

PRESS RELEASE

2 JUNE 2021

SCIENTIFIC STUDY AND AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGN

Lorry drivers: what are their perceptions of their own behaviour on the road and of their healthy living behaviours?

Based on a study conducted by an interdisciplinary team of researchers, the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation and the Carcept Prev Foundation launched a prevention campaign at motorway rest areas last Tuesday to share recommendations and best practices.

The VINCI Autoroutes Foundation for responsible driving has published the initial results from a first-of-its-kind study on the health and driving behaviours of lorry drivers. The study involved 515 drivers of 17 different nationalities, of whom 50% were French. Interviews were held at several motorway rest areas as part of a field study led in partnership with Patricia Delhomme, a research director at the Laboratory of Applied Psychology and Ergonomics at the Université Gustave Eiffel, and Loïc Josseran, a public health lecturer at the Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines and the Raymond Poincaré de Garches public hospital. The VINCI Autoroutes Foundation and these researchers wanted to better understand lorry drivers' behaviours in order to make prevention messages that target this population more effective. These messages aim to improve lorry drivers' health and safety, as well as the safety of other road users.

In pursuit of this goal, the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation and Carcept Prev Foundation organized an awareness-raising campaign for Tuesday, 1 June at three rest areas in the VINCI Autoroutes network. Lorry drivers were invited to participate in various workshops with sleep specialists, nutritionists, relaxation therapists, sports therapists, and representatives of both foundations, all of whom spoke to them about the risks they face and gave them practical advice for avoiding these risks.

"Because lorry drivers' jobs require them to be out on the road every day, they become very experienced drivers. This experience, however, cannot protect them from risky behaviours, especially the increasingly common use of distractors on the road, lapses in concentration, and drowsiness. All of these can cause accidents that can have serious consequences for the drivers themselves, other road users, and road works crews. Long trips that keep drivers away from home for several days prevent them from adopting healthy lifestyle habits, which can have a negative impact on their health. Awareness-raising campaigns at rest areas and on social media are meant to help inform and guide drivers that are looking for support."

Bernadette Moreau
General Delegate of the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation

Lorry drivers have plenty of experience...

In line with other surveys of this profession, **the lorry drivers we interviewed were mostly satisfied with their professional life.** They saw their job as giving them a sense of freedom and they appreciated the independent nature of their work. When asked to rank the main limitations on their activities on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely), they mentioned:

- ▶ traffic jams (3.9),
- ▶ being far away from their family (3.3 on average, but 2.9 for Western Europe, 3.9 for Southern Europe, and 4.1 for Eastern Europe, which is farther away),
- ▶ loading and unloading time (3.1),
- ▶ and uncertainty about how long their job would last (3.0).

Also, to improve their comfort and healthy living practices while on break, they wanted more services to be available at rest areas and to be able to better protect their cargo from theft, which they saw as a significant threat.

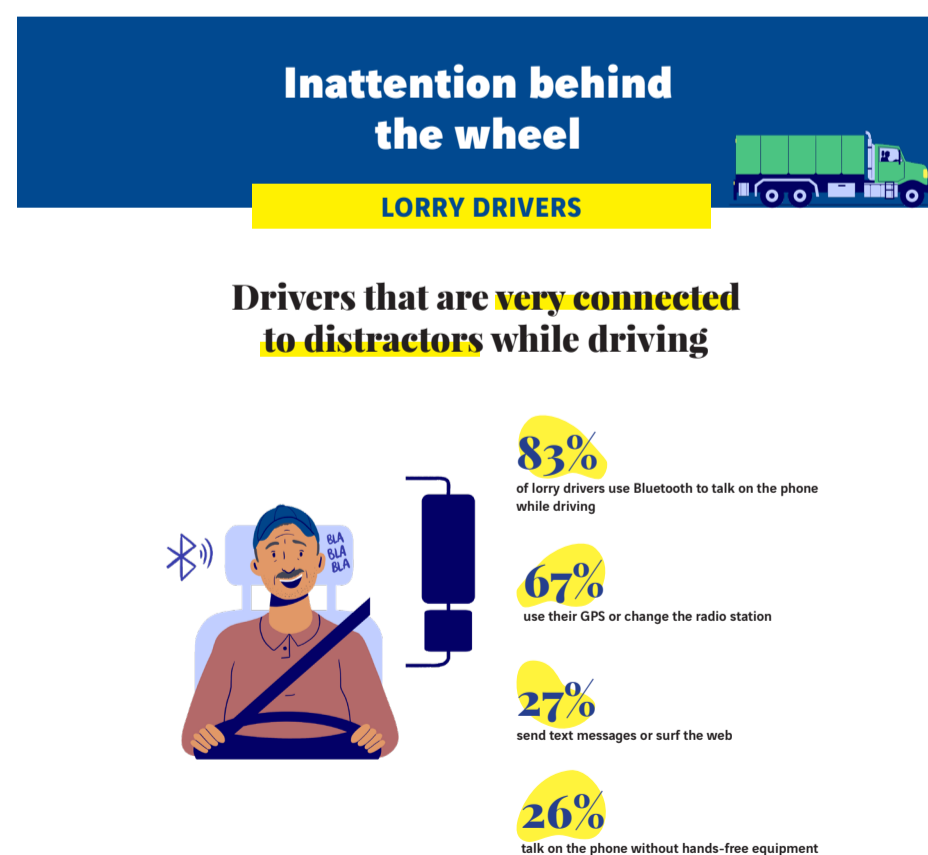
With an average of 22 years experience driving lorries, the drivers we surveyed were generally confident in their driving ability. On a scale from one to five, on average, they rated themselves over 4 for navigating parking lots and loading bays (4.5), descending slopes (4.4), anticipating and avoiding hazards on the road, maintaining safe driving distances, and managing their level of tiredness (4.3).

Contrary to what one might think, in accidents involving lorries and light vehicles, lorry drivers are found to be at fault 37% of the time, while car drivers are found to be at fault 68% of the time.¹ **76% of lorry drivers also believe that it is likely that they will have an accident involving a light vehicle.** The most commonly cited risky situation was when a car moves in between two lorries that are following each other (62%), followed by vehicles cutting into traffic (54%), cars passing a lorry and then slowing down in front of it (41%), and sudden braking in front of the lorry (39%).

...but they put themselves at risk of having an accident because they are distracted, tired, or dozing off

In line with the other drivers whose behaviours the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation analyses each year as part of the Responsible Driving Barometer,² **lorry drivers are very connected while on the road. They make intensive use of various connected devices while driving, which can become a serious source of distraction:**

- ▶ 83% use Bluetooth talk on the phone while driving (including 60% who do so often or very often).
- ▶ 67% use their GPS or change the radio station while driving (including 16% who do so often or very often).
- ▶ 27% send text messages or surf the web (including 4% who do so often or very often).
- ▶ 26% talk on the phone without hands-free equipment (including 2% who do so often or very often).



Source: Lorry driver health and behavioural study, Université Gustave Eiffel and Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Raymond Poincaré de Garches public hospital - 2021

¹ Road safety in France - Accident record for the year 2019 - ONISR

² [IPSOS Responsible Driving Barometer for the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation - 2021](#)

One clear sign that they aren't paying attention is that **nearly half of drivers (49%) say they have drifted onto roadside the rumble strips at least once in the last year**, which they say is due to distraction from using a mobile or the GPS (45%), because they want to orient themselves from the noise of passing over the rumble strips (34%), and because of drowsiness (29%). 82% also said that the rumble strips helped them to return to a normal trajectory, and 49% said that the rumble strips had woken them up.

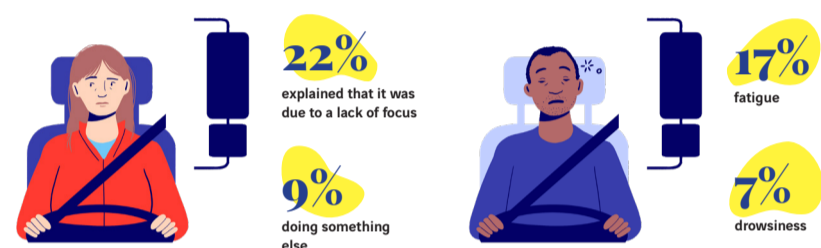
Many also identified **difficulty focusing or their mind wandering as a cause of both accidents and near accidents**. 22% of the lorry drivers that had had a near accident in the last year said that it was due to a **lack of focus** (along with 16% of those who had an accident in the last three years). **Fatigue** was mentioned by 17% of drivers who had had a near accident (10% of those who had an accident in the last 3 years). **Distraction** from doing something else while driving was cited by 9% of drivers who had had a near accident (5% of those who had an accident in the last 3 years), while **drowsiness** was mentioned by 7% of drivers who had had a near accident in the last year (4% of those who had an accident in the last 3 years).

Accident risks and behaviours

LORRY DRIVERS



Among those drivers who **nearly had an accident in the last year**



Source: Lorry driver health and behavioural study, Université Gustave Eiffel and Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Raymond Poincaré de Garches public hospital

In general, **the study revealed that drivers with attention deficit issues³ were more likely to have an accident** (2.5/6 vs 2.3/6 for drivers with no issues focusing). The same was true of drivers who were more likely to fall asleep at the wheel³ (2.2/4 vs 2.0/4 for drivers with no risk of falling asleep).

“This study might lead us to make various recommendations, including the cultivation of preventative actions, holding trainings for other road users to raise their awareness about the specific problems that lorry drivers face (blind spots, for example), acknowledging the linguistic diversity inherent in drivers’ work within the set of services they are offered, or installing equipment to encourage physical activity near to the parking lots reserved for their use (exercise equipment, health circuit, etc).”

Patricia Delhomme

Research Director at the Université Gustave Eiffel Laboratory of Applied Psychology and Ergonomics

³ An “attention deficit” rating from 1-6 and a “risk of falling asleep” rating from 1 to 4 were established based on several questions in the survey that indicated these variables.

Close-up on the risk of accidents with works crews on the motorway

Lorries make up 14% of motorway traffic, but are involved in more than 50% of accidents involving road workers.⁴ This is due to the fact that most lorries travel in the outside lane, where road crews are more likely to be working. Lorry drivers are well aware of the circumstances that can lead to an accident with a police or road works vehicle. **They know that the riskiest situations are when there is another lorry passing them while they are trying to change lanes to avoid a vehicle on the side of the road** (2.9 on a scale from 1 "not risky" to 5 "very risky"), **when they are behind another lorry and cannot see the vehicle until the lorry ahead of them begins to change lanes** (2.7/5), or when there is simply a patrol vehicle on the side of the road (1.25/5).

Professionals who know they could do more to be healthy...

Due to the nature of their work, which often has them away from home and on the road, many lorry drivers have trouble eating a balanced diet or getting regular exercise. **73% of them therefore carry extra weight (are overweight or obese depending on their BMI, or Body Mass Index)**, and this figure holds true across all nationalities. 1 in 4 lorry drivers (25%) has a normal body mass index. A breakdown by age reveals that those 18-24 are mostly at a normal weight (50%) or are overweight (28%), that those 25-54 are mostly overweight (45%) or at a normal weight (30%), and that those 55-64 are the most likely to be overweight (55%) or obese (33%).

When asked about the quality of their diet, lorry drivers had mixed responses: 33% thought they had a balanced diet, 33% thought their diet was not balanced, and 34% didn't know how to qualify their diet.

Less than one third of lorry drivers (29%) say they make sure to exercise, but this is closely correlated with age and drops off sharply after 25. Thus, 61% of those 18-24 make sure to exercise, while over the age of 25, the average is between 23% and 33% depending on the age bracket. Getting enough exercise has a direct impact on drivers' body mass index: drivers that exercise more were more likely to have a normal body mass index.

An average of 38% of lorry drivers use tobacco, although this figure varies from country to country: 40% of French drivers use tobacco, more than 10 percentage points more than the average for men in France,⁵ compared to 56% of Bulgarians, and 21% of Polish drivers. Those 25-34 were the most likely to use tobacco (49%). Those 18-24 were the least likely (22%). Between 35 and 64, tobacco use decreases with age. Daily smokers consumer an average of 18.8 cigarettes per day (vs 14.1 cigarettes per day among the European population in general).⁶

When asked about their alcohol consumption, only 6 lorry drivers in 10 chose to respond. Despite guarantees that their anonymity would be protected, the potential harm that could come from their answers seemed to hold them back. Nevertheless, among this sample, 8% of respondents reported drinking every day, compared to 15% of French men in general.⁷

Open consumption of psycho-active products remains quite limited. It was only the case for 2% of drivers.

⁴ Road Crew Safety Report – ASFA – 2019

⁵ France Public Health Barometer – 2018

⁶ Eurostat 2017

⁷ France Public Health Barometer – 2018

...and who are looking for help to improve their health and safety

Given what they reported, **many lorry drivers expressed interest in receiving preventative advice or support services.** Among those drivers who were overweight or obese: 36% were interested in getting help to lose weight (27% of French drivers). In terms of **help quitting smoking, 75% of drivers who smoke would like help stopping** (63% of French drivers, which is 8 points more than among the general population).

“Thus unprecedented study revealed many things about lorry drivers’ health, such as higher rates of tobacco use and excess weight than the general population. These results in particular will allow us to develop targeted prevention tools.”

***Loïc Josseran, Public Health Lecturer
Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, Raymond Poincaré de Garches public hospital***

Sleep specialists, nutritionists, relaxation therapists, and trainers come together to offer tips for lorry drivers

In line with its prevention efforts, which aim to collect new information by financing scientific research and sharing the results of these studies with as many people as possible with prevention initiatives and awareness-raising campaigns, **the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation, in partnership with the Carcept Prev Foundation, organized events for lorry drivers at 3 rest areas in the VINCI Autoroutes network on Tuesday 1 June.**



At three rest areas in the VINCI Autoroutes network: Limours-Janvry (A10), Roussillon (A7) and Arc (A8), **representatives of the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation and the Carcept Prev foundations offered free coffee and shared safety information with drivers at these rest areas, which include parking lots reserved for lorries:**

- **Relaxation therapists** held workshops to teach simple mental conditioning techniques for re-centring yourself quickly and improving your focus before getting on the road, and if necessary, while driving.
- **Sleep experts from the Institut national du sommeil et de la vigilance (French National Institute for Sleep and Alertness, or INSV)** spoke with drivers and advised them on good sleep behaviours. They also introduced the Roulez éveillé app, which can help them evaluate how tired they are before they get behind the wheel.
- **Nutritionist-dieticians** discussed options and recipes for eating a healthy and balanced diet and invited transport professionals to attend a nutrition coaching session.
- **Physical trainers** shared exercises for increased awareness and muscle toning to help drivers find ways to be more active and invited transport professionals to attend a training session offered by *Transportez-Vous Bien*, a prevention program for road transportation professionals.
- **Representatives from the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation** shared information about the risk of drowsy driving, inattention behind the wheel, their impact on people's safety, and reviewed some best practices for avoiding these risks.
- **Representatives from the Carcept Prev Foundation** spoke with lorry drivers about the social support systems available to transportation professionals.

“The work of the Carcept Prev Foundation is an extension of the work done by Carcept Prev institutions, especially the “Transportez-Vous Bien” preventative health program. This program is open to all non-executive employees of the transportation division since 2017, with incentives to help them improve their healthy living behaviours, given the specific health risks that they face.”

Benjamin Laurent
Deputy Director of the Carcept Prev Foundation

Study methodology

This study was based on a field survey conducted in March and April 2018 at 4 rest areas in the VINCI Autoroutes network: Agen-Porte d'Aquitaine (A62), Roussillon (A7), Canaver (A8), and Limours-Briis-sous-Forges (A10).

The anonymous survey was written in French and translated into 7 other languages (English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, and Bulgarian). The survey was conducted by professional investigators, by the study's scientific advisers, and by VINCI Autoroutes Foundation employees. Respondents' answers were entered directly into a tablet by the drivers themselves, who were chosen at random from the rest area parking lot.

Sample

- 515 drivers, of which 97.9% were men and 2.1% were women
- 17 different nationalities
 - o 19% from Eastern Europe: Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldavia, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Ukraine
 - o 61.6% from Western Europe: France (50%), Germany, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland
 - o 19.4% from Southern Europe: Spain, Italy, Portugal
- Average age, 45.8 years
- 22 years experience driving lorries
- 90% were full-time drivers
- 9.1 hours of driving per day, on average, and 11.6 hours of work per day, on average
- 588 km driven per day (including 387 km on motorways and 201 on trunk roads).

About the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation for Responsible Driving

Founded in February 2011, the VINCI Autoroutes Foundation for Responsible Driving is a laboratory, observatory and source of information specifically dedicated to changing driver behaviour.

Primarily focused on improving road safety, it aims to promote responsible road behaviour and, in 2018, it expanded its sphere of action to include environmental and educational measures ("responsible behaviour").

Its work includes:

- innovative scholarly research into certain areas of risky driver behaviour, into protecting the environment, and into the use of education and reading as a means to improve driver behaviour.
- carrying out information and awareness campaigns.
- funding initiatives by non-profit associations and citizen initiatives aimed at encouraging responsible driving.

<http://fondation.vinci-autoroutes.com> and Twitter account: @FondationVA, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram

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About the Carcept Prev Foundation

The Carcept Prev Foundation was created by the transportation social protection organizations Carcept Prévoyance, IPRIAC and the Carcept Prev Mutual Organization, which came together under the Carcept Prev brand as part of the Klesia Social Protection Group. The goal of the Carcept Prev Foundation is to promote and support health prevention activities and intergenerational solidarity among transportation companies when drivers become disabled or can no longer work. It also supports the most vulnerable among our fellow citizens with solidarity actions. Klesia programs: retirement supplements, planning for the future, health, dependency, savings, personal services, and social action. Some key figures: 3.6 million people covered, 300,000 client companies, €10.9 billion in revenue and 3,200 employees. For more information about www.carcept-prev.fr and @CarceptPrev, www.klesia.fr and @klesia

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