

The Diamond Dust

Diamond Re-Organizes the System

It was time for a change!

As always, Diamond is looking for ways to improve the company and this time operations was the focus. With input from management, a consultant with over 30 years of experience and the voice of many owner operators, Diamond has restructured the operations department.



Diamond's fleet manager team of Mike Barrows, Jeff Schimanski, and Terry Peaslee have more responsibility.

The changes, which Diamond feels benefit both owner operators and customers, allow operations to focus on their area of responsibility in a more effective manner. What Diamond wants to accomplish is to strengthen the relationship between the fleet manager (formerly dispatcher) and the owner

operator and at the same time improve the relationship between our customer service (formerly sales coordinators) and the customer.

To help these relationships, Diamond wanted to decrease the number of owner operators in each fleet manager's group to less than 35. Because of this, Diamond increased the number of fleet managers to three, with the goal of four as the fleet increases. Currently the fleet managers are Jeff Schimanski, Terry Peaslee and Mike Barrows.

Most importantly, fleet managers will be very aggressive in pursuing

freight that benefits owner operators, working with you on home time and handling all issues with owner operators. Where dispatchers used to pass all non operations issues/problems to contractor services, fleet managers now handle all issues directly.

Customer service now has less responsibility directly to the owner operator and has been instructed to secure as much freight as possible. If there are no operators in the area, brokerage will handle the overflow of freight. This allows customer service

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Key Position Changes

- Jon Coca—V. P. Operations/Customer Service
- Pat McLeod—V. P. Administrative Services
- Mike Barrows—Fleet Manager
- Liz Bruns—Recruiting Director

Owner Operators of the Month - Tatro, Skillingstad & Yates

Congratulations to Duayn Tatro, Casey Skillingstad and James Yates who earned Diamond's Owner-Operator of the Month awards in January, February and March, respectively.

Duayn joined Diamond this past October and got up to speed on the specialized freight industry in record time. Duayn is consistently in the top 10 when it comes to revenue. Duayn hails most recently from Arizona, but he and his wife, Vicki, are in the process of selecting a new home somewhere in the Midwest.

Casey has been part of the Diamond team since 1998 and this is the third time he has achieved this well-deserved honor. Casey is greatly appreciated for

his knowledge in the specialized freight industry as well as his excellent customer skills. Casey makes his home in Lyle, MN with longtime girlfriend Marilyn. In his spare time, he enjoys renovating his 100 year old house.

James started with Diamond in January 2003. James' success is due to the fact that he doesn't over-analyze loads, he simply gets his load, runs it and relies on his fleet manager to keep him moving. James loves to spend time with his son, Colby. Together they restore old cars, work on the truck and especially like to hunt. Colby will be joining James in the truck over summer vacation and they're both looking forward to this!



Tatro

Skillingstad

Yates

AGENTS AND CUSTOMERS

Shipper News: Compensation for Out of Route Miles

Diamond has been working with customers and the permit department in overcoming the problem with excess miles on oversized loads.

At times routes are taken for convenience and speed in operation not necessarily because it is the shorter route. With spring and summer coming, road construction has begun and roads for some oversized loads will be closed.

Recently, a number of loads were re-billed to customers because either the owner operator or the permit department indicated that the shipment required out of route miles. Excessive out of route miles may require additional billing.

When out of route miles happen we

are required to look at the practical route and determine if the route could have been taken. If not, we are to use the shortest route using practical miles. This route may not always be the route you took. Whatever the case, if we find that the route is longer we will bill for the additional miles.

Many times it is up to the owner operator to notify us of the out of route miles.

Our permit department doesn't always see the permitted route because at times the permit is sent directly to the owner operator. We must work together on this to make sure that we catch all excess routes.

Our contracts and tariff determine "what is excess mileage" and what is "not". Most contracts indicate that the route has to be more than 5% out of route in order to be considered excessive and subject to additional charges. We will then determine the charges and bill the customer.

We will try to identify most out of route shipments in the office and begin the additional billing.

When you notify us of an out of route situation we will review it and advise of the additional billing.

Fleet managers will work with you on any out of route issues you may have.

-Paul Martinson, President

We will try to identify most excess mileage situations...but, it is up to the owner operator to notify the fleet manager when it is happening.

TOP-FIVE AGENTS JANUARY—MARCH

1. Frank Lantrip
2. Debbie Murphy
3. Dale White & Larry Meek
4. Brenda Suttles
5. Tim Wood

Diamond congratulates our top producers and thanks all of our agents for a job well done! Agents are a key to our success and we would like to expand our agent traffic whenever possible.

High Fuel Prices Still on Everyone's Mind

You don't need us to tell you that fuel prices are high, you are out there on the road three or four weeks at a time.

However, as we see fuel prices fluctuating (mostly upward), Diamond thought it would be beneficial to explain why different fuel surcharges apply to different loads.

We have numerous contracts with our larger customers. Each of these customers developed a fuel surcharge with the carriers a few years ago that provided for hikes in prices as fuel increased.

Some of the fuel surcharges are based upon the National Fuel Index announced weekly and some are based upon the Na-

tional Fuel Index but applied for a full month.

The issue we are having is that some of the surcharges are not keeping up with the rising fuel prices. Diamond is approaching each of these customers to identify the problem.

Specifically, we want to modify the charges to properly reflect the market price and the affect not changing will have in moving their freight.

Be assured we are making every effort to assure that our owner operators are being compensated for the excess fuel prices.

Diamond will attempt keep you updated to the process of these negotiations.



THE DISPATCH PERSPECTIVE

Successful owner operators have much in common. Perhaps the trait that has most impact on their bottom line is dependability.

Think of the importance of reliability as it relates to your spouse, children and friends. It is certainly a characteristic that enhances these relationships.

The same holds true of your relationship with your fleet manager. When he is able to depend on you to pick up and deliver on time, he is able to feel confident in pre-planning you

on your next move.

This dependability bleeds over to the sales department. When the fleet manager can tell the sales person that the owner operator is reliable, they can secure a load that much quicker and avoid losing a load while waiting to find out if the owner operator is 'really' going to be on time.

This, of course, means less or no waiting between loads, less deadhead and in general, smoother loading which in turn results in larger settlements...*isn't that what it's all about?*

SAFETY & COMPLIANCE

New Hours of Service Rules Still Confusing to Many Drivers

Despite attempts by regulators to clarify the new Hours of Service rules, many truck drivers are still confused about the regulations, according to phone calls tracked by the Department of Transportation.

The largest number of calls, 18 percent, concern the 34-hour restart period. Another 16 percent of callers want to know more about the sleeper berth provision.

Nine percent have asked about the 60/70-hour workweek change, and five percent called about record keeping, accord-

ing to help-line personnel who have answered almost 5,500 calls.

The remaining calls vary widely, including questions specific to unique driving situations, questions on the difference between drive time and duty time, and inquiries into the use of electronic on-board recorders.

The toll-free telephone line, 1-800-598-5664, is staffed 24-hours a day to answer drivers' questions. The line became active on Dec. 29, 2003.



CONSTRUCTION SEASON IS INTO FULL SWING

Spring has sprung! And as always, so has the construction season.

With this construction comes a more hostile driving environment and more dangerous driving in those construction zones.

Diamond wants to put additional emphasis on these dangers in order to assure safe driving. Please be aware of workers moving about, construction vehicles and autos or trucks that fail to take adequate precautions when approaching or traveling thru these zones. Please prepare yourself for

the worst and use extreme caution when you come into a construction area. Frustration is a given, but that will seem pale in comparison to an accident or worse yet a tragedy.

Also remember to watch your speed and obey rules of the zone. Most construction zones will require larger trucks to stay in the left or right lane. Watch for these rules closely.

Most states have adopted the rule of doubling fines in construction zones, so be aware of that.

Be prepared, be patient and be careful!



News and Notes

DRUG & ALCOHOL SCREENING—

Diamond has recently selected a new service to provide testing for our pre-lease and random drug tests. In conjunction with this change, we recently sent out new chain of custody forms which should replace your current forms and be kept in the truck. Please make the change of forms and if you have any questions give Gary or Pat a call.

MAY IS INSPECTION MONTH—It's that time again. Please get a DOT inspection on your tractor and have it in the office by May 31. We are working on a direct bill program with TA truckstops and hope to have this in place by mid May. Under this program, you will be able to stop at any TA shop and receive your inspection. Diamond will be billed direct by TA and will handle all but \$12 of the fee. You will see the \$12 charge on your

settlement statement shortly after your inspection. We are also working with a similar situation with the Gateway Truck Plaza in E. St. Louis, IL. As soon as both of these are in place we will notify you via your voicemail and your fleet manager.

CARGO CLAIMS—The majority of you participate in the reinsurance program which lowers your deductible on cargo claims from \$1000 to \$100. Effective immediately, our insurer requires pictures on every claim. When you call in to report an exception on your bill of lading, we will advise you if we want you to take pictures or if we will have the customer take them (if they file a claim).

CAMERAS & FILM—It is critical that you keep your company issued camera with you at all times. If we request you to take pictures, we want you to send us the camera with the film in it. We will develop the film and send you the camera back with new film.

Employee News & Anniversaries

Employee Anniversaries

- Paul Martinson—32 yrs. April
- Tony Sharpe—14 yrs. April
- Pete Petkus—11 yrs. April
- Kathy Kerl—18 yrs. May
- Judy Gregory—18 yrs. May
- Pat McLeod—13 yrs. May
- Diane Dahse—11 yrs. June

Owner Operator Anniversaries

- James Atchley—2 yrs. April
- Gerry Christensen—6 yrs. April
- Rex Foreman—23 yrs. April
- Edwin Harris—6 yrs. April
- Pat Patton—1 yr. April
- Bob Troxel—38 yrs. April
- Don Welker—5 yrs. April
- Gus Widmer—3 yrs. May
- Ron Cook—3 yrs. May
- Dean Cook—2 yrs. May
- Harry Butzer—21 yrs. May
- David Boothe—1 yr. May
- John Doyle—14 yrs. June
- Terry Key—1 yr. June
- Loyd Nichols—3 yrs. June

THE BACK PAGE

Diamond Owner Operators Honored

Diamond would like to congratulate Arvin Weber, Irvin Woodruff, Phil Jostad and Bob Troxel.



On Saturday, February 24th several Diamond owner operators were honored by the Wisconsin Motor Carriers Association and the Wisconsin Council of Safety Supervisors in Milwaukee, WI.

Weber received his award for being se-

lected as Wisconsin's Driver of the Month for June 2003. In addition, Arvin received his 4th year membership award in the President's Safe Driver Club. Woodruff received his 8th year President's award, Phil Jostad his 4th year award and Bob Troxel his 1st year award.

Diamond is very proud of these men, their accomplishments and all they have meant to Diamond over the years.

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Comments and Questions
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The Daily Routine

REFERRALS—Diamond is replacing our current referral program which is contained within the Meet the Challenge program. The new program is a \$1000 payment to the referring owner operator. The first \$500 would be paid to you on the 90-day anniversary of the referred driver's hire date. The second \$500 will be paid at the six-month anniversary. Both payments will be dependent on a pre-determined amount of revenue generated by the referred owner operator.

The old program awarded points within Meet the Challenge and we did not feel it was generating enough referrals. The goal of this change is to give our existing owner operators an incentive to get out there and refer drivers to us. Freight is good right now and trucks are at a premium. The more owner operators we have in our fleet, the more freight we can accept.

If you have any questions regarding the new referral program please call our recruiting department and speak with Liz or Cindy.

PERMITS—Ordering permits in a timely manner can make or break your load. Make sure that you start your permits immediately when you are assigned a load—even if you have not finished your current load. We will order the first two states before you are loaded in order to assure that you will be able to travel as soon as you are tied down. If dimensions are different than expected when you are finished loading, Diamond will reorder the permits at no cost to the owner operator.

CDL CLARIFICATION—Your current address must be on your CDL. It is a requirement and must appear on the actual CDL. Not complying can result in a citation from law enforcement or further action by the DMV. CDL holders must make the change of address in person at the DMV customer service center. This only applies toward CDL holders, class D and class M licenses may be handled through the mail or e-mail.

FROST LAWS—Aside from North Dakota, all frost laws are off for the summer and you are free to travel according to normal restrictions.

LOADING/UNLOADING—Again, per our contracts and tariffs, all customers are required to load and unload the freight. Please do not load or unload freight unless you have received approval from your fleet manager. Insurance coverage may be jeopardized by not following this rule.

We understand that this may cause some customers to delay the loading or unloading process. As long as you notify your fleet manager when it looks like you are going to be detained longer than two hours we will start the clock on detention. You are the trigger, as long as you notify us promptly we have had great success in collecting detention charges.



Operations Changes / Building Stronger Relationships

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the ability to build a larger customer base. Diamond's customer service representatives are Lee Reynolds, Randy Brown and Tony Sharpe.

Management changes in this area include Jon Coca stepping in as vice president of operations and customer service. Jon was the vice president of contractor services and billing. Also, Pat McLeod has changed over to vice president of administrative services. His new responsibilities are in contracting, safety (because of Carl Henningfeld leaving), insurance, permitting, terminal opera-

With questions relating to logs or truck settlement, please call our main switchboard and ask to speak with Debbie (logs) ext. 150 or Judy (settlement) ext. 148. Our main phone number is 262-554-5400.

tions, equipment maintenance and the records department.

With the increase in fleet manager responsibility, our contractor services department has been dissolved. Now the recruiting department focuses only on attracting new owner operators to Diamond. Liz Bruns has moved to the management level as the recruiting director. New owner operators will be introduced to Gary Snyder for orientation and contracting.

The billing department has moved back to accounting where Chad Thur, the accounting manager, has taken over responsibility for this group.