

APRIL 1-15, 2020

# UPDATED: ANALYSIS OF DRIVER FEEDBACK ABOUT COVID-19



*April 1-15, 2020*  
*WorkHound*

# ABOUT WORKHOUND

## Mission

WorkHound launched to address high turnover in industries with distributed workforces. In these industries, workers get little time with managers.

This leads to sparse communication, distrust, and diminished productivity. These issues are precisely what WorkHound sought to tackle.



## How it works

WorkHound enables workers to share real-time, anonymous feedback with their companies. Workers speak their mind when asked open-ended questions like: *How are you doing right now? And why do you feel that way?* This open-ended feedback fills in management blindspots and reduces the bias of traditional surveys. Feedback is aggregated to a dashboard that can help managers filter feedback by topic to take action on issues.





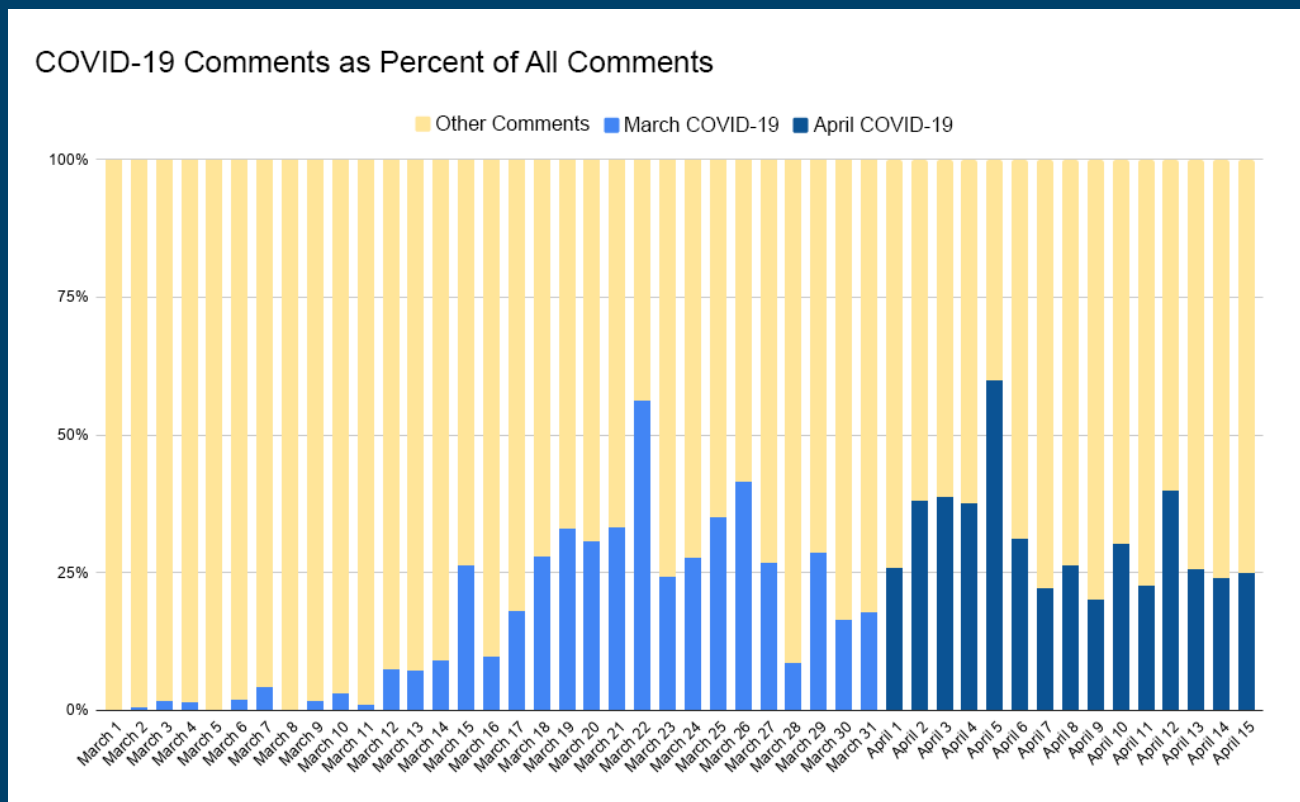
# COVID-19 FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

*Summary: April 1-15, 2020*

In a continued effort to share transparent information about driver feedback, our team of experts has dissected this analysis from WorkHound driver communications. Professional truck drivers share open-ended feedback weekly, and often, feedback reflects curiosity or confusion about the impact of global or industry news.

Drivers began commenting about COVID-19 in February of 2020. At the beginning of March less than 1% of all comments submitted to the platform were regarding the virus. In March, there was a drastic increase in the amount of feedback on COVID-19, resulting in 14% of the 3,435 comments received throughout the month referencing the pandemic.

In the first half of April, the proportion of comments focused on the virus represented more than 27% of the 1,791 comments received through 4/15/20. This analysis examines those 485 units of driver feedback related to COVID-19, and is WorkHound's third analysis on this topic.



# SUMMARY FINDINGS

The mid-April quantity of comments concerning COVID-19 has continued to increase significantly. Compared to the second half of March, the number of COVID-19 comments increased by 31%. In just the first 15 days of the month, the number of COVID-19 comments sent to WorkHound has already exceeded the quantity received in the full month of March.

The most prominent themes within these comments have also shifted. While Sanitation and Planning were the standout themes throughout March, Pay and Morale have grown to become the top themes so far in April.

- Over one-fourth of commenters feel that they deserve additional compensation for working through hazardous conditions, or request other means of financial support from their companies such as deferral for truck payments or tuition.
- Comments concerning the theme of morale increased significantly (21% - up from 12% in March), with over one-fifth of commenters sharing general feelings of positivity or negativity relating to the pandemic. An overwhelming majority of these commenters expressed a sense of optimism and perseverance, while a smaller portion conveyed frustration and negativity.
- Commenters requesting personal protective equipment (PPE) and other additional sanitation measures represented a little less than one-fifth of the feedback. The frequency of this topic has decreased by 8% from March - the sharpest decline of any theme this month - indicating that these concerns are being adequately addressed by local and statewide organizations, and expectations that drivers have of their companies are largely being met.
- The percentage of comments about Planning dropped notably in the first weeks of April to 16%, indicating that drivers may be more satisfied with their companies' response and communication around policy changes.

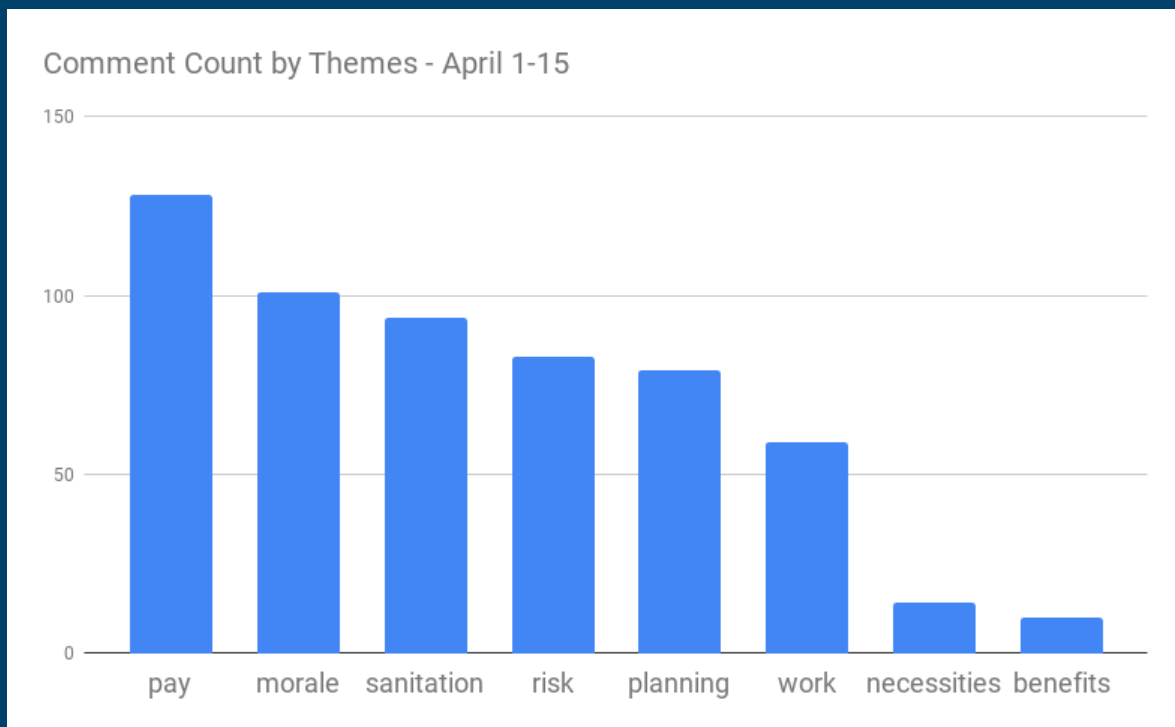




# SUMMARY FINDINGS

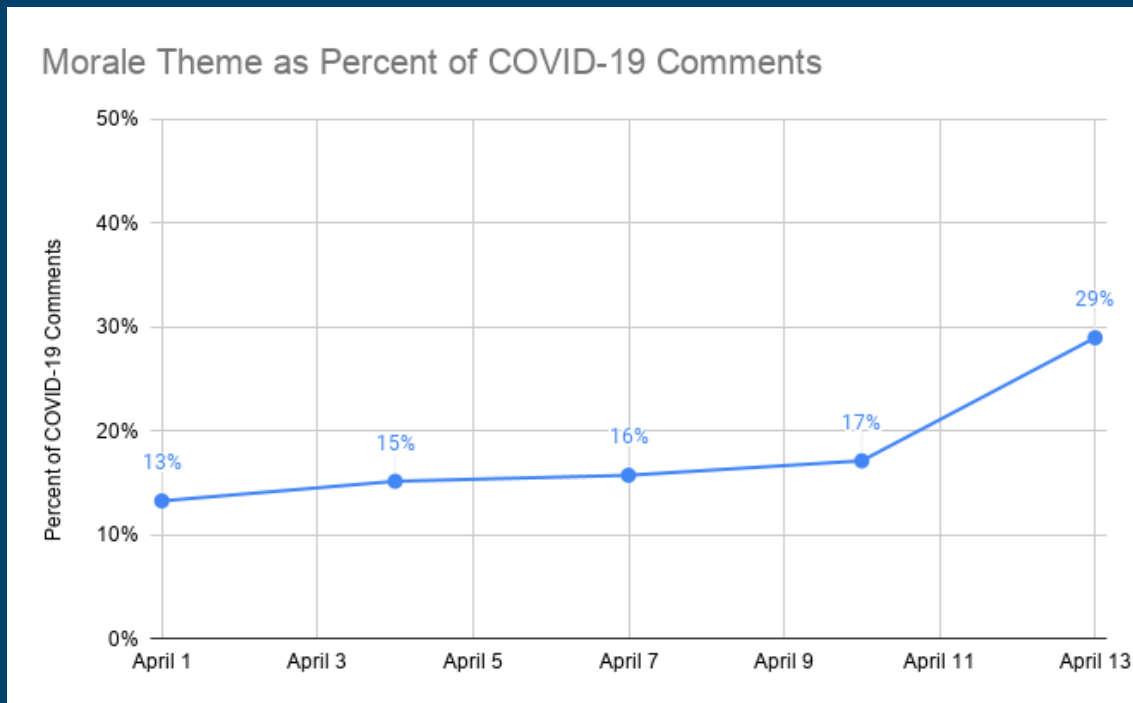
A trend identified in our previous report, in which Pay was noted as the fastest growing concern for commenters, has reached a peak. Pay has become the most prevalent theme, as of mid-April.

This theme has grown tremendously since the beginning of March, when Pay was mentioned in just 6% of COVID-19 comments, and was as high as 35% of comments in the second week of April. These comments have become slightly more diverse, as drivers not only request additional pay, but also changes in policy around truck and tuition payment scheduling.



# SUMMARY FINDINGS

The number of comments within the theme of Morale has grown most significantly by mid-April, totaling 21% of all COVID-19 comments. This theme was further split into Optimism (78%) and Pessimism (22%), revealing that a bulk of these commenters express general feelings of perseverance, comradery and gratitude.



As comments around Morale increased in the first half of April, the two themes that were most prevalent in March - Planning and Sanitation - decreased substantially. Drivers' initial questions about how the company would respond to the pandemic, as well as drivers' requests for PPE and sanitation supplies have largely been addressed, which is reflected in this data. Many of the April comments within the theme of Planning are focused on positive and negative experiences with communication from management, dealing with wait times at customers, and questions on COVID-19 testing.

*NOTE: It is important to remember that some comments fall into multiple categories, thus the categories below will not equal 100%.*





# BREAKDOWN

## PAY - 26% (↑6%)

*“I wish our bosses would see these dark days and not only say “good work,” but put at least more cent per mile in such days... “Good job” is not enough when things in stores are now expensive. I wish you look into that... It's a very hard decision to make to be on the road and nowhere to buy food, always eating Mcdonald sandwiches, driving tired and weak because the body needs good food and the food is so expensive to buy... That's a lot of money to spend when we have families home which are starving.”*

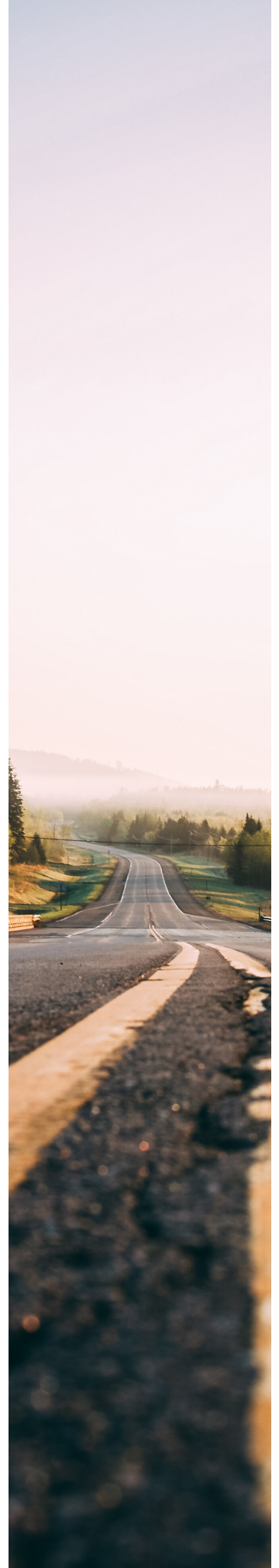
The subject of "Pay" has continued to rise in April, ultimately becoming the most talked about theme. Drivers are increasingly voicing their frustrations around not receiving “hazard” pay while engaging in the high-risk job of driving and interacting with customers during this pandemic. Truck drivers are considered an essential part of our supply chain and economy, but workers overwhelmingly feel that their compensation does not accurately reflect their essential status.

*“Is it possible to stop our lease payments for a couple weeks or a month so we can get through this troubling time?”*

However, not all comments on Pay were simply requesting more money. There was an emerging trend around deferrals for truck payments and tuition owed to companies.

*“Just listened to the announcement on the pay change through the pandemic and once again I am so grateful... Thank you for once again taking care of me and my family...”*

Additionally, a small portion of commenters thanked their companies for any actions being taken to support them financially, such as bonuses and reimbursements for additional cleaning supplies.



# MORALE - 21% (↑9%)

Morale as a percentage of COVID-19 comments grew at the greatest rate of all themes from March to the first half of April. This could indicate that drivers have found that the actions taken by their companies in response to earlier specific requests for PPE, necessities, and other planning concerns to be adequate.

## Optimism - 78% of Morale Comments

*"I just want to take time to thank you all for doing your best right now to take care of your employees! I know these are uneasy times, but I know you all are trying your best to help us all survive. Thank you for your efforts."*

A substantial portion of drivers acknowledge COVID-19 and the challenges it represents, and then just get right back to work. These drivers feel a sense of duty to keep their trucks moving and the significance that has for the country. They also express gratitude to the people working to support them and keep them rolling throughout the pandemic.

## Pessimism - 22% of Morale Comments

*"...they have done a fine job to protect office workers, but nothing with the drivers, and they say the drivers can be replaced if they get sick, but the office people are more important. We should all be equal."*

While it is less prevalent than Optimism, a number of commenters expressed a generally negative outlook about the implications of the virus on their lives.

During this stressful time it is critical that our essential workers feel valued and respected. This can be a challenge for carriers, as more precautionary measures put in place by companies and customers have the potential to isolate and alienate drivers.

Many shared that they feel "all alone" out on the road without support. It is key for leadership to take a proactive approach to clearly communicate support channels and changes in policy to avoid potential misunderstandings. It is important to convey a sense of unity and empathy for those that remain on the frontlines.





## SANITATION - 19% (↓8%)

*“No face mask or gloves for the drivers... Only one tiny bottle to wash our hands was given, and only if you went through an inspection lane at a terminal. How much is our lives and our families worth? Very disturbing.”*

Many drivers want to know that their companies are taking extra precautions to ensure that their equipment is safe and sanitized. The public has been panic buying cleaning supplies and drivers are feeling the effects. Items like hand sanitizer are hard to find.

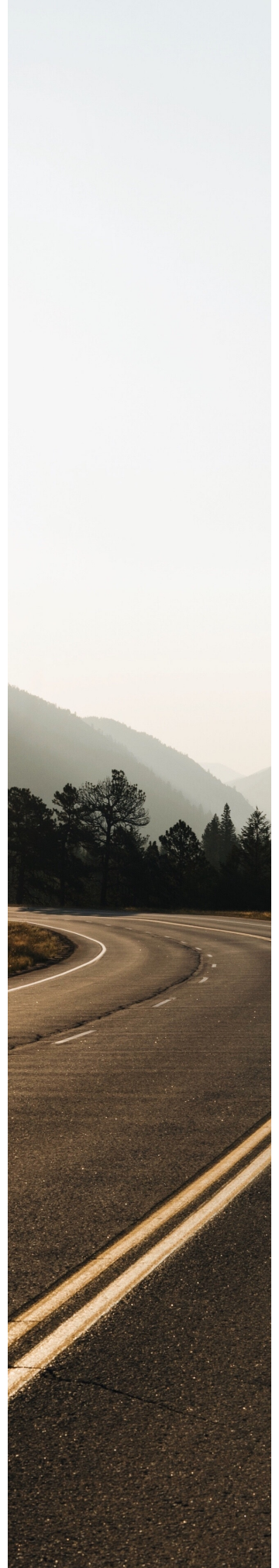
Even the most basic precautions like frequently washing one's hands become impossible if soap is not available in terminal bathrooms.

Drivers expect their companies to be able to provide basic necessities. Without them, drivers not only feel unsafe, but also disrespected.

*“I really appreciate the extra effort the company has made to help the drivers stay safe during this virus outbreak. Supplies like disinfectant and rubber gloves really help... Keep up the good work.”*

While we saw a spike in comments about Sanitation in the second week of April, this subject has been trending down when compared to March.

Many companies have finally been able to source these products and distribute them to their workforce.



## RISK - 17% (↓2%)

*“Worried about going into the hotspots where covid19 is rampant. Don't need to take anything home to my family and to top it off I have sleep apnea and I've smoked for the last 27 yrs, so I'm at a greater risk.”*

These drivers are highly aware of the risks associated with COVID-19 and want to know that their companies are too. They express concerns about going into "red zones" where cases of the virus are growing. They also know the health risks are greater for older people and those with existing illnesses like diabetes. They have concerns for themselves, their families, and their fellow drivers that are part of the high risk population.

The proportion of commenters preoccupied with the overall risks associated with working during the pandemic has decreased slightly in April, yet still remains significant at 17% of all feedback.

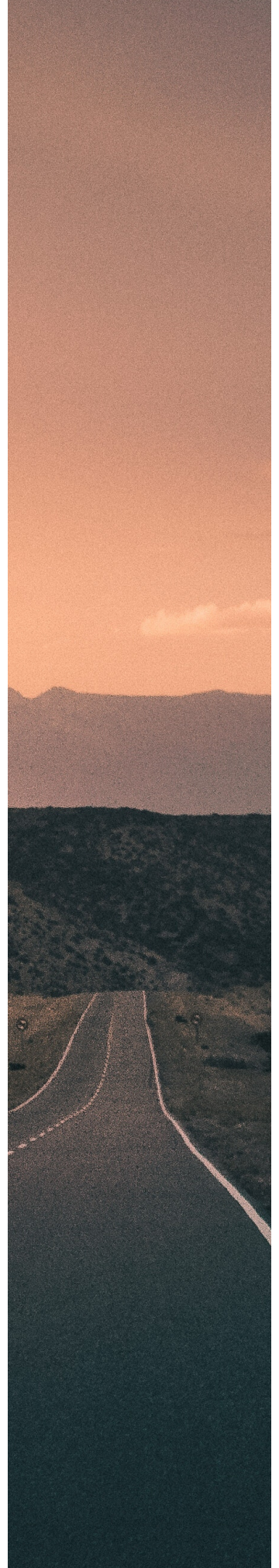
## PLANNING - 16% (↓5%)

*“I was wondering if there is any way to be tested for the virus before I go home. I'm not sick, but my wife has an underlying condition and if she gets the virus it would kill her, and I couldn't live with that.”*

Many commenters just want to know that there are plans in place to address this pandemic. These drivers express frustrations that their company has not been forthcoming with information, or isn't taking effective measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

April comments regarding planning continued to focus on things like how to handle customers and facilities being shut down, and what to do if someone they work with gets sick.

Drivers are increasingly asking about plans for COVID-19 testing. Some drivers express hopes that their companies will source and supply testing when it becomes available, so that they don't unknowingly take the virus home to their families.





# WORK - 12%

*"Was great till the covid-19 set in, and now no work "*

This theme represents a fear of low freight and inability to get loads.

These drivers have concerns about their family and the impact of potentially missing a paycheck. They understand that the situation is uncertain and want some assurance they will still have a job in the future as they see carriers furlough office staff and fellow drivers.

## NECESSITIES - 3% (↓4%)

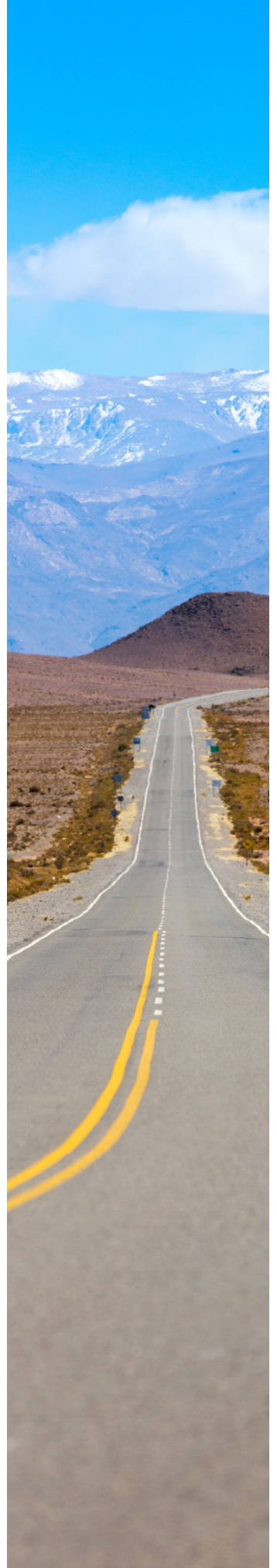
*"Truck stop restaurants are being closed. This puts a large strain on drivers' health and wellbeing if we can not eat, we can not operate efficiently."*

Without a doubt, this is a stressful time for everyone.

But in addition to dealing with COVID-19, many drivers have voiced concerns about their inability to get basic necessities. They express food insecurities as many restaurants have closed their doors. Some even state that they are having difficulty accessing safe drinking water.

These drivers are looking to their companies for guidance on how to meet their needs while ensuring the rest of America stays fed.

As roadside food service establishments and others have adapted to accommodate truckers, the conversation around necessities has decreased notably in early April.



## BENEFITS - 2% (↓4%)

*"Giving every driver a paid week off during a crisis shows your true colors."*

With the threat of potential illness so pervasive, the minds of many drivers turn to the benefits their companies offer. These drivers express concerns that their health insurance is inadequate and are uncertain about whether loved ones are covered. They resent not having enough sick days and feel forced to work when unwell. When companies proactively offer additional benefits like paid time off to maintain health and care for sick loved ones, drivers express gratitude.

*"I am upset that our company used the excuse of Covid-19 as a reason to stop the company match on our 401k"*

Some companies have decided to suspend benefits like 401k match contributions to cut costs during the pandemic. This has left some drivers feeling as though their companies don't value them.

## DENIAL - 0% (↓4%)

*"The media has blown it all way out of proportion. There have been more people die of the regular flu than this one. We had the bird flu, and the swine flu just to name two viruses that were the pandemics to end all."*

Initially comprising about 4% of COVID-19 comments by mid-March, comments expressing Denial that the virus is a serious threat have dropped to zero in mid-April. Like the rest of the population, drivers have now had more time and exposure to trusted educational resources about Coronavirus. Additionally, the likelihood of an individual knowing, or knowing of, someone who has been directly affected by COVID-19 has increased.

This analysis displays insights communicated by professional truck drivers regarding the COVID-19 crisis.

For further information or to gain an understanding of the top concerns of your company's drivers, please contact WorkHound at [info@workhound.com](mailto:info@workhound.com)

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