

PROFILE

Bob Gauvin Trucking

Langley, BC

Dump truck driver loads up on hauling safe

When you turn onto a busy road in a big truck weighed down with a heavy load of gravel, you worry about a lot of things. You worry about accidents. You worry that the load is too heavy for the truck, and your livelihood will be ruined. You worry that something will happen to you, and you won't be able to take care of your family.

Bob Gauvin Trucking is a one-man operation. Gauvin, who has been in business since 1990, owns and operates his own gravel truck, Bob Gauvin Trucking. He hauls fill, soil, gravel and other loads for various contractors in the Lower Fraser Valley. As an owner-operator, he's the sole breadwinner for the company — if his health and safety is compromised on the job, there's no one to take over for him. If anything happens to his one and only truck, he, like many other owner-operators of a single truck, is out of work.

“We need to think about staying healthy to keep driving. Most of the time there's not much to worry about, unless we're hauling contaminants and need to wear safety gear.” But Gauvin says his biggest health and safety concerns are not always within his own control.

“I work for the contractors who fill the truck, and I have to stay on good terms with them to keep working. It's hard to get contractors to pay attention to weight limits on the loads they put in my truck,” he says. “The more they load in each truck, the fewer trucks they have to pay for. Sometimes contractors overload the trucks, which can be a very dangerous situation for me as the driver and for everyone else on the road.”

“The first thing that happens if you have an accident with a dump truck is that they weigh the truck and its load. In B.C., the trucker is responsible for his load. Even if the contractor is the one who causes the overload, if you go out on the street with that load, your insurance can be invalid,” he says. “Overloading can be dangerous, and it makes it hard to operate economically if anything happens. If I can't get insurance or if I get heavy fines, I could be out of business.”

While Gauvin says overloading beyond weight limits has been a constant problem since he went into the business, he believes things will get better. He would like to see the responsibilities for overloading shared with contractors, as is the case in Ontario. He hopes organizations like the WCB will look into these types of issues as part of improving health and safety for the industry.

Being a one-man operation means that he can't separate safety from the business, if he doesn't look after his own safety, no one else will — staying safe means staying in business.

For more information please contact the Small Business Service Centre at:

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