



ALLIANCE FOR DRIVER SAFETY & SECURITY, LLC

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NEWS RELEASE

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New Study Finds Gaping Hole in DOT Drug Testing Results

Washington, D.C. – The US Dept. of Transportation (DOT) prohibits commercial truck drivers, airline pilots, train engineers and other safety sensitive occupations from using illegal drugs, whether on-duty or off-duty. But DOT’s testing method, a urinalysis, is missing 90% of the actual drug users, according to a new study of nearly 1 million truck driver drug test results between 2017 and 2022.

Drawing from 936,872 licensed commercial truck driver pre-employment urine and hair drug screens submitted by Trucking Alliance member carriers, researchers at the University of Central Arkansas concluded that hair drug tests uncovered:

- 25x more Opioids
- 23x more Cocaine
- 13x more Amphetamines/Methamphetamines
- 5x more Marijuana
- 65x more Ecstasy
- 3x more PCP

Results indicate hair testing produced a 9x higher positivity rate than the DOT required urinalysis.

Further, hair testing uncovered more positive drug tests across:

1. Every illegal drug,
2. Every examined age group, and
3. Every U.S. state.

Previous research from the University of Central Arkansas demonstrated that if the national truck driver population submitted to hair drug tests and results were submitted to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration’s (FMCSA) Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse, an additional 276,500 truck drivers would be prohibited from driving.

“I don’t see how anyone can reasonably argue with these drug test results, given the large disparity in positivity rates between hair and urine testing for every drug, and a sample of almost 1 million drug

tests,” observed Dr. Doug Voss, one of the UCA researchers. “At some point it’s like arguing whether the sun will rise tomorrow.”

Texas is #1 in Drug Use and Large Truck Crashes

Of the 173,408 pre-employment drug test results analyzed for 2022, Texas had the most positive hair drug test results, with marijuana and cocaine the leading drugs. FMCSA recently stated that Texas also leads the nation in large truck crashes.

Other Employers Don’t Know the Drivers’ Names

In 2015, Congress directed the Secretary of Transportation to approve hair drug tests as an option for employers of commercial truck drivers. Positive hair test results could be submitted to the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. DOT was given one year to comply. Yet, eight years later, DOT cites bureaucratic delays for not implementing the law and the agency refuses to accept hair test results, even from nationally accredited laboratories.

Truck Drivers Caught for Drug Use Simply Go Elsewhere

Had Trucking Alliance carriers relied solely on the DOT required urinalysis, about **90%** of the actual drug users would have escaped detection; more than 26,000 licensed truck drivers. The companies disqualified them, but since hair test results are not in the Clearinghouse database, other employers didn’t know their names. Those 26,000 drivers likely found trucking jobs elsewhere.

DOT Doesn’t Know How Many Large Truck Crashes are Drug-Related

“In 2021, almost 5,000 people died in large truck crashes, and nobody knows how many of those crashes involved truck drivers with an illegal drug habit,” said Lane Kidd. “DOT didn’t verify that all those truck drivers took a post-accident drug test. DOT should audit every such truck driver, make sure the driver submits to a drug test and if the driver doesn’t, revoke their commercial driver’s license.”

DOT Secretary Pete Buttigieg Has a Public Safety Crisis

“This study concludes that our family and friends are driving alongside thousands of truck drivers who use illegal drugs,” said Kidd. “If airline pilots had similar drug test data, all planes would be grounded. Yet truck drivers and airline pilots must meet the same drug testing rules. If taking illegal drugs, both occupations create the same risks to public safety. Nothing in the above referenced 2015 federal code prevents Secretary Buttigieg from recognizing hair test results today. If done by an accredited lab, the Secretary should submit those results to the Clearinghouse. Further delay would be incredible and inexcusable.”

([The new study can be found here.](#))

End of Release

About the Trucking Alliance: The Alliance for Driver Safety & Security, also known as The Trucking Alliance, is a coalition of like-minded freight transportation companies, united in a mission to advance federal safety reforms that can reduce and ultimately eliminate all large truck crash fatalities. Trucking Alliance member companies embrace standards that exceed the federal government’s minimum insurance and operating requirements. The companies collectively employ more than 82,000 people, including 65,000 professional drivers, of whom 49% are Minority, compared to an industry average of 32% Minority. More information about The Trucking Alliance can be found at <https://truckingalliance.org/>

About Hair Drug Testing: Information about hair drug testing can be found in this recent Petition for Exemption that would have allowed positive hair drug test results of truck drivers into the Drug and Alcohol Clearinghouse. FMCSA Administrator Robin Hutcherson denied the petition on December 23, 2022. Click [here](#) to access the Petition for Exemption.