

# FIRST GEAR

## NEW DRIVER NEWSLETTER

Presented by



APRIL 2021



### The CB Radio

*The most important safety tool in trucking*

By Kim McDonnell, RoadPro Family of Brands

If you are new to the trucking industry, you may think that having your smartphone with weather, navigation, and traffic apps is all you will need to do your job and get you to your next delivery. You may think that having a CB radio is not needed in today's world with all of those apps on your phone and that a CB is some relic from days gone by. But talk to any driver with a few years of experience under their belt, and they will tell you otherwise. The CB radio remains one of the most important safety tools you can have on your truck today.

Take it from veteran driver Bill Weaver who would not be without a CB radio in his truck. "Other than visual communication, it's the only tool we have that will be able to tell you why the traffic stopped or when the road conditions up ahead could change in an instant," said Weaver. "The CB is the first line of defense when it comes to information on the roads."



He continued to share how his CB got him out of a jam or dangerous situation time and again and said that for trucking, a CB is the same as wearing a hard hat in a construction zone. You would not want to be without one when you need it. He recalled a time when he was just about to crest a hill, and someone started shouting over the radio that there was stopped traffic on the other side. Without that warning and adjusting his speed, he knew he would have been in trouble and most likely could not stop and avoid an accident.

*"The CB is the first line of defense when it comes to information on the roads."*

*-Bill Weaver*

With a smartphone, you also have to keep in mind that cell service could be impacted. Perhaps you travel through deserts or mountains where service is not always guaranteed, or a storm impacted a cell tower, and there is no reception. Having that CB in your truck will allow you to communicate and get the help you need or provide help to other drivers that may be heading into trouble.

Mike Landis, an owner-operator known in the trucking world for his cool cabover, would undoubtedly agree. "The cell phone doesn't help with what is a mile ahead of you," said Landis. "There is certain technology that doesn't get outdated, and in trucking, it is the CB, and as great of technology that is out there today, that isn't as fast as the guy coming towards you that can alert you of an incident up ahead well before your phone will." He also mentioned that it is just as important to notify people as to be notified and give others on the road a heads up going the other way on what they may be headed into. "You don't have their phone number, but you can reach them if they have a CB and let them know what is happening."

Both agreed there are still some that use the CB radio for useless chatter, and it can be annoying, but still, neither one of them would be without one in their truck. "Turn the radio down just so you can hear when the chatter increases; most times, that is a good indication that something is going on up ahead that you may need to know," recommended Landis.

*While CB radio technology hasn't really changed in decades, RoadPro Family of Brands recently launched a new Hands-Free CB Radio from RoadKing, bringing the CB radio into the 21st century.*

Another advantage they pointed to was that when COVID shut down the country, it also shut down services at many travel centers and truck stops. Many drivers used the CB to communicate to others where food was available, who had open showers, and who was providing other services or food options for truckers. "COVID created conversations on the CB that helped other drivers so they didn't waste time pulling into a truck stop that might not have what you need," Landis said, "that really helped other drivers."

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This industry-first CB is ready to go right out of the box. It includes the best in class RoadKing CB Radio, the RoadKing 940 noise-canceling Bluetooth® headset, which is already paired to the radio, a dynamic 4-pin handheld CB microphone, and an optional push-to-talk button. "This new radio is one of the best I have ever had, and I love the aesthetics and the layout of the radio," commented Weaver. "There is a 7-color display that allows me to adjust the light, making it easier on your eyes." He pointed out that having the ability to change

up the color is helpful if you wear tinted sunglasses or all the other lights in your interior may be the same color. Other features include NOAA weather alerts, PA function, and talk back to reduce the echo that often comes with other CB's.

To learn more about the new RoadKing hands-free CB radio, watch this [informative video](#), or visit our website at [www.roadprobrand.com](http://www.roadprobrand.com).





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# CB TIMELINE

**1945**

Al Gross invents the CB radio. In response, the FCC creates personal radio services.

**1960's**

Solid-state technology replaces vacuum tubes, making CBs cheaper, smaller, and lighter. Popularity grows among contractors, construction workers, and small businesses.

**1969**

Channel 9 reserved for emergency use.

**1973**

The oil crisis leads to a 55-mph nationwide speed limit.

**1975**

C.W. McCall's song "Convoy" hits No. 1 on the country, and pop charts help fuel the CB craze.

**1977**

*Smokey and the Bandit* released. The number of CB bands increases from 23 to 40.

**1980**

FCC drops widely ignored the requirement that CB operators be licensed.

**2021**

RoadPro Family of Brands launches the **NEW RoadKing RKCBBT CB Radio** the first of its kind hands-free CB Radio







## Unrealistic Expectations

By Kearsey Rothlander, *Truckin Along with Kearsey*

People entering trucking schools often don't know what they don't know. They are unaware of the difficulty of learning the skills required to pass the exam, let alone the length of time it takes to become a safe and successful trucker. This ignorance creates unrealistic expectations in their minds, and often drivers then struggle with their own self-worth throughout training and their first year in the industry. Most drivers will question whether or not trucking is for them or whether they are meeting their dispatchers' standards. "Did I mess up by quitting my last job of 5 years?", "What did I get myself into?" and "How am I ever going to back into docks with ease?"

Drivers often disappoint themselves by not meeting the goals they set for themselves, not realizing they expect too much from a newly trained driver. Believe it or not, carriers expect new drivers to make mistakes, hit things, and violate Hours of Service regulations. The new drivers are the ones putting too much pressure on themselves, not necessarily the dispatcher or carrier. Depression and a sense of despair overwhelm the driver on bad days, while excitement and pride wash over them on good days. The driver's first year is often a roller coaster of emotions, cycling between the two peaks. However, had the driver been prepared and researched, the driver may have been spared that torment.

*There is hope. It gets better with time and practice, and there is no other way to learn it than by experience.*



Unless one grew up on a farm or boat marina pulling trailers, most new drivers are at least concerned, if not downright terrified, about backing a 53-foot attachment to the already larger-than-life tractor. CDL schools teach reference points to flawlessly put the trailer in the space every time; then the driver goes into the real world only to find no reference points. There are no whistles to stop the driver from hitting another vehicle. No trainers to get that trailer in the door if one fails. Sometimes the consignees do not provide ample space or lighting, making the maneuver seem almost impossible. Yard dogs, pedestrians, and other trucks speeding around the driver builds the pressure. Body heat rises, beads of sweat form above the brow, and respiration increases as adrenaline rushes through his/her veins. "How the heck am I going to put this in the dock? It's too dark, it's tight, and I cannot do this. My company was stupid for giving me the keys to this truck." Sound familiar? Of course, it does. Although each feels utterly alone and unique, every driver goes through it—as if he/she is the worst driver that ever existed and there is no hope.



There is hope. It gets better with time and practice, and there is no other way to learn it than by experience. Many instructors will tell drivers that backing "clicks" at six months. Sometimes this is a disservice because the driver then unrealistically expects to be perfect at six months. The truth is the fear and confusion of what to do remains for quite some time. I did not realize the extent to which my skills improved until about 18 months. I still got nervous, frustrated, and pounded the steering wheel from time to time. I cried and pouted and wanted to quit, but I persevered. Upon my second anniversary of driving, I said, "Hmmm, I am getting really good at this." Now at almost six years, the fear of hitting something and confusion is gone. The frustration sometimes returns, but not nearly as often as when I had first started. I now have the observation powers of the amount of room I need to swing, how far to pull up, and understand the reaction of the trailer. But that takes time, and many new drivers want to skip the learning and get right to the good part. Take your time, learn the trade, and stop belittling yourself for every new driver's mistakes. Dwelling on mistakes could distract you enough to cause an accident.

One very important aspect of trucking one must understand—do not compare yourself to others, but to yourself. A brand new driver who compares him/herself to a 20-year driver will fail. Defeat will overtake the driver, and the driver will feel worthless and give up. The best way to prevent this? Track your progress by comparing you to you. When you begin a backing set up, hit the "Stop Watch" on your phone. This does two things. First, it allows a true indication of how long it is taking you to back. When one is scared and nervous, a minute feels like a millennium. When I time new drivers, most guess it took them 45 minutes to an hour to get into the dock. In reality, most take less than 15 minutes. It is the fear and anxiety that prolongs that time in their minds. When a driver understands he/she is actually moving much more quickly than realized, a lot of that pressure and anxiety will be relieved. The second reason for the stopwatch is to track one's progress. If this month it takes 15 minutes, but next month it takes 9 minutes to get into the dock, then the driver's improvement is documented. Doing this will not only build confidence but motivate a driver to continue learning and polishing one's skills. Again, the stress will diminish.



*Always keep in mind that a driver can be their own worst enemy by placing unrealistic expectations upon themselves.*

Many drivers watch other truckers back and think, "I wish I could back like that. I will never be that good." Again, unrealistic expectations. Instead of clinging to self-pity, the new driver needs to pay attention and ask, "At what point did that driver turn the wheel?", "How far did he pull forward before putting the truck in reverse?", "Where are his trailer tandems when he began to swing?" Even the trucks already docks can help the new driver when the person is willing to observe. Look at how closely the other driver's trailer tires are to the guidelines. Are the trailer tires inside the lines or on the lines? And, of course, do not be afraid to ask for assistance. Other drivers will always rather help guide a new driver than deal with the hassles of a collision.



several times, so do it and learn from it.

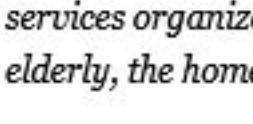
Always keep in mind that a driver can be their own worst enemy by placing unrealistic expectations upon themselves. Backing will take months to years, not days to weeks. All drivers struggle through that time, and it does not make you the worst driver in the world. Watch Youtube videos, other drivers, and even your own backing to gain a better perspective on what can and cannot work for you. Understand that every driver has a different signature setup that works for him/her. I prefer 45-degree angles, but my co-driver prefers 90-degree setups. Neither is wrong as long as we safely achieve our desired results. Take a break. Take a walk. Do some deep breathing. But do not quit. It will get better with time, so build yourself up instead of tearing yourself down for being a "normal" rookie driver. Don't let unrealistic expectations destroy your career before it even begins.

Here's a link to a correlating video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fePmyzSfuSY&t=5s> ●



*After a decade and a half of working for the United States Postal Service, Kearsey Rothlander resigned to attend company-sponsored CDL school in exchange for a one-year commitment as an OTR driver. In the almost six years since, she has driven as both Company Solo and Company Team and been a mentor to hundreds of drivers new to the trucking industry. For the last four years, she has been a successful team trainer and a member of her company's Driver Advisory Board that regularly meets with management to improve the drivers' quality of life. Kearsey has earned a degree in Human & Social Services, as well as History & Political Science. Over the years, she has volunteered for various community services organizations and donating the proceeds of her published novels to military veterans, the elderly, the homeless, and abused animals.*





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## Welcome to the Brotherhood

By Craig Daniels

Welcome to the brotherhood (or sisterhood) of truckers. Or as Tony Justice, famed musician and fellow trucker, calls it, “The Last of the Cowboys.” No matter what driving school you went to or what family member may have provided guidance, most of you will be driving the biggest piece of equipment you have ever seen.

Does driving a truck require you to be a better driver? Absolutely! Is it important to adapt your driving habits and be a more attentive driver, depending on whether you drive a governed or unrestricted truck? Absolutely!

*Remember to get out of your truck once in a while and meet other drivers.*

When rolling down the road, out west especially, if you are in an unrestricted truck, one of the things you have to watch for besides the cars, deer, dogs, motorcycles, turkeys, and so on is that governed trucks don't pull out in front of you doing 55-60 while you are running the roads at 80. These people don't see the real closure rate you have on them and are trying to advance on the track like Bobby Allison at Talladega.



If you hang back the four-second minimum distance from the person you are about to pass, it is frustrating to have them slow down even more, but you have to choose your hole to give carefully. Lie back six or seven seconds, then accelerate back the regular following distance to see how fast you are gaining on the slower truck. This will give you an idea of how much room and time you need to complete the pass. Pay attention to the conditions, weather, and terrain. If you have a better chance to pass going up a hill, that is probably the best time.

Make sure, though, that when you come back in front, you give them the room you would want and more. One way to determine when is the best time to return to the right lane is

when you see the whole truck and an inch or so of sky above it in your mirror. If you want to count, the lines look for no less than five dashed lines between your trailer and the front of the truck you just passed. This is about 150 feet or two truck lengths. When passing the other truck, you can count the time it takes for your nose to go from his trailer doors to his nose and then count that again for your truck (if it is the same length) to clear them and double it again to get your spacing. Watch your mirror and move when you have enough time and not before.

I hope these tips help you. Remember to get out of your truck once in a while and meet other drivers. You can learn a lot from them and don't be afraid to ask questions. Most of the old hats will give you props for asking questions and trying to do the right thing. Welcome to the Brotherhood! ●



*Craig “1oring” Daniels has been driving for Crete/Shaffer/Hunt for the last seven years. Daniels is an Army veteran who went into heavy equipment repair after serving, and that led to almost twenty years of building roads by running asphalt plants, rock quarries, and paving crews. He tried his hand at his own business as a subcontractor, but he started driving truck when the economy tanked in ‘09. He has been led to help and guide others along the way in what he calls divine intervention. He has trained and mentored other Crete/Shaffer/Hunt drivers, helping new family members with policies and procedures unique to the company. He has been exposed to some special people who have taught and continue to teach him the force's ways and is proud to call a few good friends he values and takes their knowledge to heart.*





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# Truck Stop Proteins

## Proteins...What are they really?

By Casey Hayes, RDN

Proteins are one of the three nutrients your body fuels with each day. In the nutrition world, we call these fuels MACROS. These macros are Protein, Carbohydrates, and Fats.

Proteins are mainly animal meats, but they can also be found in small amounts in vegetables like nuts, seeds, beans, and peas. Proteins can also be found in cheese, dairy, and eggs because milk and eggs come from animals.

*Proteins are kind of like the alternator on your truck.*

Proteins are essential to your diet because they help you build muscle, repair tissues in your body, make enzymes and hormones. They also build new hair, nails, skin, bones, and blood. Nobody wants to be lacking hormones and hair, right?

Proteins are kind of like the alternator on your truck. It powers your body (like recharging the battery) and recharges and repairs the other electrical components (like building muscle, skin, blood, etc.). Your truck wouldn't run long if you disconnected your alternator. You would even have a rough time starting each morning without it.

## So, what kind of proteins can you find at truck stops?

- **Dried meats and jerky.** Just watch for high sodium levels that can be bad for high blood pressure and high added sugar, leading to diabetes. Also, watch for nitrites, nitrates, and preservatives that can lead to other health problems. (High blood pressure is like having too high of a current running through your alternator. It will eventually burn out your electrics.)
- **Nuts and seeds.** They come in all kinds of tasty flavors and plenty of varieties. But make sure you watch for high sodium and sugar.
- **Hard-boiled eggs.** Eggs also come from animals and are a great source of protein. They contain healthy forms of cholesterol for hormones and brain health. They also contain choline which is essential to muscles, mood, and memories, and also feeds your brain.
- **Fresh meats.** Fresh meats and cheeses can be found at truck stops in sandwiches, wraps, and packs of loose meat and cheese.
- **Cheese sticks** or single-serve sizes of cheese.
- **Protein powders and drinks.** Watch these for excessive added sugar.

## How much protein should you eat?

The DRI (Dietary Reference Intake) is 0.36 grams per pound of bodyweight or your weight divided by 3 (in grams). **That is the minimum amount.** So if you weigh 180 pounds... 180 divided by 3 = 60 grams per day, minimum. Some dietitians recommend a little higher...roughly 80-150 grams a day. This is especially true if you build muscle, heal any injuries, or cut carbs for diabetes, pre-diabetes, or insulin resistance.

When buying proteins at truck stops, remember that they can be expensive when sold in single portions. Try to buy these items at a grocery store or warehouse stores where they will be cheaper per ounce, since you are buying in larger quantities.

Again, watch for excess added sugars and salts. You don't want the current load in your alternator at too high a charge, burning out your electrical lines... Your Veins!

Lastly, watch how much you are eating, and limit intake to 80-150 grams per day. That is 25-30 grams per meal, plus some in your snacks.

Keep your body charged each day to run more efficiently, and keep those power lines running at max efficiency!

Here's to eating protein confidently... One Mile at a Time. ●



Casey Hayes is a registered dietitian nutritionist and is a wife, mother, and sister-in-law to a truck driver. She has worked the last 11 years on a wholesale warehouse dock while achieving her degree as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. You can find her at [www.CaseyHayesRDN.com](http://www.CaseyHayesRDN.com) and testing recipes in her 12-volt appliances or finding better food to eat on the road. Her passion is to help truckers choose healthier food on the road...One Mile at a Time.





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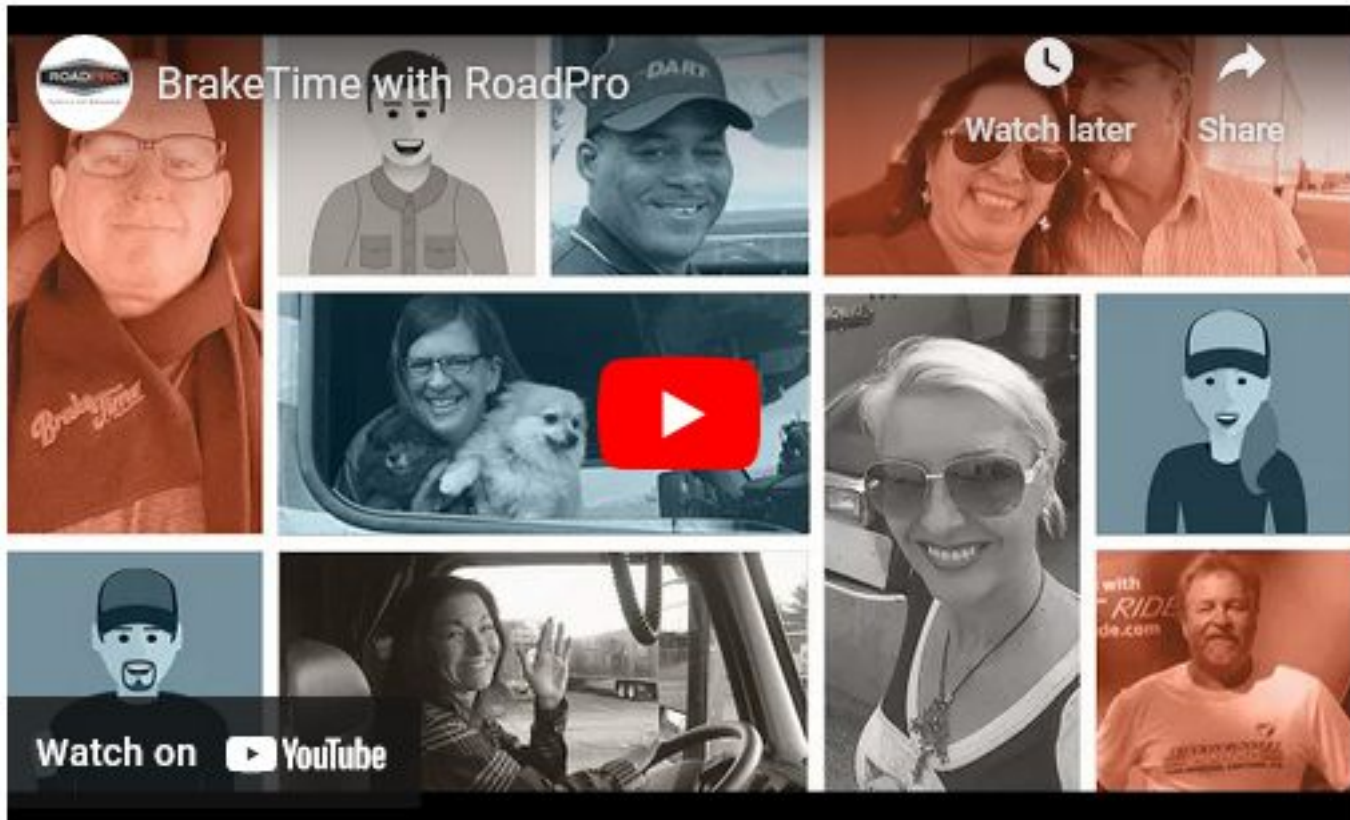


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