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12 PRODUCE SEASON IS HERE

Produce season can make a load board look tempting. For independent over-the-road truckers, that can mean real opportunity – but it can also mean tight appointments, long waits, washouts, reefer fuel, rejected product, and claims risk hiding behind a nice-looking rate.

A good produce load has to work after the waiting, cooling, fueling, washing, unloading, and paperwork are completed. That means asking the right questions up front, getting the details in writing, documenting delays, and knowing when a broker's emergency is about to become your unpaid problem. Produce season rewards truckers who know their numbers – and know when to keep rolling.

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Summer Holiday Season

Traffic is not just annoying. It costs money.

8

May Maintenance

Don't wait until July to find out what your truck cannot handle.



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WORD SEARCH

May Birthdays
+ Sudoku



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MORE INFO

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When America Hits the Road, Truckers Pay the Price

Memorial Day weekend is when the country kicks off summer. Families pack the coolers. Campers roll out. Boats get hitched. The left lane fills with people who have not pulled anything heavier than a lawnmower since last July.

For independent over-the-road truckers, that holiday traffic is not just annoying. It costs money.

A load that looks fine on Thursday can turn ugly by Friday afternoon. A two-hour delay at a fuel island can blow up an appointment. A wreck outside a lake town can eat the clock. A receiver that was supposed to be open may be running a holiday schedule, and suddenly the truck is sitting with freight that should have already come off the trailer.

That is the part four-wheelers do not see. They see a long weekend. Truckers see lost drive time, full parking lots, tighter delivery windows, and more risk packed into every mile.

Memorial Day freight can still be good freight. Some loads pay well because shippers know trucks will be harder to find. But the rate has to cover the real trip, not the imaginary one on a load board. Holiday miles are different miles. They come with congestion, construction zones, distracted drivers, and parking pressure that starts earlier than usual.

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Before taking a holiday-weekend load, owner-operators should slow down and ask a few practical questions:

- Is the pickup or delivery affected by holiday hours?
- Is the receiver actually open, or is someone guessing?
- Does the rate cover extra time if traffic turns bad?
- Is there detention language in writing?
- Are fuel stops and parking options realistic along the route?
- Does the delivery window leave any room for trouble?
- Is the lane worth the stress once lost time is figured in?

That last question matters most.


A load is not good because the gross number looks decent. It is good if it protects the truck, the driver, and the week. A holiday run with no room for delay can turn a strong rate into a headache fast. A cheaper-looking load with better timing and a cleaner delivery may actually be the smarter business move.

Memorial Day also brings a different kind of road hazard: drivers who are impatient, distracted, tired, or pulling trailers they barely know how to handle. That does not mean truckers should drive scared. It means they should drive like professionals surrounded by amateurs, because that is often exactly what is happening.

Leave more room. Watch the ramps. Expect sudden lane changes near exits, rest areas, campgrounds, and tourist stops. Do not count on normal traffic patterns. Nothing about a holiday weekend is normal.

Independent truckers do not get paid extra for being frustrated. They get paid by making smart calls before the trouble starts.

So when America hits the road this Memorial Day, let them have the cookouts and the lake traffic. Just make sure the load pays for the reality of the weekend, not the fantasy version.



The top 3 U.S. destinations for Memorial Day weekend 2026, based on AAA booking data, are:

Orlando, Fla. • Seattle • New York

AAA's full domestic top 10 also includes Las Vegas, Miami, San Francisco, Anchorage, Chicago, Denver, and Boston.

AAA projects 45 million Americans will travel at least 50 miles from home during the Memorial Day period, May 21–25, with 39.1 million traveling by car and 3.66 million flying.

The logo for 'Hotels 4 Truckers' features the word 'Hotels' in white, a red and white shield with the number '4' inside, and the word 'Truckers' in white. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the right of 'Truckers'. Above the 'Hotels' text is a small icon of a house with a red roof.

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Truck routing that works.





May Is the Month to Fix What July Will Punish

May is a warning light.

Not the red one on the dash. The calendar itself.

This is the month when the weather starts telling truckers what summer is going to test. Heat is coming. Longer days are coming. Heavier air, hotter pavement, and harder pulls are coming. The smart owner-operator does not wait until July to find out what the truck cannot handle. Summer does not create every breakdown. A lot of the time, it exposes what was already weak.

A tire that was running a little low becomes a roadside failure. A cooling system that was barely keeping up starts losing the fight on grades. Batteries that made it through winter suddenly show their age. Brakes get hotter. Belts crack. Hoses give up. A weak A/C system turns the cab into a rolling punishment.

For an independent trucker, that is not just inconvenience. It is lost revenue.

A breakdown on the road means repair bills, towing risk, missed appointments, lost loads, and a week that may never catch back up. Preventive maintenance is not exciting, but neither is sitting on the shoulder waiting for help while the load clock keeps ticking. May is the practical window. It is late enough to know winter is gone and early enough to get

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ahead of summer. A trucker does not have to rebuild the whole rig. But a careful heat-season check can save real money.

Start with the basics:

- Check tire pressure cold, not after the tires are already hot.
- Look for uneven wear, cuts, bulges, and aging sidewalls.
- Inspect brakes before mountain grades and summer traffic punish them.
- Check coolant levels, hoses, belts, and the radiator.
- Test the A/C before the first brutal heat wave.
- Look at batteries and connections.
- Make sure the fan, water pump, and cooling system are doing their job.
- Stock extra fluids, fuses, gloves, and basic emergency supplies.

None of that sounds glamorous. That is the point.

The expensive failures usually start as boring problems. A small leak. A soft tire. A loose connection. A belt that looked “good enough” last month. Summer heat does not care about good enough. It finds the weak spot and charges full price.

Cab comfort matters, too. Some people treat A/C like a luxury. It is not. A driver who cannot sleep well because the cab is hot is not getting proper rest. A driver fighting heat all day is more fatigued, more irritable, and more likely to make a bad decision. Comfort is part of safety. It is also part of doing the job well.

The same is true for tires. They are not just a maintenance line item. They are the only thing between the truck and the pavement. Hot roads, heavy loads, and underinflation are a bad mix. Ignoring tire care in May is just gambling against July. Owner-operators already know the truck is the business. Still, it is easy to push maintenance one more week when freight is moving and money is tight.

That is understandable.

It is also risky.

May is the month to fix what July will punish. Not because anyone needs another checklist. Because the cheapest breakdown is still the one that never happens.

*WHERE
is Gizmo?*



Keep your eyes peeled for Gizmo, NAIT's furry mascot, this Memorial Day weekend. He'll be out on the road, wagging his way across the miles. Spot him? Don't paws – snap a pic, send it our way!

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MORE INFO



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Produce Season Is Here. Don't Let a Good Load Turn Bad.

Produce season can make a load board look tempting.

The freight is moving. The phones are busy. Brokers are trying to cover trucks. Shippers want product picked up now, delivered fast, and handled right. For independent over-the-road truckers, that can mean opportunity.

It can also mean trouble with a nice rate attached.

May is when produce freight starts pulling harder in many lanes. That brings urgency, and urgency can make people sloppy. Details get rushed. Pickup times shift. Product is not ready. Appointment windows are tight. Receivers run behind. A truck sits at a shed, then races the clock to make delivery, then waits again on the other end.

That is how a load that looked good turns bad.

Produce is not general freight. It carries more risk. Temperature matters. Pulp temps matter. Washouts matter. Seal numbers matter. Paperwork matters. Claims can get ugly fast. One misunderstanding can leave the trucker holding the headache while everyone else points across the table.

That does not mean independent truckers should avoid produce. It means they should price

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it, document it, and protect themselves like business owners.

Before taking a produce load, ask the questions that matter:

- What is the exact pickup appointment?
- Is the product ready now, or is the truck expected to wait?
- What temperature is required, and is it written on the rate confirmation?
- Is a washout required? Who pays for it?
- Are there lumper fees? Who advances or reimburses them?
- What are the detention terms, and when does the clock start?
- Are there multiple pickups or drops?
- What happens if the product is rejected?
- Are seal instructions clear?
- Is the receiver known for long unload times?

Those questions are not picky. They are professional.

The broker may want the truck covered fast. The driver needs the load covered correctly. There is a difference.

A good produce load should pay for the real work involved. That includes time at the shed, reefer fuel, washouts, possible delays, and the added responsibility of hauling freight that can spoil, be rejected, or lead to a claim. If the rate does not account for that, the load may only look good from a distance.

Documentation is the owner-operator's best friend. Take photos when appropriate. Keep reefer settings recorded. Note arrival and departure times. Keep bills clean. Communicate in writing when there is a delay. If the product is not ready, say so. If the shipper changes instructions, get it documented.

This is not about being difficult. It is about staying out of the blame pile.

Produce season rewards disciplined truckers. The ones who know their numbers. The ones who do not let a broker's emergency become their unpaid problem. The ones who understand that gross revenue does not mean much if half the week disappears at docks and wash bays.

May brings opportunity, but it also brings pressure. That is where the independent trucker has to think like a business owner first and a driver second. The truck can only make money when it is moving, paid, and protected.

So take the produce if the math works. Just make sure the load is still good after waiting, washing, fueling, cooling, unloading, and risk has been accounted for.

A strong rate on paper is not enough. Produce season pays best when the trucker knows when to say yes – and when to keep rolling.

Word Search

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Adele
 Billy Joel
 Bob Dylan
 Brooke Shields
 Cher
 George Carlin
 George Clooney
 George Strait
 Harry Truman
 Janet Jackson
 John F. Kennedy
 John Wayne
 Mr. T
 Rory McIlroy
 Stevie Nicks
 Stevie Wonder
 Tim McGraw
 Tina Fey
 Willie Mays
 Yogi Berra

Y	E	X	C	J	F	E	Y	M	W	N	J	K	R	A	N	E	N	Q	T
P	E	P	N	S	R	Y	R	E	A	A	Z	G	P	T	A	F	U	A	I
Z	I	Y	D	L	Z	T	A	M	N	Y	R	N	K	O	O	M	D	B	A
R	H	Z	D	T	H	C	U	X	Y	O	Q	G	W	Y	Q	V	S	R	R
E	J	A	L	E	H	R	Q	W	B	O	O	L	C	H	N	D	T	O	T
L	O	L	E	E	T	M	U	J	E	O	G	L	E	M	X	E	W	O	S
Z	H	K	R	Y	T	B	Y	D	O	N	B	I	C	M	M	F	X	K	E
H	N	Y	R	Y	D	W	L	W	L	H	Y	D	B	E	P	I	C	E	G
D	W	R	P	R	G	I	B	S	V	V	N	B	Y	E	G	O	T	S	R
J	A	N	E	T	J	A	C	K	S	O	N	F	N	L	R	R	O	H	O
H	Y	S	T	E	V	I	E	N	I	C	K	S	K	E	A	R	O	I	E
L	N	W	G	Z	D	T	B	I	L	L	Y	J	O	E	L	N	A	E	G
R	E	D	N	O	W	E	I	V	E	T	S	P	U	G	N	Y	X	L	G
E	F	D	Y	K	F	A	O	E	D	P	E	X	Z	T	B	N	W	D	T
R	K	B	E	Y	O	R	L	I	C	M	Y	R	O	R	N	Q	E	S	C
K	B	Y	F	E	H	E	W	W	I	L	L	I	E	M	A	Y	S	D	Z
R	Z	B	A	J	D	S	I	A	Z	N	U	A	G	V	F	J	P	N	Y
R	E	R	N	A	N	I	L	R	A	C	E	G	R	O	E	G	W	V	J
A	A	P	I	N	P	P	B	I	Z	U	B	P	C	O	W	N	G	W	D
K	U	G	T	N	P	H	S	C	F	P	R	T	A	B	W	Z	B	R	P

	9				2			
3				4				8
	8	5		9	6	4		
				6	3			
1					7			
8	6		9			3		
		8		3		1		
4			5	1	8		7	3
5		1	6	7		8		2

Sudoku

The goal is to fill a 9x9 grid with digits 1 through 9, ensuring each digit appears only once in each row, column, and 3x3 subgrid.

MISSED THE TAX FILING DEADLINE?

DON'T LET IT RIDE SHOTGUN.

Penalties, interest, and IRS stress can pile up fast.



PENALTIES



INTEREST



IRS STRESS



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