

SPOTLIGHT REPORT | 2023

U.S. Transportation

Navigating Trends in Recruitment,
Retention & Background Screening

HIRE **RIGHT**



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Foreword

**Dr. Todd Simo**

Managing Director of
Transportation and
Chief Medical Officer
HireRight

Welcome!

HireRight is pleased to present this year's **U.S. Transportation Spotlight Report**. The report contains interesting trends around recruitment, retention, and background screening compiled from our annual benchmark survey.

I hope you find the information insightful and discover new ideas to enhance your current programs. Special thanks to all who participated in this year's survey and shared their expertise.

Key Trends



Recruitment

Finding qualified talent continues to be a critical and ongoing challenge for the industry. Companies experienced higher-than-expected turnover rates and hiring costs, all while dealing with reduced staff, increased workloads, and tighter budgets.

Strategic recruiting tactics are evolving to attract both active and passive candidates, with greater emphasis placed on multi pronged campaigns, social media, and the candidate communication process.

Retention

Increasing pay to retain employees dropped considerably from last year as companies struggle to find a balance between budget constraints and meeting industry standards.

To help reduce turnover, companies are focusing on well-being programs, a holistic approach that looks at the physical, financial, social, and cultural aspects of jobs and their work environment.

Background Screening

Many companies are adding additional checks (above DOT requirements) to their screening programs and enhancing their internal review practices, including overall program evaluations with their compliance teams.

To help speed up the onboarding process, nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents order an initial motor vehicle record before proceeding with the full background screening process (in accordance with applicable laws).

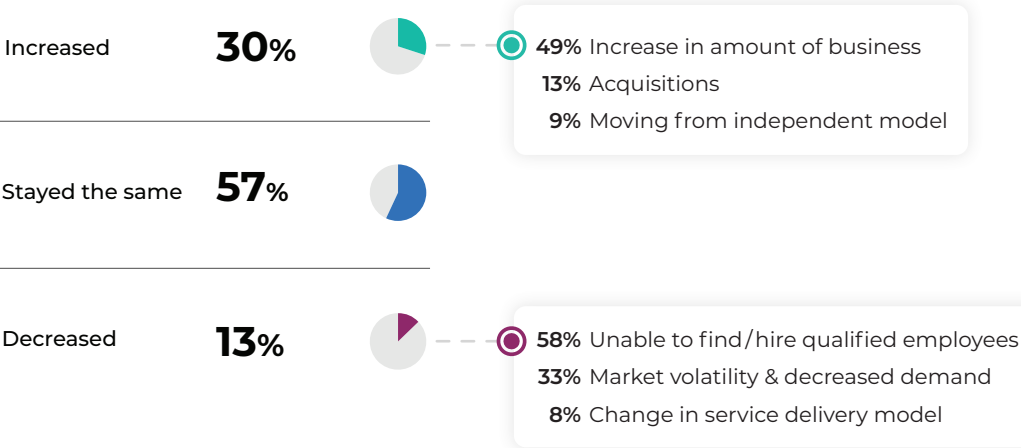
Talent Acquisition / Recruitment



Workforce Growth Trends Tempered by Ability to Find Qualified Employees

Transportation companies continue to battle the labor shortage. To keep up with demand, the trucking industry must hire nearly [1.2 million drivers](#) over the next decade to replace those leaving.

Regulated Workforce Size Change in 2022



Regulated Workforce Size Expected Change in 2023



Multiple Challenges Impact Hiring in 2023

Finding qualified job candidates continues to be one of the major challenges facing transportation companies; however, meeting candidates' benefits/pay expectations rose from 23% in 2022 to 55% in 2023. While compensation is usually a driving factor in attracting candidates, it will be even more important in 2023 due to a confluence of factors including rising inflation and a more competitive job market.

➤ Top 5 Recruiting Challenges

	2023	2022
Finding qualified job candidates	90% 	88%
Meeting candidates' benefits/pay expectations	55% 	23%
Making recruitment processes more efficient	46% 	42%
Improving the candidate experience from application through onboarding	42% 	27%
Creating an employer brand that attracts talent	40% 	21%

Strong onboarding processes increase new hire retention by **82%** and improve productivity by **70%**.

Source: <https://www.zippia.com/advice/onboarding-statistics/>



Stagnant Positions, Higher Churn, and Turnover Plague Industry

Recruiters want to fill vacancies as fast as possible; however, making a hiring decision can take several months and open times for jobs seem to be escalating over time. As it becomes harder to fill open positions, companies may need to be more strategic and efficient with their recruitment and hiring processes.



Hiring Challenges

Positions remained unfilled three to six months	43%	
Higher than expected resignation/churn	34%	
Higher than normal "new hire" turnover	30%	
Positions remained unfilled over six months	28%	
Higher than normal time to hire	26%	
Higher than normal cost to hire expenditures	21%	
Understaffing in HR/recruitment teams	21%	

Tips to Help Reduce Time to Fill

- Build a candidate database
- Seek out passive candidates
- Create an effective referral program
- Leverage social media to attract candidates
- Promote your company culture
- Share your messages across platforms
- Write compelling job descriptions
- Showcase strong employee benefits
- Develop a mobile-friendly career site
- Streamline hiring processes

Securing the Best Talent Through Channel Optimization

When comparing the most effective recruiting channels from last year to this year, considerable increases were seen for employee referrals, recruiting former applicants/employees, and corporate website. Interestingly, smaller size companies (<500 employees) used referrals at a higher rate (68%), while medium and large-sized companies used a greater mix of channels to optimize their recruiting efforts.



Did you know?

Referrals are **4x** more likely to be offered a job than website applicants

45% of people employed through referrals stay with a company for more than four years compared to only 25% of job board hires

Referred candidates are **2.6%** to **6.6%** more likely to accept job offers

Source: <https://www.zippia.com/advice/employee-referral-statistics/>

➤ Most Effective Recruitment Channels

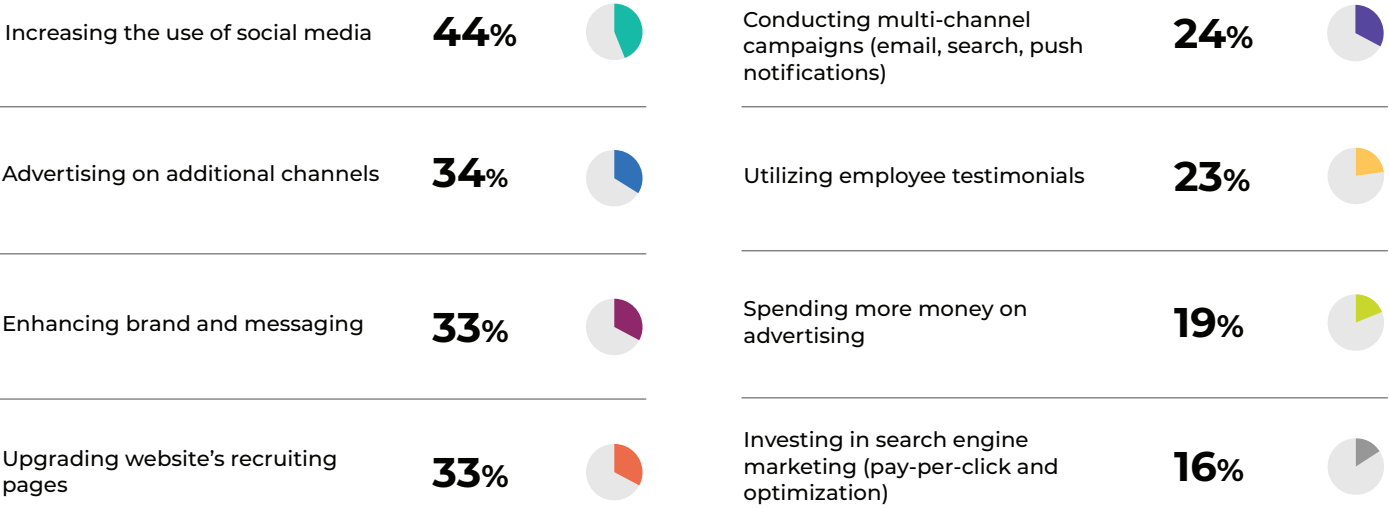
	2023	2022
Employee referrals	62%	52%
Online job boards	49%	55%
Social media	41%	52%
Recruiting former applicants/employees	38%	15%
Corporate website	33%	17%
Internal recruitment	24%	24%
External recruiters	14%	5%
Truck driving schools	12%	7%

Building an Effective Online Presence & Message Attracts Candidates

Nearly half of the survey respondents are increasing the use of social media and one-third are advertising on additional channels. Companies with well-structured **social media recruitment strategies** are more likely to reach both passive and active job candidates, save money on job advertising, and better showcase their company brand.



► Advertising Tactics Used to Drive Recruitment



What is social media recruitment?

A recruitment strategy that combines elements of both employer branding and recruitment marketing to attract candidates on the digital platforms they prefer.

How Companies Are Expanding Their Social Media Presence

Social media allows employers to connect with passive candidates that they were otherwise unlikely to engage with, to deliver more personalized messages, and to communicate with prospects on their terms and channels.

Why it is important to target passive candidates?

- **45%** Open to talking to recruiters
- **30%** Global workforce actively looking for new positions
- **15%** Occasionally reaching out for new opportunities

Source: <https://www.testgorilla.com/blog/recruit-passive-candidates>

➤ Social Media Activities

Incorporate more videos / photos **38%**



Post more frequently / keep content fresh **36%**



Share employee stories to enhance recruitment **34%**



Use additional social networks / platforms **33%**



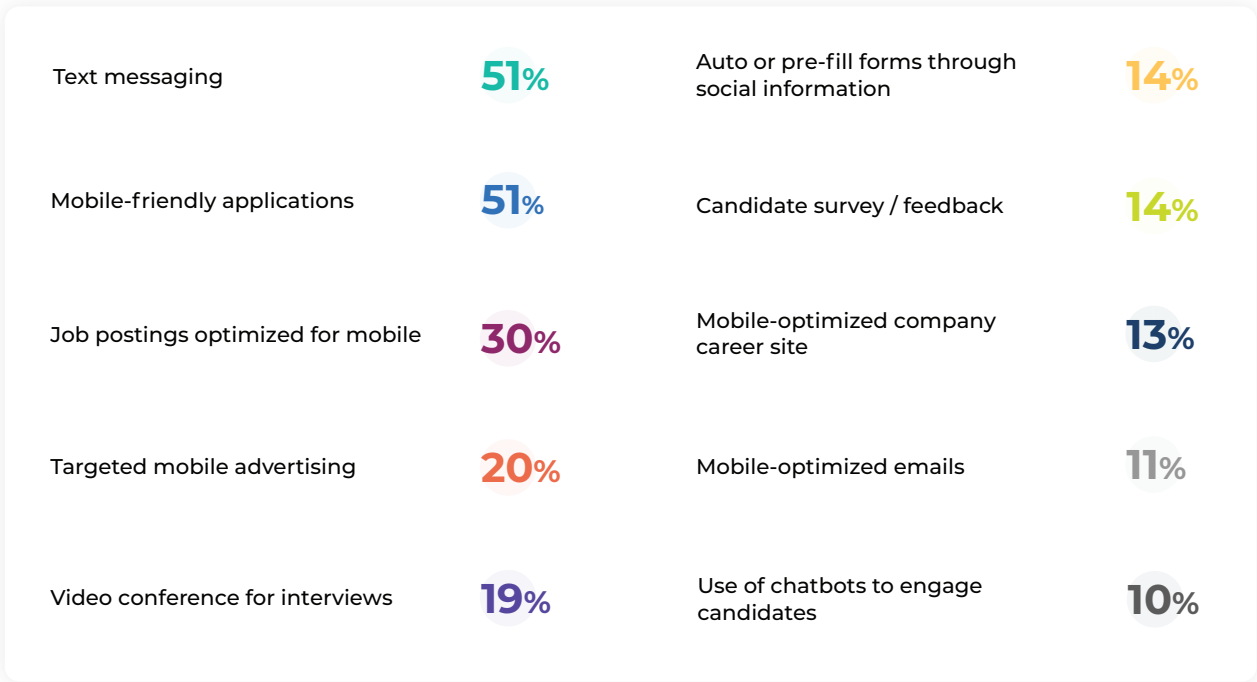
Encourage employees to tweet and post **18%**



Get more involved in forums, online communities **13%**



How Companies Are Optimizing Their Candidates' Mobile Experience



Strategies & Planned Investments to Enhance Recruiting Efforts

Tactics to Help Drive Recruitment Efforts

Increasing employee referral incentives

34%

Increasing compensation packages

28%

Implementing technology to streamline hiring process

23%

Enhancing or adding new benefits

21%

Utilizing a third-party search firm

21%

Increasing recruiting budget

19%

Launching or increasing sign-on bonuses

18%

Increasing recruiting staff

16%

Planned Investments

Recruitment ads

33%

Enhancing corporate brand & messaging

33%

Improving the candidate-experience

26%

Paid social media & search

14%

Recruiting tools (ATS, CRM, Forecasting)

11%

Optimizing career site

8%

Talent Management / Retention

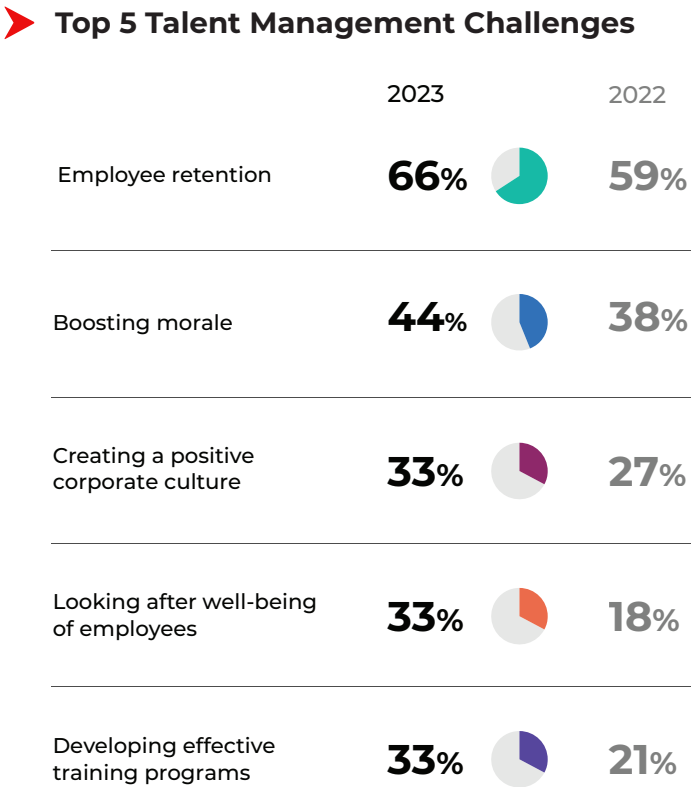
A wide-angle photograph of a two-lane asphalt road that curves gently to the right. The road is dark and has a white line on the right edge and a dashed yellow line in the center. The surrounding landscape is arid, with sparse green and yellow shrubs. In the background, there are prominent red rock formations, including a large mesa and several tall, isolated buttes under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The text "Talent Management / Retention" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

Retention Challenges Drive Employers to Become More Employee-Centric

This year’s survey saw significant increases in all five of the most common talent management challenges, but most noticeably in looking after the well-being of employees and developing effective training programs.

Employee well-being is a holistic perspective that looks at the various factors impacting an employees’ overall health and happiness, including their job, performance goals, work relationships, stress levels, and work environment.

Well-being comes in many forms, but many workers today value [work/life balance and personal well-being](#) over salary. Workers value benefits such as vacation time, mental health days, and company-planned activities designed to create a sense of community.



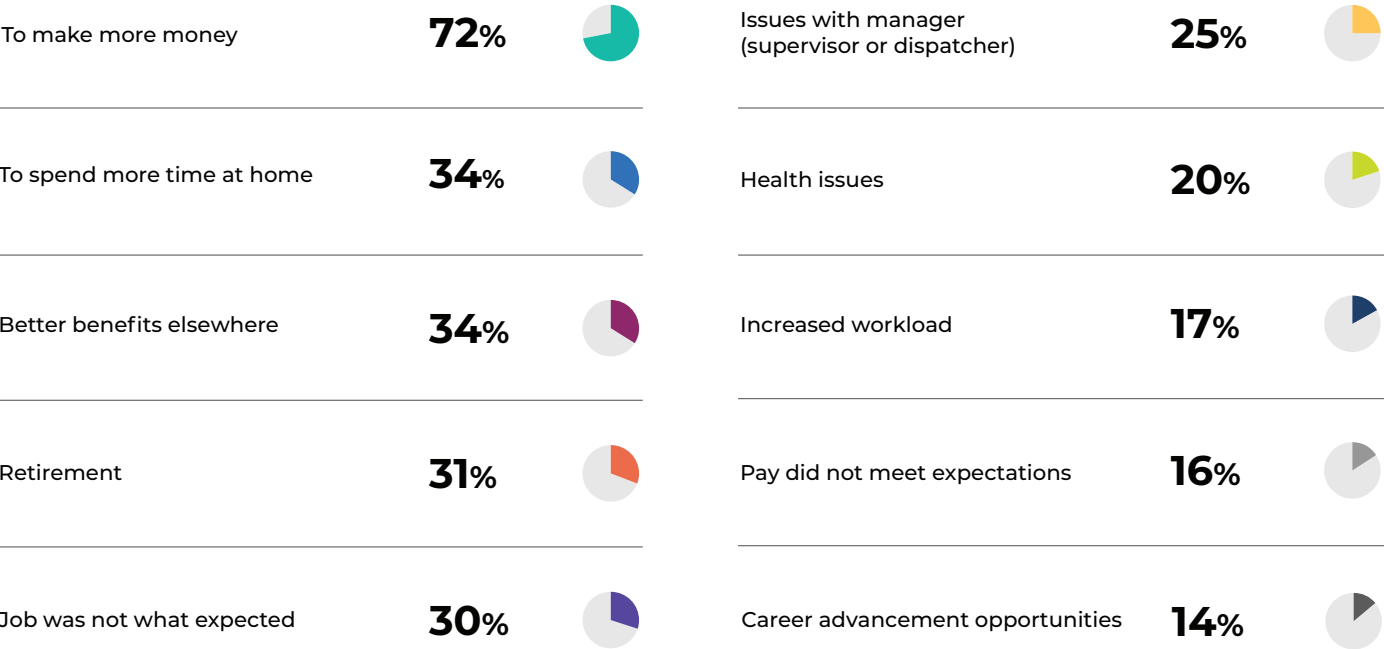
Want to improve employee well-being and boost morale?

- Start by surveying your employees about what well-being initiatives would be most useful for them.
- Create a fun and engaging well-being program based on your employees’ feedback.
- Continuously encourage employees to participate and submit new ideas for inclusion.
- Define your goals and track employee satisfaction levels over time.

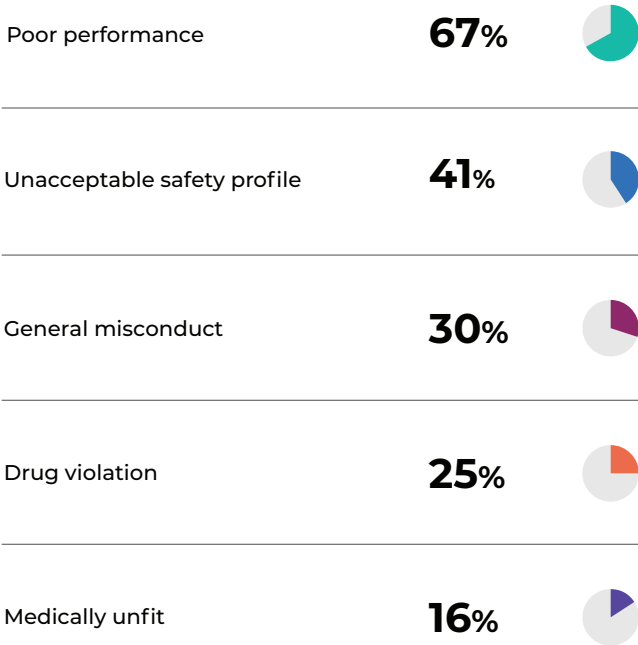
Top Reasons for Employee Turnover

While there are a variety of reasons for employee turnover, “to make more money” remains the number one voluntary reason cited by respondents and has shown a continual increase year-over-year (72% in 2023, 60% in 2022, 58% in 2021, 48% in 2020, and 45% in 2019). The other three noteworthy increases are “job was not what was expected” (23% in 2022), “issues with manager” (17% in 2022), and “health issues” (15% in 2022).

Reasons Employees are Voluntarily Leaving Company



Reasons Employees are Involuntarily Separated from Company



External Factors Impact Traditional Compensation Strategies

With increases in the cost of living and skyrocketing turnover rates, 81% of survey respondents are making adjustments to their compensation packages this year. Compared to 2022, marked decreases occurred for all but two of the top compensation strategies.

Companies may be more hesitant to raise pay rates and associated benefits due to economic uncertainty, especially if they gave out hefty increases last year.

Being able to offer competitive wages/benefits while dealing with ever-tightening budgetary restraints is a balancing act that many transportation organizations are struggling with. However, from an employee retention standpoint, it is critical that companies stay on par with other companies in their industry and job market.

Employee Compensation Strategies

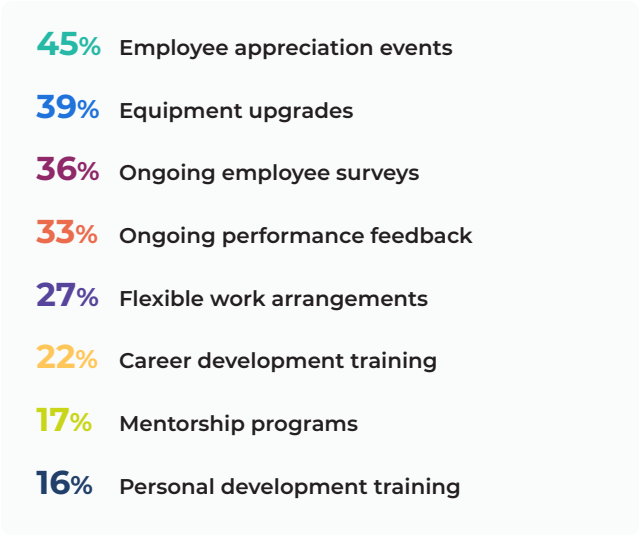
	2023	2022
Increasing pay	42%	67%
Improving company benefits	34%	40%
Annual performance-based bonus	25%	27%
Periodic bonuses throughout the year	25%	26%
Annual pay percentage increase	22%	24%
Profit-sharing plan	▲ 19%	13%
Well-being initiatives	▲ 16%	13%



How Companies Are Creating a Positive Work Environment

Creating a culture where employees feel appreciated and respected helps them to perform at their best by increasing their productivity, motivation, and engagement.

▶ Activities to Help Improve Employee Job Satisfaction



▶ Activities to Help Increase Employee Engagement



Communications Are a Vital Lifeline for a Mobile Workforce

The trend to improve workplace communications is an important business priority in 2023; however, getting it right can be difficult. Effective employee communication has a direct correlation to employee engagement and retention.

Companies are constantly looking for new ways and channels to communicate with their employees, sharing messages that are both relevant and easily accessible. While still predominant, the use of email communications dropped considerably from 49% in 2022 to 39% this year. The three activities that experienced an increase were newsletters (33% in 2022), text messages (31% in 2022), and mobile tools and applications (20% in 2022).

► Activities To Enhance Corporate Communications

- 39% Consistent email communications
- 39% Periodic company meetings
- 38% Newsletters
- 36% Text messages
- 31% More direct contact with supervisor
- 28% Mobile tools and applications
- 13% Videoconferencing and teleconferencing
- 9% Internal social communities/groups
- 9% Employee advisory council



Going Above and Beyond To Deliver on Employee Expectations

As transportation companies continue to experience difficulty in both finding and retaining employees, understanding why their employees are leaving is essential.

While factors like competitive pay and benefits will continue to play a significant role, getting employees to stay in a job requires a combination of incentives and perks. The good news is that retention activities do not have to be expensive. Small rewards and recognition programs can help employees feel valued and appreciated.

Planned Retention Investments in 2023

➤ Refining Compensation Packages

- 38% Rewards/bonus programs
- 28% Improved benefits packages
- 27% Salary adjustments

➤ Improving the Employee Experience

- 27% Training & development
- 25% Retention programs
- 20% Wellness programs

➤ Enhancing Communications Channels

- 11% Mobile applications
- 3% Gamification

An aerial photograph of a two-lane asphalt road with yellow center lines, curving along the edge of a dark, calm lake. The road is bordered by a line of trees with autumn foliage in shades of green, yellow, and orange. A dashed white line with a small circle at its end points towards the text. The text "Background Screening" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font.

Background Screening

Employee Background Screening Is Essential for Quality Hires & for Facilitating DOT Compliance Requirements

Background checks offer a wide range of benefits to employers and help reduce hiring mistakes by identifying the most qualified candidates. Pre-employment and ongoing screening can also help protect companies from negligent hiring and retention claims.



Top 5 Benefits of Pre-Employment Screening

Better quality of hires	76%	
Improved regulatory compliance	63%	
More consistent safety & security	53%	
Better company reputation	19%	
Greater employee retention	17%	

Partnering for Success With Your Screening Provider

Hiring qualified employees quickly is critical in today’s competitive job market, but equally important is making sure the screening process is thorough and accurate. Automating screening processes can improve efficiencies and reduce the administrative burden placed on recruiting and hiring teams.

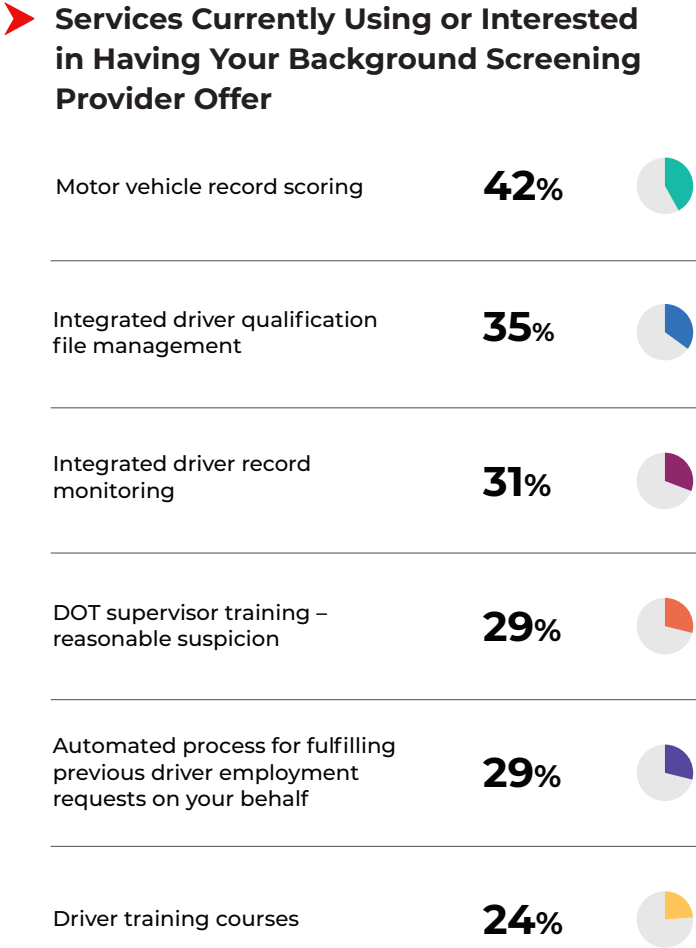
► **Most Important Factors When Choosing a Screening Provider**

Speed / turnaround times	76%		Reputation	27%	
Accuracy of results	71%		Experience / longevity in industry	22%	
Cost	59%		Candidate experience	18%	
Ease of use	51%		Breadth of services	17%	
Customer service / support	35%		Integration with your ATS	15%	



Requested Service Offerings Focus on Automation

In a quest to simplify processes, companies are looking for more streamlined solutions to help them manage their post-hire and ongoing screening requirements. Integrated motor vehicle record monitoring (31%) and scoring (42%) were cited as two of the top three services respondents were interested in having their screening provider offer. While annual MVR reviews help meet regulatory requirements, they only capture a snapshot in time of the driver’s performance. Having the ability to quickly identify changes to a record provides companies with actionable information to get ahead of issues before they become problems.



Did you know?

The FMCSA has stated that an Employer Notification System ([49 CFR § 391.25](#)) that automatically sends updates to the requestor on drivers’ license status, crashes, and convictions satisfies the need for annual MVRs. Driver monitoring may therefore replace the annual MVR requirement for many states. Check with your background screening provider for further details.

Fostering a Safer Work Environment Through Additional Pre-Employment Checks

In addition to meeting the basic pre-employment screening requirements mandated by the DOT, many companies are conducting additional checks to help ensure that the best qualified candidates are hired, and a safer work environment is attained.



Current Background Checks Performed (Beyond DOT Requirements)

Pre-Employment Screening Program (PSP)	79%	
Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS+)	74%	
Criminal checks	72%	
Identify checks (SSN validation, etc.)	60%	
I-9 Forms / employment authorization	51%	
Education	15%	
Social media	10%	

Eighty percent of survey respondents are ordering one or two initial qualifier checks. These reports enable companies to eliminate unqualified candidates up front (those individuals that don't meet their hiring guidelines) before investing additional time and resources in a full background screening investigation.

Background Checks Completed as Initial Qualifier(s)

Motor vehicle record	74%	
Pre-Employment Screening Program (PSP)	51%	
Drug & Alcohol Clearinghouse	45%	
Previous employment verification	41%	

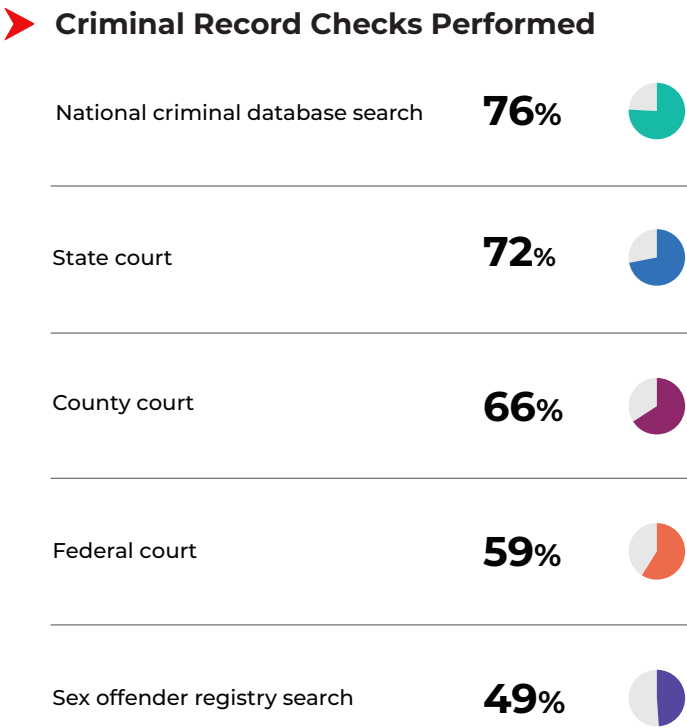
Comprehensive Criminal Record Checks Are Essential for Risk Mitigation

While DOT regulations do not require companies to conduct criminal record searches, they have become an essential component of many screening programs. Most companies are incorporating a variety of criminal record checks for more complete geographical coverage and risk mitigation.

More than three-quarters (76%) of survey respondents utilize a national criminal database search (such as [HireRight's Widescreen Plus](#) product). This type of search is often a good starting point since it provides a source of “tips and leads” information that can help reveal potential records beyond the candidate’s known address history, which is especially important for a mobile workforce.

While many crimes are prosecuted at a state level, the majority of crimes in the U.S. are tried in county courts, with the county serving as the keeper of the record. In some jurisdictions, counties will share an individual’s record with the state, making those records discoverable through statewide criminal records searches. However, not all county records are available in a state-level check.

Federal criminal court searches uncover records that are not available at a state or county level. This is important for transportation candidates who cross state lines. The types of crimes are usually more severe and include drug distribution, unlawful transport of goods, arson, kidnapping, and other major felonies.

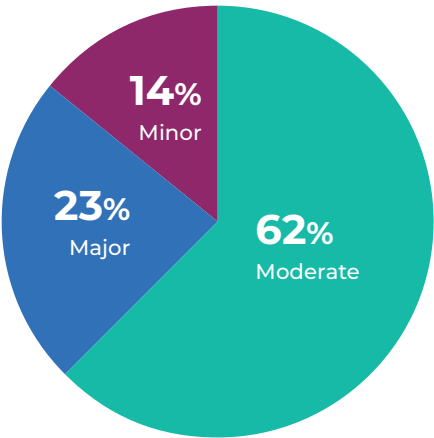


HireRight Criminal Record Classification Analysis (U.S. Transportation 2022)

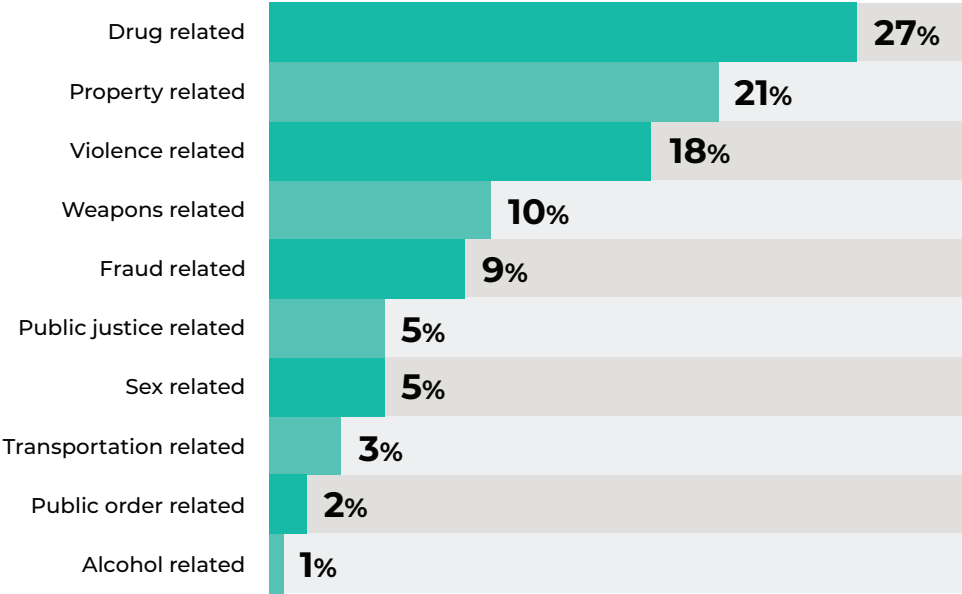
HireRight conducted over 2 million criminal record checks in 2022 - the hit rate for customers in the transportation industry was **11.2%**, compared to **6.3%** for all other industries combined.



➤ **Criminal Severity Classification**



➤ **Offense Breakdown by Major Criminal Severity Classification**



How Companies Are Enhancing Their Screening Programs

41% of respondents

Planned Checks / Services Being Added This Year

Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS)	16%	Sex offender registries	8%
Driver record monitoring	15%	Criminal recording monitoring	8%
Electronic DQ file management	12%	Social media search	8%
Pre-Employment Screening Program (PSP)	12%	Criminal county court search	7%
Criminal state court search	8%	Arrest recording monitoring	6%

46% of respondents

Planned Screening Program Changes to Help Mitigate Risk

Enhancing how background information is reviewed	16%
Heightening standards for employment	15%
Adding compliance review	13%



Drug Usage Trends May Warrant Closer Examination of Drug & Health Screening Programs

With the rise in prescription drug abuse and the decriminalization of marijuana, transportation companies may want to review their current drug and health screening program and take steps to strengthen their overall effectiveness. While testing is not mandated for many transportation employees in non-DOT positions, many companies already conduct or plan to conduct pre-employment and random drug testing on their entire workforce to ensure uniformity among their employee base.

70% of Americans who use illegal drugs are employed.

9% of the workforce struggles with substance abuse.

Source: <https://blog.gitnux.com/substance-abuse-in-the-workplace-statistics/>

40% of respondents

Planned Changes to Drug & Health Screening Program

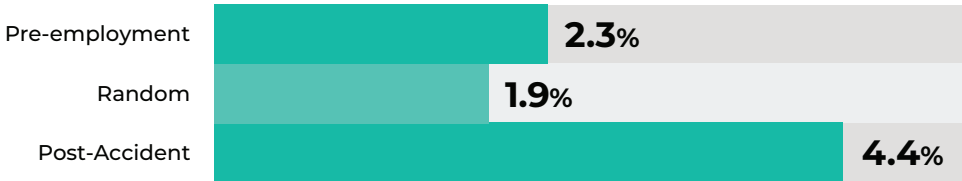
Test all non-regulated employees	10%	Add hair testing	4%
Increase the number of random tests conducted annually	10%	Add point-of-collection oral fluid drug testing	3%
Additional review of DOT physical exam results	9%	Adjust testing panels to include more drugs	3%
Adding a cannabis breathalyzer for post-accident / reasonable suspicion tests	6%	Stop testing for THC (except for safety-sensitive or regulated positions)	3%
Add lab-based oral fluid drug testing	4%	Initiate random program for non-regulated workforce	2%

Federally Mandated Lab Positive Drug Tests

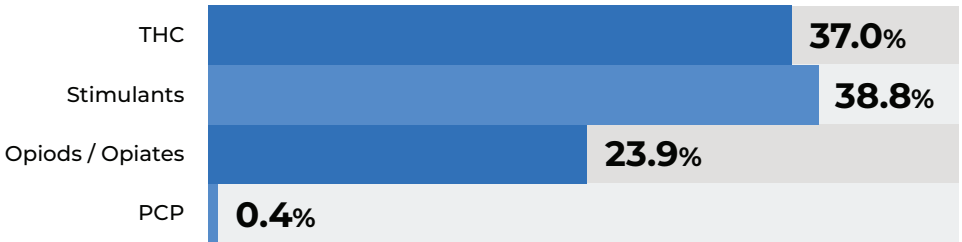
Data from [Quest Diagnostics' Drug Testing Index for 2022](#) shows that post-accident positive rates are almost double that of the pre-employment rate. When reviewing the lab positive rates by substance, stimulant usage (amphetamines, methamphetamines, MDMA, and MDA) has the highest rate followed by THC, the psychoactive substance in marijuana.



Positive Rate by Testing Reason



Percent of Lab Positives by Substance



Survey Overview & Methodology

The HireRight 2023 Global Benchmark Survey was conducted between February 15 – March 12, 2023, and this report is based on 207 U.S. respondents from that survey who indicated their primary industry was transportation.

Participants anonymously shared their experience and knowledge of their company’s recruiting, retention, and employment screening practices.

Survey questions included multiple choice, multiple selections, and open text.
Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding or multiple-selection questions.



► Modes of Business		► Business Area / Department	
For-Hire Trucking	59%	Safety/Compliance	40%
Private Fleets	17%	Human Resources	17%
Other (Other includes Bus, Airlines, Transit Authority, etc.)	24%	Administrative	12%
		Recruiting / Talent Management	11%
		Owner / Operator	9%
		Other	9%
		Risk Management	2%

Additional Resources

Check out [HireRight’s Resource Library](#) for additional information on various transportation, compliance, and drug testing topics.

About HireRight

HireRight is a leading global provider of technology-driven workforce risk management and compliance solutions. We provide comprehensive background screening, verification, identification, monitoring, and drug and health screening services for approximately 38,000 customers across the globe. We offer our services via a unified global software and data platform that tightly integrates into our customers' human capital management systems, enabling highly effective and efficient workflows for workforce hiring, onboarding, and monitoring.

In 2022, we screened over 24 million job applicants, employees, and contractors for our customers and processed over 107 million screens. For more information, visit www.HireRight.com.

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