

# Heavy Vehicles Productivity Project Research Amongst Truck Drivers and the General Motoring Public

A Quantitative Report  
[September 2008]



Email: [umr@umr.co.nz](mailto:umr@umr.co.nz)  
[www.umr.co.nz](http://www.umr.co.nz)

**WELLINGTON**  
3 Collina Terrace  
Thorndon  
WELLINGTON 6011  
NEW ZEALAND  
Tel: +64 4 473 1061  
Fax: +64 4 472 3501

**AUCKLAND**  
11 Earle Street  
Parnell  
AUCKLAND 1052  
NEW ZEALAND  
Tel: +64 9 373 8700  
Fax: +64 9 373 8704

**SYDNEY**  
Level One, Suite 105  
332-342 Oxford Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2022  
AUSTRALIA  
Tel: +61 2 9386 1622  
Fax: +61 2 9386 1633

# Table of Contents

---

	<u>Page Number</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. Summary of Key Findings	4
3. Public Views of Truck Drivers	5
4. Public Concerns about Trucks and Truck Drivers	8
5. Truck Drivers Concerns about the General Motoring Public	13
6. Demographics	16

# 1. Introduction

---

As part of its Heavy Vehicles Productivity Project, the Ministry of Transport wished to understand more about the relationship between truck drivers and other road users. It therefore commissioned UMR to conduct a research project which could be divided into two sections:

- Research into attitudes towards trucks and truck drivers amongst drivers of private motor vehicles
- Research into truck drivers' attitudes towards drivers of private motor vehicles.

The research into attitudes towards trucks and truck drivers amongst drivers of private motor vehicles was a two stage quantitative project. Both stages involved questions in the UMR omnibus survey, a fortnightly nationwide survey amongst a representative sample of New Zealanders aged 18 years or over. 91% of this sample were drivers of private motor vehicles. The first stage involved a single open-ended question asking about drivers' main concerns about trucks and truck drivers, and was conducted between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2008.

The results of this question were used to develop a list of concerns which respondents were asked directly about in the second stage of the research. The second stage consisted of several structured questions about attitudes towards trucks and truck drivers, including asking respondents to rate how worried they were about the list of specific concerns developed out of the first wave of the research. The fieldwork for the second stage was conducted between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of July 2008.

The margin of error for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level on a sample of n=750 is  $\pm 3.6\%$ .

The research amongst truck drivers consisted of a self-completion survey sent out to a selection of trucking companies. Truck drivers were asked to complete the surveys individually and without reference to others in order to keep responses as individual as possible. We do not know exactly how many surveys were sent out through the Ministry of Transport, but it should be noted that the number of surveys returned (n=250) was more than twice the original target number of surveys (n=100).

The margin of error for a 50% figure at the 95% confidence level on a sample of n=250 is  $\pm 6.9\%$ . This assumes that the sample of truck drivers who returned the survey is representative of all truck drivers.

## 2. Summary of Key Findings

---

The research showed clear differences in the attitudes of the general public towards truck drivers and vice versa.

- Truck drivers think that the general motoring public has a more negative opinion of them than they actually do, with 46% of truck drivers believing that the general public viewed them negatively compared with 28% of the general public who actually did have negative views of truck drivers.
- Most truck drivers have neutral opinions of the general motoring public, with the proportion with positive opinions (18%) not that different from the proportion who viewed the motoring public negatively (22%).

There were also differences in terms of the specific behaviours people were concerned about.

- The general public's key concerns about truck drivers included driver fatigue, trucks driving too fast and trucks being difficult to overtake.
- Truck drivers who believed that the general public viewed them negatively tended to think that they were concerned about the size of trucks and trucks driving too slowly.
- The sample of truck drivers generally did not see the public's concerns as particularly justified. The concern they were most likely to say was justified was about truck drivers driving too close, with 49% saying that this was a justified concern.

Asked which of the motoring public's driving practices they found most concerning, truck drivers were most likely to cite overtaking, generally inconsiderate or dangerous driving, poor lane changing / insufficient use of indicators and cutting in.

- The presence of overtaking and cutting in on this list is logically connected to their belief that the general public felt trucks drove too slow. This is because overtaking is clearly more likely to occur when the other vehicle is travelling faster than the truck, and cutting in may well often be associated with overtaking.

### 3. Public Views of Truck Drivers

Declared public attitudes towards trucks were fairly evenly divided although those with positive opinions outnumbered those with negative opinions. 38% of the general public said that they had a generally positive view of trucks on New Zealand’s state highways and local roads. 33% had neutral views, while 28% stated that they viewed trucks negatively. Generally speaking, the more often people drove on roads where there were reasonable numbers of trucks, the more likely they were to view them positively.

<b>HOW THE GENERAL MOTORING PUBLIC VIEW TRUCKS</b>	
<i>Using a 1 to 5 scale where 1 means “very positive” and 5 means “very negative”, how positive or negative a view do you have of trucks in New Zealand state highways and local roads?</i>	
	<b>Late July 08 %</b>
1 – Very positive	15
2	23
<b>TOTAL POSITIVE (1+2)</b>	<b>38</b>
3	33
4	16
5 – Very negative	12
<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE (4+5)</b>	<b>28</b>
Unsure or N/A	1
Base: All (n=750)	

Truck drivers, on the other hand, often felt that the general public had a comparatively negative view of them. 46% of truck drivers thought that the general public had negative views towards truck drivers, 18% higher than the proportion of the general public who actually admitted having negative opinions of trucks.

18% of truck drivers believed that the general public had positive opinions of truck drivers, while 36% thought that they had neutral views or felt unable to express an opinion on this.

## HOW TRUCK DRIVERS THINK THE GENERAL PUBLIC VIEWS THEM

*What do you think the motoring general public's view of truck drivers is?*

	August 08 %
They have a very positive view	1
They have a somewhat positive view	17
<b>TOTAL POSITIVE VIEW</b>	<b>18</b>
They have neither a positive or negative view	32
They have a somewhat negative view	42
They have a very negative view	4
<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE VIEW</b>	<b>46</b>
Unsure	4
Base: All (n=250)	

Although a plurality of truck drivers believed that the general motoring public had negative views of truck drivers, truck drivers tended to have neutral opinions of the general motoring public. 57% of truck drivers said that they had neutral views of the general motoring public while another 3% were unsure. 18% of truck drivers said that they viewed the general motoring public positively while 22% reported that they viewed them negatively.

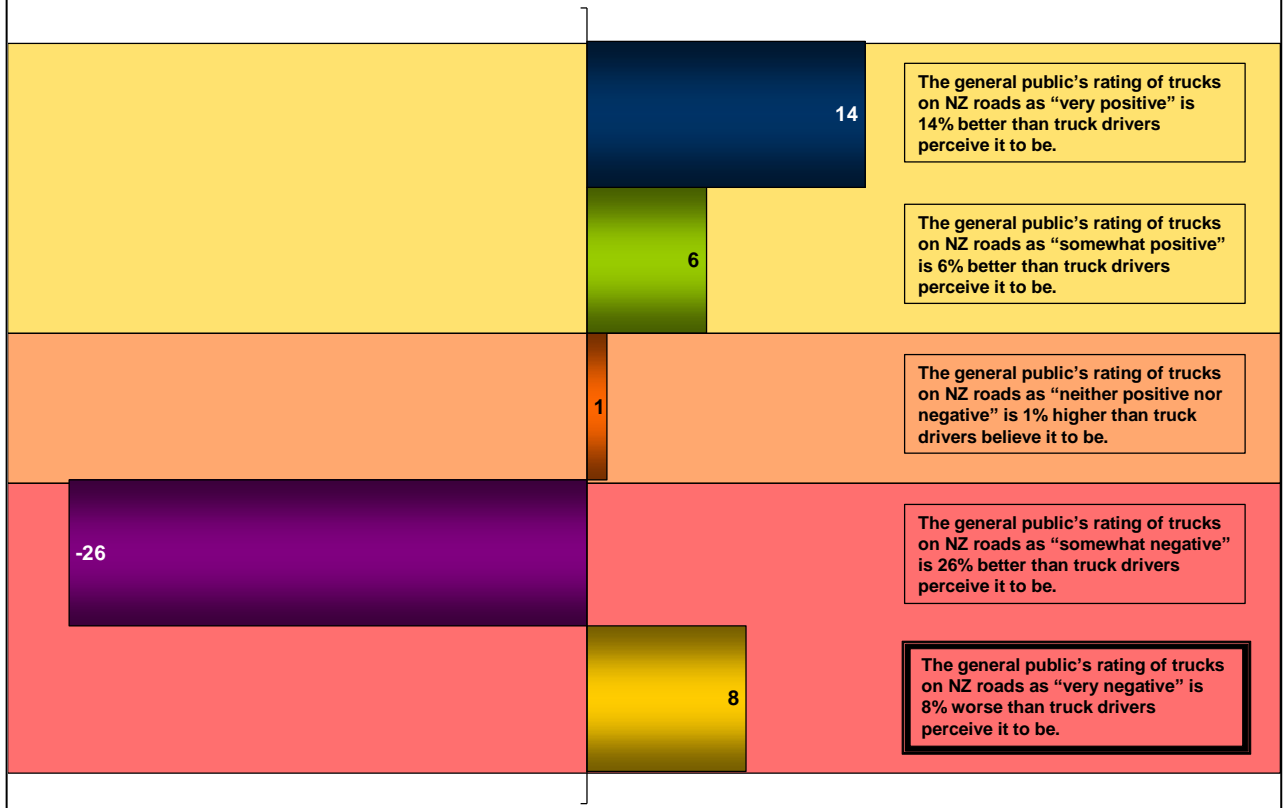
## VIEW OF GENERAL MOTORING PUBLIC

*How positive or negative a view do you have of the general motoring public that you encounter when driving on New Zealand state highways and local roads?*

	August 08 %
1 – Very positive	2
2	16
<b>TOTAL POSITIVE (1+2)</b>	<b>18</b>
3	57
4	21
5 – Very negative	1
<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE (4+5)</b>	<b>22</b>
Unsure or N/A	0
No answer	3
Base: All (n=250)	

# Gap Analysis: Views of Trucks on New Zealand Roads

5 - Very Negative 4 - Somewhat Negative 3 - Neither Positive nor Negative 2 - Somewhat Positive 1 - Very Positive



## 4. Public Concerns about Trucks and Truck Drivers

In the first omnibus survey we asked the general public to identify their biggest concerns with trucks on New Zealand state highways and local roads. One in three respondents (34%) did not have any problems or general concerns about the trucks on New Zealand's state highways and local roads. Another 28% expressed concern about driving too fast.

A further 16% were concerned about the number of trucks on New Zealand roads, 11% were concerned about their physical impact on the road and 11% were concerned about the size, saying they are too big.

<b>GENERAL PUBLIC'S CONCERNS ABOUT TRUCKS ON NEW ZEALAND ROADS (First omnibus survey)</b>	
<i>Thinking about trucks on New Zealand state highways and local roads, what concerns, if any, do you have? What other concerns do you have?</i>	
	JUN 08 %
No problems/ No concerns	33.9
Travel too fast/ Speed concerns	27.5
Too many on road/ Concern about number on road	16.3
Ruining roads/ Roads not built for trucks	11.4
Too big	11.0
Not efficient transport/ Should use rail	9.4
Driver concerns (tired, overworked, etc)	4.8
Inconsiderate truck drivers	4.6
Dangerous driving	3.4
Difficult to overtake	3.2
Noise/ Pollution/ Carbon footprint	3.1
Travel too slow/ Hold up traffic/ Congestion issues	3.1
Dangerous heavy loads	2.2
Follow too closely	2.0
Safety (General)	1.5
Insecure loads	1.0
Block view of road ahead	0.6
Need better roads for trucks	0.4
Base: All, n=750 This was a multiple response question so percentages may not sum to 100	

In the second wave of omnibus questions we asked the general public to rate how concerned they were about specific aspects of truck driving, with these aspects reflecting the findings of the first wave of omnibus questions. The general motoring public expressed greatest concern about fatigue amongst truck drivers, with 64% saying they were concerned (1+2 on a 1-5 scale where 1 means 'very concerned') and 38% very concerned. Around the same proportion were concerned with trucks driving too fast (61%, with 36% very concerned). At the opposite end of the scale, trucks driving too slow was the issue that caused the least amount of concern (24%).

We asked the 46% of truck drivers who believed that the general public had negative views of truck drivers what they thought those negative views were. These truck drivers often thought that motorists concerns were about the size of trucks (37%) and about trucks driving too slowly (22%), with a key concern with the size seeming to be their relatively slow speed. There were also comments about their impact on the environment (including using too much fuel and space) and about the perceived inconsiderate behaviour of truck drivers.

The wider sample of all truck drivers were also asked to rate how justified the public's concerns were about truck driver behaviour. Defining 'justified' as 1 or 2 on a 5 point scale where 1 meant completely justified, none of the specific behaviours tested were seen as justified by a majority of truck drivers. 47% of truck drivers felt that the public's concerns about trucks driving too close were justified, and 34% felt that concerns about truck's speed were justified (although the open-ended question suggests that they saw slow speeds as being of a particular concern, when in actual fact the public were more concerned about trucks going too fast).

**GENERAL PUBLIC'S CONCERN ABOUT ISSUES INVOLVING TRUCKS ON NEW ZEALAND ROADS**  
(Second omnibus survey)

*Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means very concerned and 5 not concerned at all, how concerned are you about the following issues involving trucks on New Zealand state highways and local roads?*

	Lt JUL 08 %							
	1 - Very concerned	2	TOTAL CONCERNED 1 + 2	3	4	5 - Not concerned at all	TOTAL NOT CONCERNED 4 + 5	Unsure
Driver fatigue	38	26	64	18	9	7	16	2
Trucks driving too fast	36	25	61	17	12	10	22	-
Trucks being difficult to overtake and blocking the view of the road ahead	29	24	53	21	14	11	25	1
Inconsiderate or dangerous driving from truck drivers	32	18	50	18	18	13	31	1
Their physical impact, such as damaging the road	24	26	50	25	14	10	24	1
Heavy loads	22	26	48	25	14	11	25	2
Their impact on the environment	20	27	47	29	13	10	23	1
The size of the trucks	21	24	45	23	14	17	31	1
The number of trucks on the road	21	23	44	25	16	15	31	-
Noise from trucks	11	18	29	29	23	18	41	1
Trucks driving too slow	9	15	24	32	21	22	43	1

Base: All, n=750

## PERCEIVED MAIN CONCERNS OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC

*What do you think the general public's main concerns are about trucks on New Zealand state highways and local roads?*

	%
<b>TRUCK'S SIZE</b> Big and slow (21.7%), People are intimidated by trucks, size of trucks (14.8%)	36.5
<b>TRUCK'S SPEED</b> They hold up traffic (15.7%), Too slow on hills, take off (6.1%)	21.8
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b> They take up too much energy and space on roads (13.0%), Create pollution (6.1%)	19.1
<b>INCONSIDERATE TRUCK DRIVERS</b> Unprofessional truck drivers, arrogant, speeding (13.9%), Misconception of professionalism of truck drivers (4.3%)	18.2
<b>DANGEROUSLY HEAVY TRUCKS / DAMAGE ROADS</b>	17.4
<b>OVERTAKING</b> Drivers who have to pass trucks no matter what (6.1%), Block traffic and obscure signs (6.1%)	12.2
<b>UNJUSTIFIED AVERSION TO TRUCKS</b> Think trucks shouldn't be there (6.1%), Public don't have knowledge of how trucks operate (5.2%), Most motorists ok, takes few to be silly (0.9%)	12.2
<b>THE NUMBER OF TRUCKS ON THE ROAD</b>	7.0
<b>DANGEROUS TRUCK DRIVERS</b> Truck drivers pointed at first for accidents (5.2%)	5.2
<b>BEING FOLLOWED TOO CLOSELY BY TRUCKS</b>	3.5
<b>OTHER</b> Create too much spray (6.1%), Influence of government/media to use rail and shipping (3.5%)	9.6
<p>Base: Respondents who think the general motoring public's view of truck drivers is either somewhat negative or very negative (n=115) Multiple response question, responses may not sum to 100</p>	

## TRUCK DRIVERS' VIEWS ON WHETHER CONCERNS ARE JUSTIFIED

*Using a 1 to 5 scale where 1 means "very justified" and 5 means "not justified at all", how justified do you think general motorist's concerns are for each of the following issues?*

August 08	1 – Very Justified	2	TOTAL JUSTIFIED (1+2)	3	4	5 – Not Justified At All	TOTAL NOT JUSTIFIED (4+5)	Unsure	No Answer
Being followed too closely by trucks	19	28	47	24	16	9	25	1	3
Truck's speed	9	25	34	30	22	11	33	2	1
Trucks being too difficult to overtake	8	24	32	25	19	21	40	1	2
Inconsiderate driving by truck drivers	11	20	31	27	26	11	37	2	3
Dangerous driving by truck drivers	18	11	29	26	24	16	40	3	2
Insecure loads on trucks	19	10	29	20	27	19	46	3	2
Trucks blocking view of the road ahead	7	18	25	22	20	29	49	2	2
Truck's size	7	17	24	29	18	23	41	4	2
Dangerously heavy on trucks	14	7	21	18	25	30	55	4	2
The number of trucks on the road	5	12	17	24	22	32	54	2	3
Noise from trucks	4	10	14	28	23	31	54	1	3

Base: All (n=250)

## 5. Truck Drivers Concerns about the General Motoring Public

Truck drivers' main concerns about the behaviour of other members of the general motoring public were overtaking, generally inconsiderate driving, poor lane changing and cutting in. More than half the truck drivers in the survey (58%) said that they were concerned about overtaking, while 38% simply criticised other drivers' general lack of consideration. Around a quarter identified not indicating and/or changing lanes without proper warning as a key concern, while another quarter complained about other drivers cutting in in front of their trucks.

Truck drivers were more likely to complain about other drivers driving too slowly than about them driving too quickly (although speed was almost certainly a factor in concerns about overtaking).

<b>CONCERNING BEHAVIOURS</b>	
<i>What specific behaviours by the general motoring public cause you the most concern as a truck driver?</i>	
	%
<b>OVERTAKING</b> People who pass in stupid, dangerous, unsafe places (26.8%), Passing on corners (9.6%), Desperation to be in front of truck, not behind (9.2%), Passing a truck, then slowing down (6.0%), Passing on yellow lines (4.4%), Unsafe passing (1.6%)	57.6
<b>INCONSIDERATE DRIVERS</b> Inconsideration of trucks, their size and weight, no braking space (25.2%), Impatient, inconsiderate drivers, no respect for trucks (7.6%), Blocking access to driveways and no stopping zones (3.2%), Inconsiderate pedestrians (0.8%), Following with lights on full-beam (0.8%), Drivers not checking rear vision mirror (0.8%)	38.4
<b>LANE CHANGING / INDICATING ETC.</b> Not using indicators (10.0%), Pulling out of side streets or getting out of traffic suddenly (4.0%), Not indicating at roundabouts (3.6%), Dangerous lane changing at traffic lights (2.4%), Failing to keep in lanes (2.4%), Braking unexpectedly (2.0%), Stopping without indicating (0.8%) Cyclists not in their lanes causing trucks to go in the next lane (0.4%)	25.6
<b>CUTTING IN</b> Cutting in, forcing a gap (10.8%), Pulling in when road goes from two lanes to one (5.2%), Pulling in when there is little gap (4.8%), Pulling in too quick after overtaking (3.2%)	24.0
<b>DRIVING TOO SLOWLY</b> Driving too slowly causing a back-log, not letting traffic pass (10.4%); Slowing down on the flats then fast uphill and passing (5.6%), Oblivious campers, motor-homes, drivers towing other traffic (2.0%), People that speed up at passing lanes (0.8%)	18.8
<b>OTHER UNSAFE DRIVING PRACTICES</b> Tailgating (6.4%), People who disregard the safety of others and themselves (3.2%), Talking/texting on mobile phones (2.8%), Traveling with no headlights (1.2%), No safety belts for kids (0.4%)	14.0
<b>FAILING TO GIVE WAY</b> Not giving way at intersections (5.2%), Not observing give way rules (2.8%), Drivers failing to stop at stop signs (2.0%), Not obeying roundabout rules (0.8%)	10.8
<b>OTHER</b> Not obeying speed signs (6.8%), Lack of concentration (4.8%), Lack of knowledge (4.8%)	16.4
Base: All (n=250) Multiple response question	

When truck drivers were prompted with a list of concerns about the behaviour of other drivers, the same patterns emerged. Overtaking came through as the biggest concern, with 88% saying that they were concerned about this issue (1 or 2 on a 5 point scale where 1 meant very concerned) and 67% saying that they were very concerned. This was followed by inconsiderate driving (76% concerned including 36% very concerned) and dangerous driving (75% concerned including 46% very concerned).

Motorists driving too slowly again emerged ahead of motorists driving too quickly, with 59% saying that they were concerned about motorists travelling too slowly (29% very concerned) and 48% saying that they were concerned about them driving too fast (19% very concerned).

## CONCERN ABOUT ISSUES INVOLVING THE GENERAL MOTORING PUBLIC ON NEW ZEALAND ROADS

*Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “very concerned” and 5 means “not concerned at all”, how concerned are you about each of the following issues involving general motorists that you encounter when driving on New Zealand state highways and local roads?*

August 08	1 – Very Concerned	2	TOTAL CONCERNED (1+2)	3	4	5 – Not Concerned At All	TOTAL NOT CONCERNED (4+5)	Unsure	No Answer
Overtaking trucks in a dangerous way	67	21	88	7	3	0	3	0	2
Inconsiderate behaviour towards truck drivers	36	40	76	15	5	1	6	0	3
Dangerous driving	46	29	75	16	6	1	7	0	2
Motorists driving too slow	29	30	59	25	12	3	15	0	1
Following trucks too closely	29	28	57	22	13	5	18	0	3
Motorists driving too fast	19	29	48	23	22	6	28	0	1

Base: All (n=250)

## 6. Demographics

---

<b>FREQUENCY OF EXPERIENCES WITH TRUCKS OR TRUCK AND TRAILER UNITS - GENERAL MOTORING PUBLIC</b>	
<i>How often do you drive a private motor vehicle on a road where you encounter trucks or truck and trailer units?</i>	
	<b>Lt JUL 08 %</b>
Every day	51
Several times a week	28
Every one or two weeks	16
Around once a month	4
Less often	1
Never	-
Unsure	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>
Base: 91% of respondents, those who said they drive a private motor vehicle at least once a week, n=682	

### LICENCE TYPE- TRUCK DRIVERS

*What type of licence or licences do you hold?*

Type of licence	% Hold licence
Class 1: Car licence	89.2
Class 2: Medium rigid vehicle	89.9
Class 3: Medium combination	74
Class 4: Heavy rigid	87.6
Class 5: Heavy combination	77.2
Class 6: Motorcycle licence	40.4
(F) Forklift	40.8
(D) Dangerous goods	34
(W) Wheels	32.4
(R) Rollers	24
(T) Tracks	23.6
(P) Passenger	8.4
(V) Vehicle recovery	2.8
(I) Driving instructor	0.4
Other	10.8
Don't know	0
No answer	1.6

Base: All (n=250)  
Multiple response question, responses may not sum to 100

### DRIVING TYPE- TRUCK DRIVERS

*What sort of driving do you usually do?*

Type of driving	%
Mainly town/city	20
Mainly open road	20
Both	59
Unsure	0
No answer	1

Base: All (n=250)