array of chargers that plug into your truck's 12-volt port. Most are 18-watt, have both USB and USB-C ports, can accommodate fast charging, and are compatible with all devices. Likewise, you have many to choose from when shopping for a fast charger you can plug into a wall socket at home, in a hotel or a truck stop. And, the good news is that none is too expensive: a good one can be had for under \$20.

*It's also possible to quickly charge your phone with no cord at all.*



The other essential part of any fast charge solution is getting the juice to your smartphone. Not every charge/sync cable is up to that task. Cords that feed more power from the electrical outlet to your device must be heavier, stronger, and made of stouter stuff. The first thing you will notice is that most cords made for fast charging are thicker, and that's good. The MobileSpec MBS06900 and MBS06903 both have USB-C™ to Lightning tips and are a convenient 6 feet long. Both are rated for 18 watts. RoadKing's RK06934/35/36/37 cables are also rated for 18 watts, heavy-duty, and ideal for trucking use.

It's also possible to quickly charge your phone with no cord at all. More and more smartphones are being built to accommodate wireless charging. All you do is place your phone on a wireless pad and the Qi charger does the rest. It's also possible to use wireless chargers with older phones with the addition of a small pad or case — but rather inexpensive — that connects to the phone's charger port.

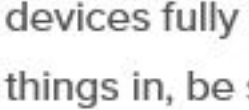


MobileSpec's universal Qi mobile wireless charging mount features an automatic sensor that keeps your phone secure and allows for one-hand operation. The Fast Charge 10W mount is compatible with Apple, Samsung, Motorola, LG, and other Qi-enabled smartphones. The non-slip rubberized coating also keeps your phone secure.

RoadKing makes a heavy-duty universal charging pad for Qi-enabled smartphones that has a non-slip rubberized coating that keeps devices secure. Compatible with iPhone X, 8, 8+, Samsung, Note 8 and 9, S8, S8+, S7, and other Qi-enabled devices.

In addition, RAVPower makes both a wireless charger with a stand for your phone to rest in and a smaller, less expensive round pad. Both are highly-rated and accommodate a variety of phones. Tech giant Anker also makes similar wireless chargers — standing and round pads — that do the job and about half the price of the ones from RAVPower.

From inverters to fast chargers, today there are enough options to keep appliances running, computers humming and smartphones and other devices fully and properly charged. But, before you purchase and plug things in, be sure the power supplies your tapping into are compatible with your devices and appliances and safe for your truck and you. ■



# Cooking with RoadPro

## ROADPRO® MAC & CHEESE

### INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup milk
- ⅔ cup evaporated milk
- ⅓ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1½ tbsp margarine
- 3 oz. cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 oz. Monterey Jack cheese, grated

### DIRECTIONS

1. In the [RoadPro Slow Cooker](#), whisk together the milk, evaporated milk, salt, pepper, and paprika.
2. Add the uncooked macaroni and top with margarine and cheeses.
3. Stir to combine.
4. Cover the slow cooker and cook for 1 hour. Stir. Then cook an additional hour.
5. The mac and cheese will be done when all the liquid is absorbed, and the pasta is cooked.
6. Serve and enjoy!



## JAMBALAYA

SUBMITTED BY: KARI FISHER, PROFESSIONAL TRUCK DRIVER & BRAKE TIME MEMBER  
MADE FOR THE ROADPRO SLOW COOKER

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 box Mira Poix (carrots, celery and onion, chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 6 oz. smoked sausage (Andouille)
- 1 boneless, skinless chicken thigh (optional)
- ½ bag cooked shrimp
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1-2 tbsp Cajun seasoning
- Freshly cracked pepper
- 1 can diced Rotel® tomatoes
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 cup uncooked long grain white rice
- 2 green onions, sliced

### DIRECTIONS

1. Mince the garlic. Add the celery, onion, bell pepper, and garlic to the bottom of the [RoadPro Slow Cooker](#), lined with a slow cooker liner.
2. Slice the smoked sausage into rounds or half moons and add them to the slow cooker, along with the chicken thigh, and seasonings.
3. Pour the diced tomatoes and all their juices over the meat and spices in the slow cooker. Add the chicken broth and a handful of chopped fresh parsley. Stir briefly.
4. In about 3 hours add the shrimp.
5. After four hours, the liquid in the slow cooker should be boiling. Carefully remove the chicken thighs, making sure to replace the lid quickly, shred the meat, and stir it back into the pot along with the uncooked rice. Replace the lid and let it continue to cook on high for 20-25 minutes, or until the rice has absorbed most of the liquid.
6. Open the cooker, test the rice to make sure it's tender, then stir to fluff the ingredients.
7. Sprinkle the sliced green onions over top, then serve.



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Our best-selling BlueParrott B450-XT has been upgraded to keep pace with the demands of your busy day. Now with added IP54-rated durability, USB-C charging and firmware updates on the go, as well as all the features that come as standard with BlueParrott headsets, including our industry-leading 96% noise cancellation, VoiceControl™ and customizable Parrott Button™, the B450-XT delivers impressive levels of comfort, fit and performance.



BlueParrott B450 XT



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# MOBILE TECH ACCESSORIES

A BUYERS' GUIDE FROM **TRUCKER GEAR** PRESENTED BY **ROADPRO**  
FAMILY OF BRANDS



## Bluetooth® Accessories for Today's Well-Connected Trucker

**Quick History Lesson #1:** The first Bluetooth device for consumers was a wireless headset that came to market in 1999. Now, a bit more than 20 years later, Bluetooth technology is everywhere, including and especially in the trucking industry.

This short link radio technology is now part of everyday life and a long list of devices to make your driving day much easier. It's at work in your truck and in most of the devices, you depend on for your work and while relaxing. Here are a few of the devices:

### Headphones vs. Earbuds: Which Works Best

When it comes to listening to audio, be it your favorite playlist, a podcast you enjoy, talk radio, or a video you stream after driving all day, truckers have a wide selection of ways to listen.



There are two broad categories: wired and wireless. And, within the wireless group, you can listen with headphones that fit over your head, on your ears, or earbuds that fit snugly in your ears. In most instances, and unless you're a hardcore audiophile, most options will provide sound you can enjoy. Which you choose is largely a matter of personal preference.

In the wired/wireless argument, here are the reasons to stay wired:

- no batteries or charging
- wired headphones are said to deliver better sound quality because they carry an analog signal and hence more data
- generally less expensive

And the primary reason against wired headphones is the wire. Cords can be inconvenient and get in the way even if you're just lounging in your sleeper's bunk.

Those who favor wireless headphones say:

- they're now compatible with most devices as Bluetooth is pretty much ubiquitous
- they give you freedom of movement, be it rolling over or sitting up on your bunk, or walking around
- they let you connect to online assistants like Siri or Google Assistant

The knocks on wireless headphones are that they can be more expensive than their wired cousins, and they need to be charged and recharged.

**Now, how does the on-ear vs. over-ear vs. in-ear discussion shakeout? Pretty simply actually.**



On-ear and over-ear-headphones are similar in almost all respects except size. As the name suggests, on-ears rest on the ear while over-ears cover the ears and create a seal against the side of your head. This delivers the audio you want and blocks out background noise. However, over-ear headphones are bigger, generally heavier and can be a bit less comfortable to wear for extended periods of time.



In-ear headphones have become a popular choice in recent years and for several reasons. They're small and portable. Apple devices now come with them as standard equipment. They're lightweight and comfortable to wear for most folks. And, because they fit snugly in the ears, they block out background noise and deliver good sound.

For the trucker shopping for a good way to consume audio the market is wide and deep. You'll have lots of choices and a wide price range.

MobileSpec, one of the members of the RoadPro Family of Brands, also offers a wide selection of audio products. It's selection includes:

- several styles of stereo in-ear headphones with in-line microphones in a variety of colors
- wireless earbuds with clips that go over the ears to help secure them in place
- stereo wireless headphones that rest on the neck and feature earbuds that can be inserted
- wireless, folding, on-ear headphones with a built-in microphone
- a mono in-ear headset that can pair with a camera

### For When Your Smartphone Needs A Boost

The good old days of trucking weren't all that good when it came to staying in touch with dispatchers, shippers, receivers, and your family back home. Generally, good communications meant finding a working payphone and having a roll of quarters with which to feed it. But, like free coffee at truck stops, payphones are all but a thing of the past.

There's now fewer than 100,000 in the entire U.S.

Today's trucker just about lives on their cell phone. Most rely on a decent smartphone not just to make and receive calls, but to avail themselves of the digital riches of the internet, do video chats with friends and families and transfer business-related data. While cellular service has come a long way since the days of vast expanses of the country suffering from low or no signal access, there still are times and places where calls fade or drop, something today's pro driver can ill afford.

Wilson Electronics' weBoost cell signal boosters line has models created specifically for truckers that help eliminate dead spots and weak signals while on the road.



weBoost's Drive 4G-X OTR for use by truckers enhances all available network speeds for major US carriers including Verizon, T Mobile, Sprint, ATT and U.S. Cellular. It boosts existing signal strength with 50 dB system gain, the most allowed by federal regulations.

Installed in your truck, the Drive 4G-X OTR enables drivers and passengers to experience fewer dropped calls, better voice quality, faster data speeds, increased hotspot capability, and improved audio and video streaming.

The Drive 4G-X OTR works by reaching out to the cell tower to access voice and data signals. Once receiving the outside signal, the Drive 4G-X OTR amplifies the signal and sends it to the inside antenna. The inside antenna then broadcasts the boosted signal to devices inside the vehicle. Its three-way mount works in any truck.

Commonly paired with Drive 4G-X OTR and Drive Sleek OTR products, the 17-inch 4G-OTR Antenna Truck Edition kit comes with parts to accommodate multiple installation options. Included in the kit are two mast extensions (13¼ x 5/8), 3-way antenna mount, side exit adapter, antenna spring, cable adapter, and thread lock packets.

weBoost products are available at most travel centers and online.

### Mounts Hold Your Smartphone When You Can't

Staying connected while driving is a must, and so is doing it hands-free.



There are a variety of mounts available to truckers, including one that lets you charge your phone as you drive. The PwrUp Qi Mount by Bracketron provides both easy access and fast wireless charging for all Qi-compliant smartphones and phones with a Qi receiver. You can choose from either a magnet or clamp mount; both come with an optional vent bracket, making it a truly universal device. The dash mounts feature technology that allows them to stick to smooth or textured surfaces.

The PwrUp Magnet Mount includes strong magnets with easy to apply metal bars, ensuring that you always find the sweet spot for Qi charging, while holding your smartphone in place. The clamp and magnet mount have a fast-charge charger, that gives high levels of current flow to the phone's battery, to maximize charging efficiency. With 2.1 amps, it allows for faster, wireless charging.

### Chargers Keep All Devices Ready to Use

Fortunately, there are more than a few ways to keep your Bluetooth accessories powered up for when you need them. A number of portable power banks are available, ones you can plug your smartphone into as you drive. Most have USB and USB-C™ ports and have the capacity to refill your phone in one go.

Power banks are rated in milliAmphours (mAh). So are your devices. Be sure the power bank you buy has enough mAh to charge your phone. MobileSpec delivers a pair of portable power banks. One's rated at 5,000mAh and the other at 20,000mAh. Both have USB and USB-C™ ports, and will refill your phone properly.



A popular new charging option speeds up the process. Fast charging charges your device by safely increasing the amount of current sent to the battery in your device, reducing the time it takes to recharge it. Fast chargers can refill your devices three times as fast as a normal charge. MobileSpec and RoadKing offer several fast chargers that plug into your truck's 12-volt port. Most are 18-watt, have both USB and USB-C™ ports, can accommodate fast charging, and are compatible with all devices.

You also have many to choose from when shopping for a fast charger you can plug into a wall socket at home, in a hotel room, or a truck stop. And, none is too expensive: a good one can be had for under \$20. Be sure you also buy cables that have the capacity to handle the increased flow of electricity to your device.

### Bluetooth Makes Life on the Road Easier

Today's trucker has at their disposal an entire arsenal of tech devices to keep them connected, comfortable and safe while on the road. And now for **Quick History Lesson #2:**

The word "Bluetooth" was the name given to the technology developed by several Scandinavian companies. It comes from Harald Bluetooth, the 10th-century Danish king that united several tribes into one country. The technology was seen as similarly uniting how people communicate.

# MOBILE TECH ACCESSORIES

A BUYERS' GUIDE FROM **TRUCKER GEAR** PRESENTED BY **ROADPRO**

FAMILY OF BRANDS

## MobileSpec Mounts

The world of the professional driver is one of contradictions:

- don't be late to your pickup or delivery, but don't be too early either
- cover as many miles as you can, but do so within speed and time limits
- keep your hands off your mobile devices, but stay properly connected

The answer to the last one is to have a good mount for your smartphone or tablet, one that keeps it accessible but lets you stay focused on the road.



**MobileSpec**

MobileSpec delivers four styles of universal and adjustable mounts that keep your smartphone accessible, let you drive safely, and meet your personal viewing preferences. They include:

**Vent:** Uses two clips to hold your phone securely. The adjustable swing arm allows you to position the device for easy viewing and so it does not block the airflow from the vent.

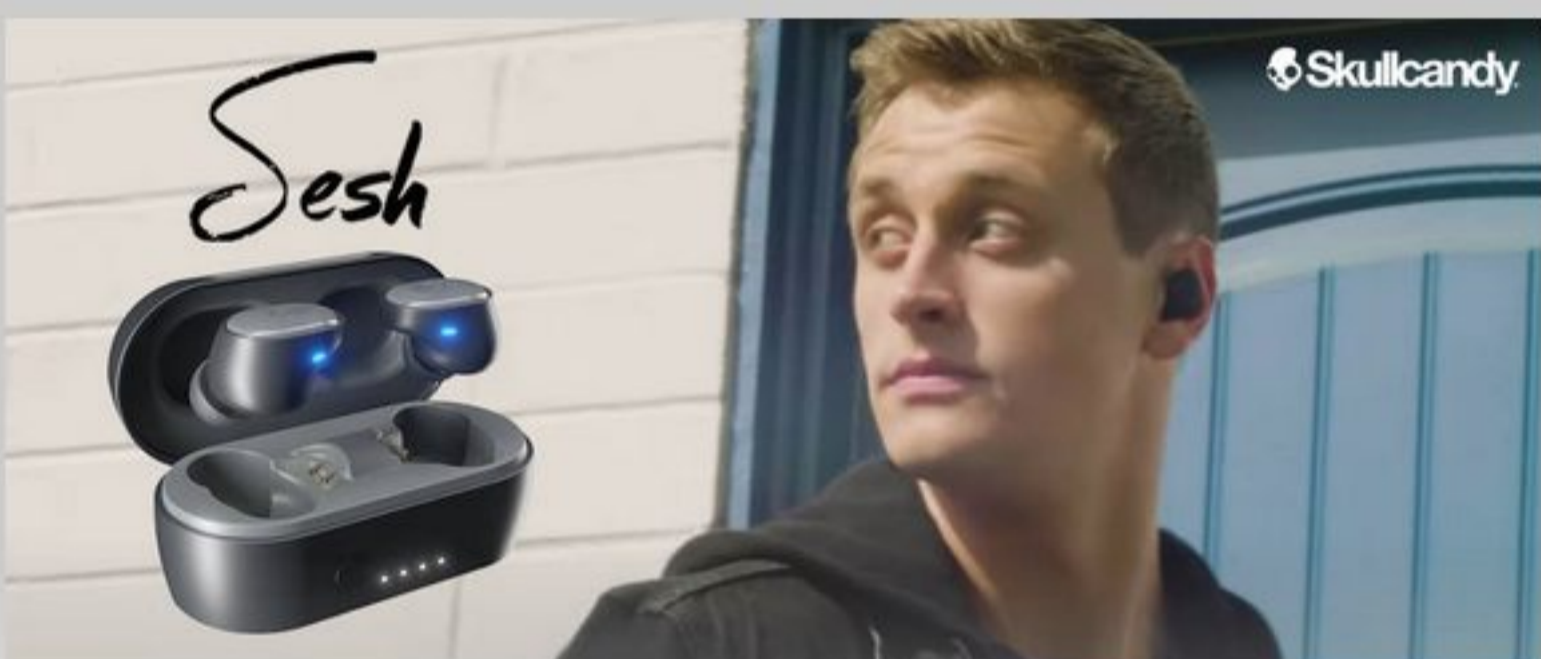
**Dash:** An extra-sticky gel pad keeps the mount, and your device, secure, and where you want it. The extendable arm lets you adjust the height of your phone for optimal access.

**Windshield:** Comes with a long, flexible arm so you can affix the mount on your windshield in a legal position and still maximize viewing and access. Mounts with an extra-

sticky gel pad.

**Cupholder:** With an adjustable base, this mount will fit just about any cupholder. Its three-way arm pivots so you can find the ideal viewing position.

All four allow for full 360-degree rotation, provide the best viewing angles, and keep your device secure. They all let you switch between securing your smartphone with a magnet or in a cradle and come with hardware for easy installation.



## Skullcandy Sesh

Skullcandy makes a wide range of earphones -- both wired and wireless -- and earbuds that are ideal for truckers who want both comfort and superior sound quality. All are engineered to provide high-quality sound, and most are meant for an active, mobile lifestyle. Most are more than affordable.

One of the standout earbud products from Skullcandy is the **Sesh**. These wireless earbuds feature

- 10 hours of battery life between charges
- easy to use microphone
- one-touch call, track and volume controls
- P55 dust, sweat, moisture resistance
- handy charging case
- Bluetooth 5.0 connectivity

And, Skullcandy also delivers a little peace of mind. With its Fearless Use Promise, Skullcandy will replace at a discount any Sesh earbud you lose or damage.

Finally, this company that made its name with the "X" Games crowd, also ensures the Sesh earbuds are as easy on your wallet as they are on your ears. They're available online or at travel centers for under \$50.



**weboost**

**Drive Sleek OTR**



## WeBoost

Even in these days where cell phones are part of everyday life for most professional drivers and good cell service is taken for granted, there are times and places when your signal needs to be pumped up a bit.

The Drive Sleek OTR by weBoost delivers the signal upgrade that assures you stay connected. All you need to do is place your smartphone or mobile wifi hotspot in the Drive Sleek's cradle and let the device do the rest.

Here's what it does:

- The Drive Sleek reaches out to nearby cell tower to access voice and data signals
- Its booster receives the outside signal, amplifies it up to 32x and sends it to the inside antenna
- The boosted signal is then broadcast by the inside antenna to the cellular device inside the cradle

The Drive Sleek OTR enhances all available network speeds for major US carriers including Verizon, T Mobile, Sprint, ATT, and U.S. Cellular. It boosts existing signal strength with 23 dB system gain.

Installed in your truck, the Drive Sleek OTR extends cellular signal range, delivers reliable cell signal and more consistent data speeds, enables faster data downloads, and gives drivers up to two hours additional talk time in weak-signal areas.

The Drive Sleek OTR's cradle holds phones and cellular hotspots from 5.1 inches to 7.5 inches in length.

Sesh



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Charging Case



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Skullcandy Sesh



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6. You must submit receipt within 30 days of purchase.



# Get Organized



## Storage Tips Every Trucker Needs to Know

By Kim McDonnell, Manager, Customer Experience, RoadPro Family of Brands

**W**hen you live within the confines of a truck cab it can be difficult to find space for all of the essentials you need. We recently reached out to veteran driver Linda Caffee, who drives team with her husband Bob, and asked her to provide a few tips on how she stays organized. We compiled a list of the top tips she shared.



### Use clear containers to store food

Food will remain fresh for a longer period of time and you can easily see what is inside eliminating rummaging through items to look for what you want.

### Reuse sanitizing wipe containers or other containers with lids

Repurposing containers you purchase that have lids to store pens, office supplies, and power cords. They are also great for those plastic grocery store bags that can be reused as trash bags.



### Fireproof and Waterproof Lock Box

One of the most important things to have on your truck is a lockbox that is both fireproof and waterproof. Making sure you have a place to store important documents, as well as spare cash, could be a lifesaver in the event of a truck fire or if you happen to be in an accident and those documents are exposed to the elements. Knowing where they are and that they are protected can save the day.



### Multi-purpose your Microwave

The microwave can be a perfect place to store plates, bowls, silverware and paper products.



### Collapsible bowls and accessories

You will find a large offering of collapsible bowls, measuring cups and other cooking essentials that will save space and are easy to store.

### Stackable Clear Storage Containers

In addition to having clear containers for food items it is also a good idea to have them for the additional items that you store in your truck— this way you can easily see the contents of each container and they can be stacked to keep things neat and tidy.

### Stackable wire shelving

Make the most of the shelving you may already have in your truck and use stackable wire shelving to create more storage.



### Slimline Hangers

Utilize slimline hangers that can hold both shirts and pants and take up less space. Many brands have non slip fabric on them that will also keep your clothes from falling on the floor. Having the same type of hanger that does not take up additional space will help you easily organize your wardrobe.



### Storage for the Fridge and Freezer

Don't use hard containers but rather sandwich or freezer bags to store your food. Many brands are microwave safe enabling you to heat the food in the bag and then dispose of it for easy cleanup. In the freezer, stack frozen items like you would on a bookshelf. Items will take up less space and you will not have additional storage containers to find a place for after you use the contents. Also, utilize koozies for glass bottles to prevent those items from rattling as you travel down the road. Buy those dollar store spring loaded curtain rods to put across the freezer and fridge to keep items from falling on the floor when you open the door or that may have shifted during drive time.

### Storing extra blankets and more

Fold extra blankets longwise and put them under the mattress. You can also store your window shade under the mattress.



### Hooks

Having hooks in various locations throughout the truck whether the removable kind or something more permanent will help keep things like coats, jackets, hats, and backpacks off of the floor and neat and tidy.



### Seat Organizers

These types of organizers hang over the back of your seat or the front and are great to keep documents, maps, or paperwork that you want easy access to.

### 5 Gallon Buckets

This is a great way to store items that you are currently not using like extra clothing, seasonal coats or non-perishable food items. They store nicely under your bunk and save space.

What are your storage hacks to keep your cab organized? Share your tips with our Brake Time community. Check it out at [www.braketime.com](http://www.braketime.com). ■



# Pro Driver Tip



## Storage & Organization



*Bob and Linda Caffee have been married since 1978 and on the road together since 2000. They started Expediting as team drivers and owner operators in 2005. They travel with Texas, their German Shepard and Squeaky the cat and are also speakers at many events covering topics on trucking, expediting and being an owner-operator.*

*Both are involved in numerous organizations including, Trucker Buddy International, Women in Trucking and are Freightliner Team Run Smart Pro's. They are also fill-in drivers for Dale Coyne IndyCar Race Team and drive one of the race transporters.*



# RAND McNALLY TND™ TABLET 85

Advanced truck tablet



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## Overhauled & upgraded

A giant leap forward in routing technology, the TND™ Tablet 85 features sophisticated truck navigation, a modern clean interface, and striking visuals. At the heart of the device is Rand McNally's proprietary new Rand Navigation 2.0 software. Powered by a hexacore processor and customized operating system, the dashboard tablet is faster, smarter, and smoother.



# Lighting It Up

By Gary Johnson – CB Handle “The Hustler”

When it comes to the subject of headlamps it always seems to become a lengthy discussion amongst drivers as to which brand is best and what types should be used. For many years the Holagen lamp has stood tall as it withstood many elements throughout the years but with the development of LED's they've beamed themselves into our hearts as they've quickly outperformed their predecessors almost overnight.

In my years of being on the road, a mixed bag of emotions comes with this through the opinions of many drivers. I myself am a firm believer in the LED for many reasons. Including the longevity, the brightness, the price point and the safety it provides.

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*Be mindful of the lumens you are purchasing.*

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Speaking of safety - lets briefly touch on the safety of others that one should be aware of whether you are using Holagen or LED headlamps. Be mindful of the lumens you are purchasing. Please do your research on this as you could potentially purchase a bulb that is too powerful and could result in a citation, this includes the use of an LED Lightbar.

Although there is no federal mandate for the use of the LED headlamps and light bars, there are DOT approved applications for such. Make sure to purchase accordingly. No matter the application; LED Headlamp, Holagenlamp or LED Lightbar make sure upon installation that they are pointed in the right direction. Meaning that you position the lamp or lightbar to be mindful of the safety of the public, maintain regulations guidelines and still give yourself optimal vision.

The top of the low beam shining on the wall should be at or slightly below the height of the center of the headlight lens for most vehicles. You should expect the light pattern to be higher on the right side (passenger side) to illuminate road signs and lower on the driver's side to prevent blinding other drivers. Also, keep in mind a few simple rules when using your high beams:

- Your high beams should always be dimmed when following within 200 feet of another vehicle.
- You should not use your high beams when driving on a lighted road or in fog, rain, snow, or smoke.
- You are not permitted to use your high beams when you cannot see at least 200 feet ahead of you.

Whether LED headlights are legal or not varies from state to state, but in general, LED headlights are road legal if they project a beam that allows you to see between 50 and 100 meters ahead of you. They should be bright enough to be seen but must not be so bright that they dazzle other vehicles on the road. For example, you can have 2900K bulbs that are brighter than 6000K bulbs. The measure of brightness, or light intensity, is in the units of lumens. Sylvania SilverStar headlights range from 1200 to 1700 lumens. According to the US DOT, an HID (Holagen) bulb is roughly 3000 lumens. Headlamps shall be mounted and aimable following FMVSS No. 108. More information can be found on the FMCSA (Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) regulations page.



Auxiliary driving lamps and front fog lamps shall be mounted so that the beams are aimable and the mounting shall prevent the aim of the lighting device from being disturbed while the vehicle is operating on public roads. Please also make sure when in lighted areas, within city limits and surrounded with congested traffic do not use your high beams, LED Lightbars or even

floodlight applications. This may cause harm to other's vision which could be permanent and create a potential accident scene of large proportions if one becomes temporarily blinded from your actions. Such times to utilize those applications would be in rural areas with at least a 1/2 mile or more of vision such as open plains, deserts or mountain ranges.

Thank you All for taking the time to read this article as I hope it was educational and useful to you all. Safe Travels in your journeys drivers and Thank You for everything you do in this industry no matter the division you ride for! ■



Gary Johnson is a member of the RoadPro Pro Driver Council and has been driving for 17 years and grew up in the transportation business. He is an owner/operator leased to Combined Transport and drives a 2017 Freightliner Cascadia. He is also a singer and made it through the first round auditions for America's Got Talent and appeared on Deal or No Deal with Howie Mandel.