

APRIL 1-30, 2020

# UPDATED: ANALYSIS OF DRIVER FEEDBACK ABOUT COVID-19



*April 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.



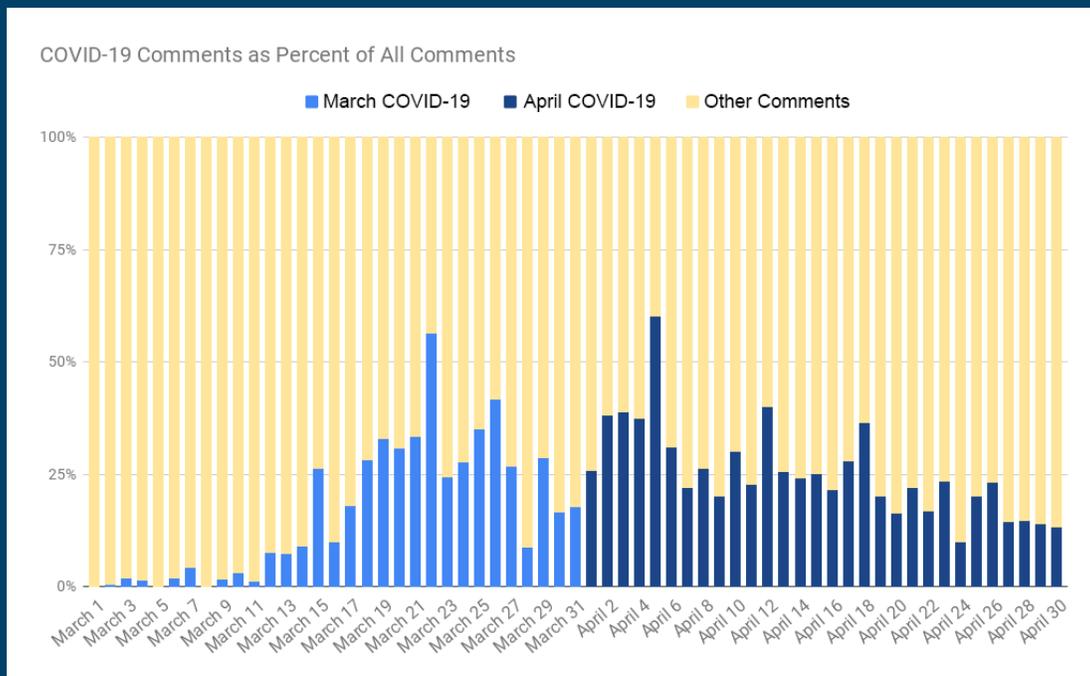
# COVID-19 FEEDBACK ANALYSIS

Summary: April 1-30, 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.

Throughout April, WorkHound received 3,297 comments from professional truck drivers. 750 of these comments explicitly referenced Coronavirus, representing nearly 23% of all comments. This is an increase of almost 9% compared to March data, while total comment volume remained stable.

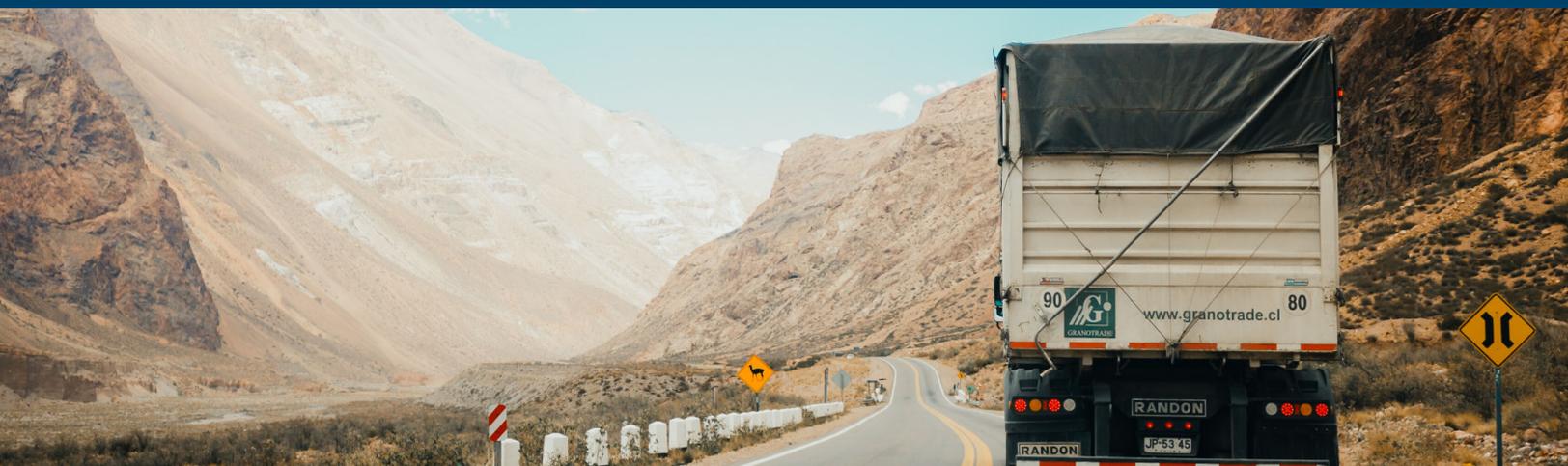
Compared to the first half of April, the percentage of comments about COVID-19 between April 16-30 was down almost 10 percent. This segment was still significant, though, representing nearly 18% of total comments in these two weeks. The decrease in COVID-19 comments in late April resulted in higher apparent volatility of theme prevalence from day-to-day, so it's important to keep in mind the larger trends over time.



# SUMMARY FINDINGS

In the Mid-April WorkHound Driver Feedback report, there was a notable shift in the most prominent themes from Planning and Sanitation to Pay and Morale. The full April data solidifies these themes as the main topics covered by drivers when talking about Coronavirus. The Planning theme became more prevalent in late April, as did the theme of Work.

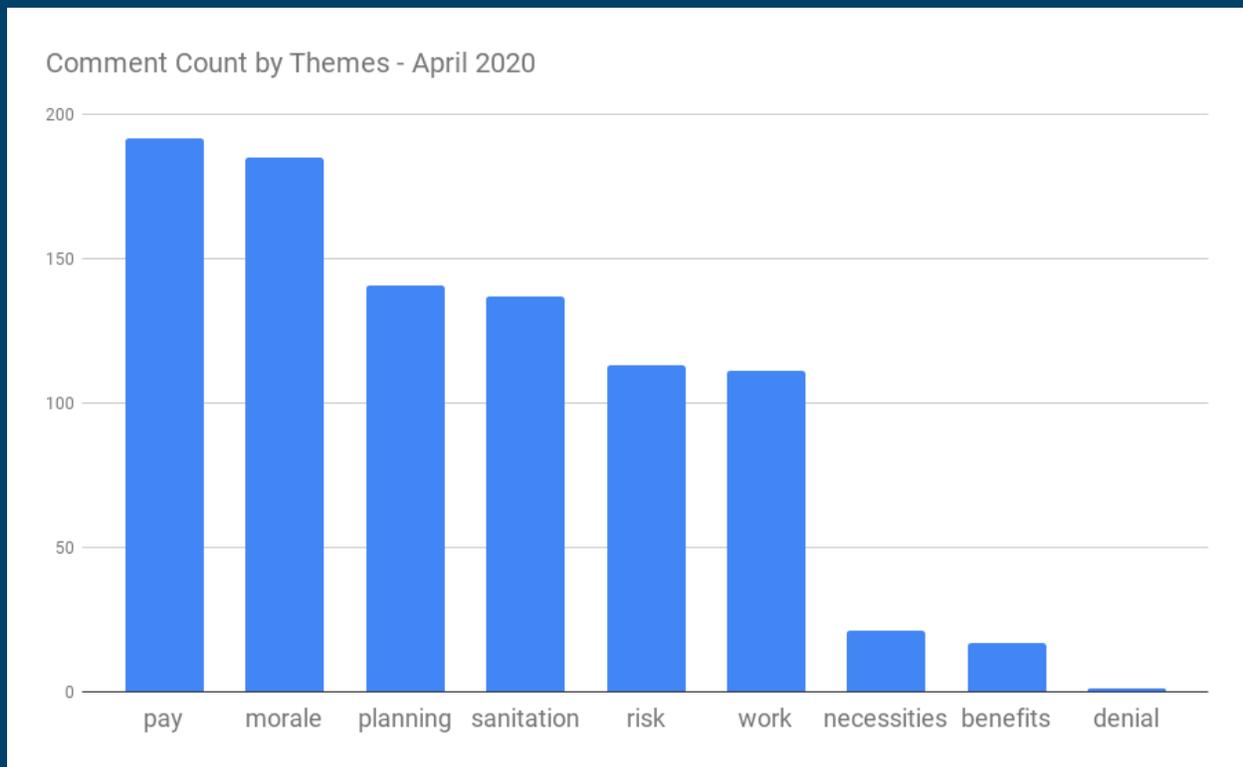
- Over one-fourth of commenters feel that they deserve additional compensation for working through hazardous conditions, or request other means of financial support from their companies such as resources for government-sponsored aid or deferral for truck payments.
- Comments concerning the theme of Morale continued to increase throughout the month of April (25% - up from 12% in March), with nearly one-quarter of commenters sharing general feelings of positivity or negativity relating to the pandemic. Over 80% of these commenters expressed a sense of optimism and perseverance, while a smaller portion conveyed frustration and negativity.
- The percentage of comments about Planning, which appeared to be dwindling in early April, has since experienced a resurgence. By the month's end, these comments represented nearly one-fifth of all COVID-19 comments. This could indicate that drivers are not satisfied that company planning is comprehensive enough to address the ever-evolving situation.
- Comments concerning the theme of Work have been on the rise, resulting in 15% off all COVID-19 comments received in April. In the final two weeks of the month, this segment reached 20% of comments. The impact of the soft freight market is increasingly being felt by drivers. The softer freight market has resulted in fewer miles for drivers. With much of the industry still using mileage pay to compensate drivers, feedback shows drivers are feeling concerned about the volume of available work.



# SUMMARY FINDINGS

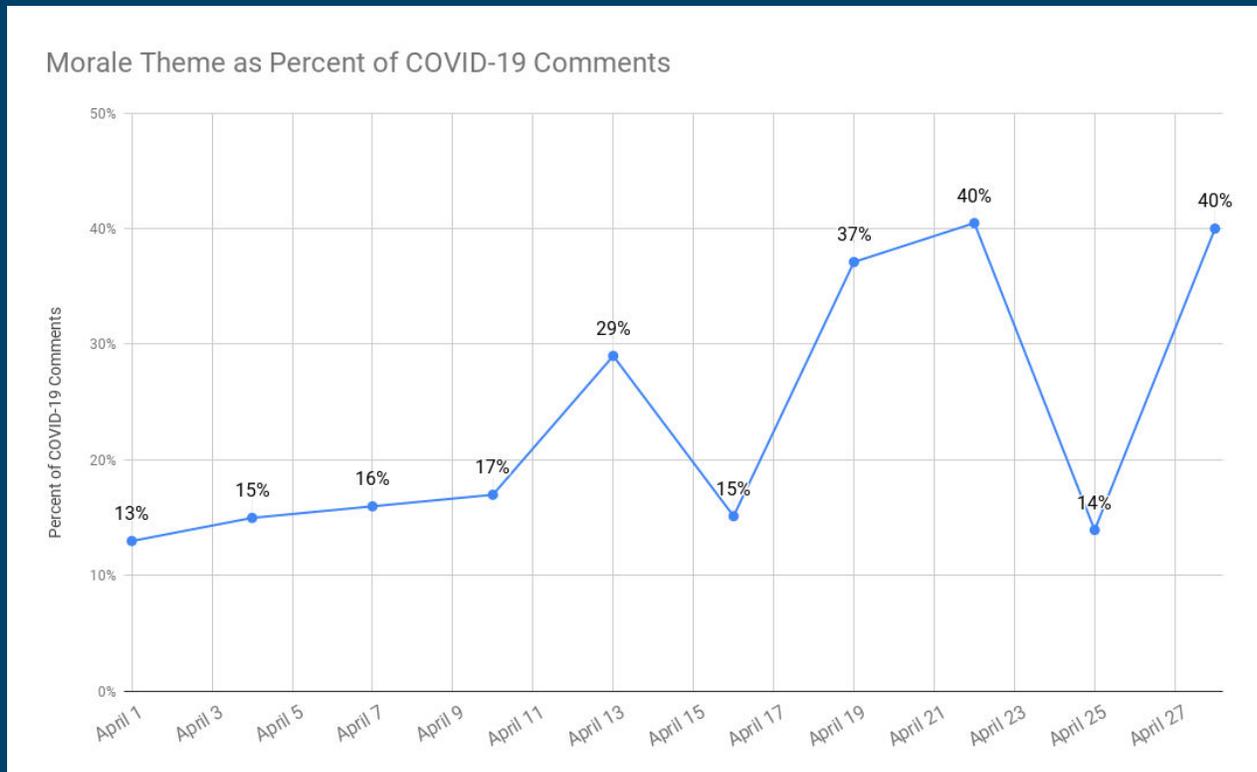
A trend first identified in March, in which Pay was noted as the fastest growing concern for commenters, has proved to be ongoing throughout April. Pay remains the most prevalent theme, representing 26% of all COVID-19 comments.

This theme has grown tremendously since the beginning of March, when Pay was mentioned in just 6% of COVID-19 comments. 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, as well as resources for obtaining government-sponsored aid.



# SUMMARY FINDINGS

The number of comments within the theme of Morale has grown most significantly since WorkHound began tracking comment data on the virus in March - ultimately totaling 25% of all COVID-19 comments in April. This theme was further split into Optimism (81%) and Pessimism (19%), revealing that a bulk of these commenters express general feelings of perseverance, comradery and gratitude.



## NOTES:

- *It is important to remember that some comments fall into multiple categories, thus the categories below will not equal 100%*
- *Theme percentages represent full April data, while percent change is compared to the previous report using data from April 1-15*



# BREAKDOWN

## PAY - 26%

*“Working during lockdown as an essential employee..and not receiving hazardous pay is a joke...thought y'all cared about employee safety?? Hmmm..sure hope the hero stimulate package gets approved..because we can't count on you...”*

The subject of Pay rose significantly from March to April, and has maintained its position as the most talked about theme throughout April, at 26% of all COVID-19 comments. While there is some volatility in the percentage of comments in late April, the overall share of the conversation has remained stable.

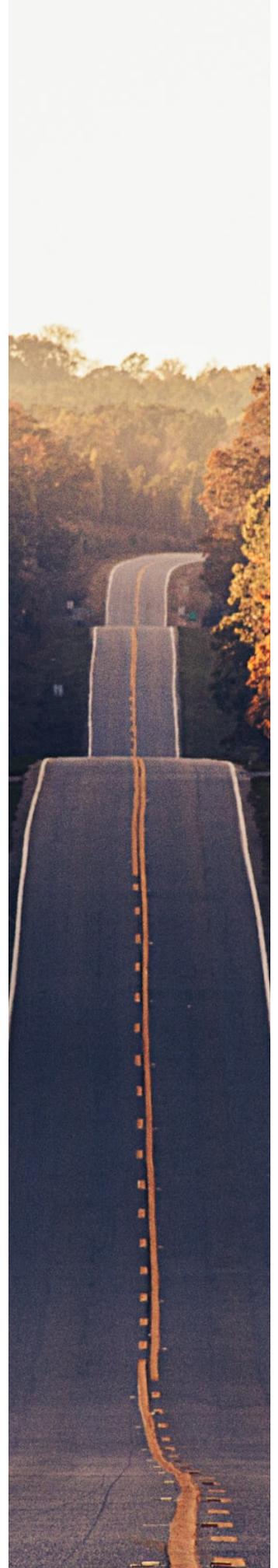
Drivers are most notably voicing their frustrations around not receiving “hazard” pay while engaging in the high-risk job of driving and interacting with customers during this pandemic. Truck drivers are considered an essential part of our supply chain and economy, but workers overwhelmingly feel that their compensation does not accurately reflect their essential status.

*“With this covid going on everyone is getting something but the drivers on lease purchase we get bad loads and still have to pay full on lease payment and we don't have enough to pay our bills and feed our family... At least they can defer payments on the truck till it is over and then start again...”*

However, not all comments on Pay were simply requesting more money. An emerging trend identified in our last report around deferrals for truck payments and tuition owed to companies has continued.

*“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 - 25% (↑4%)

The theme of Morale has trended notably upward throughout April. While only representing about 12% of COVID-19 comments in March, that figure has more than doubled throughout April. Comments counted with the Morale theme have increasingly included other themes outlined in this report, as drivers are expressing general optimism or pessimism about topics around Planning, Pay and Sanitation. In this sense, it serves as an overall sentiment indicator. We take a deeper look at these sentiments below.

## Optimism - 81% of Morale Comments

*“We always hear Thank You to all of our Drivers for all that we do. I’d like to say Thank You to all of our Management, DM’s, Dispatchers, Janitors, Shop Maintenance for keeping us rolling through these difficult times. We appreciate you as well. “*

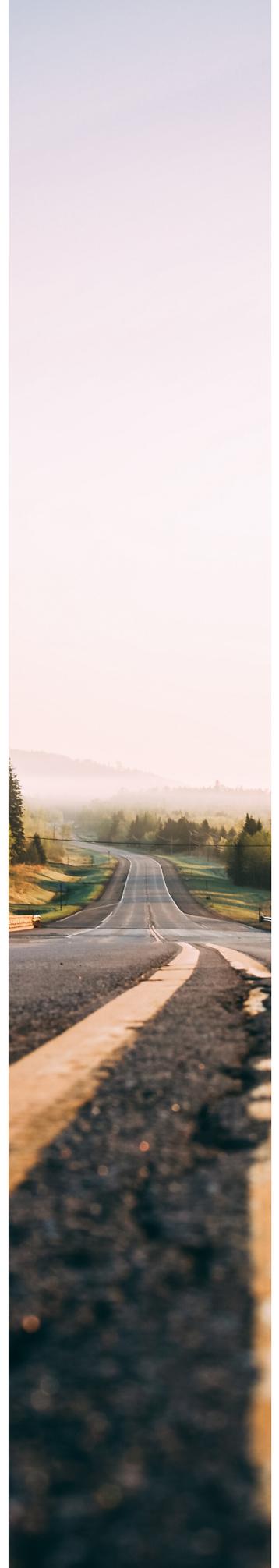
Within the theme of Morale, a general sense of optimism was the most prevalent. Many drivers express gratitude for the efforts of the office and support staff that are working hard to keep them on the road. These commenters often acknowledge the difficult conditions they are facing due to the pandemic, but also recognize that their teammates, both on and off the road, have their backs. Some also feel that working throughout the pandemic is a source of pride.

## Pessimism - 19% 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.**



# PLANNING - 19% (↑3%)

*“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.”*

Drivers have consistently been vocal about the theme of Planning. They want to know that there are plans in place to address the effects of this pandemic.

Even when companies establish a plan and communicate it to workers, the benefits can be short-lived. Drivers are expecting their companies to evolve their plans as quickly as the situation is evolving.

*“Covid 19 pandemic is not taken seriously at the terminal. Only 35-40% of people wear masks & ppe. Some 40-45% do not understand social distancing, and not respect that. Most of the people do not know how to dispose ppe correctly.”*

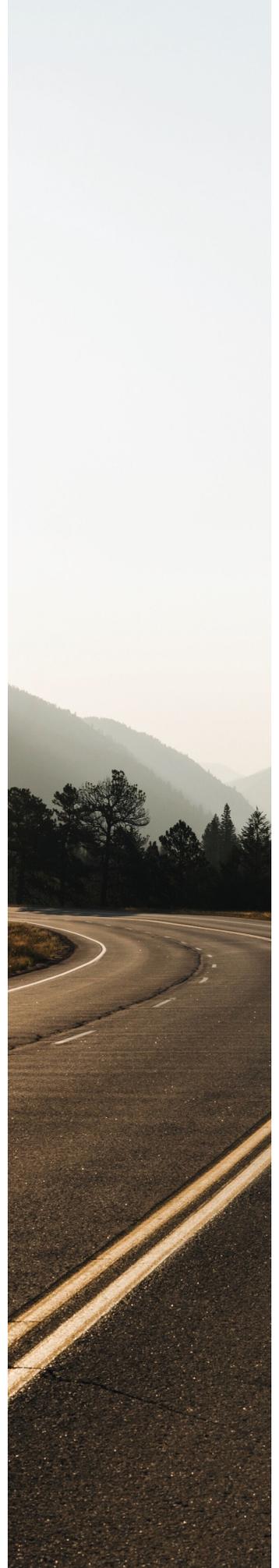
April comments regarding Planning largely focused on things like testing for the virus and transparent communication between drivers and management, as well as communication between management and customers.

Many drivers voiced their concerns about handling long wait times, changing policies, and inconsistent precautionary protocols across customers. Drivers are looking to management to represent their best interests when working with customers.

*“When should your company tell the other employees someone has the Coronavirus so they can get tested to not continue to spread the virus?”*

In regards to testing, some drivers have continued to 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.

This reflects a larger national conversation beyond the transportation industry.



# SANITATION - 18% (↓1%)

*“Why don’t we have PPE like masks, gloves and hand sanitizer... we don’t seem essential... more like expendable employees that no one seems to care about while we continue to make loads happen... putting our lives and the lives of our loved ones at risk”*

Many drivers want to know that their companies are taking extra precautions to ensure that their equipment is safe and sanitized. Items like disinfectant supplies and 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.

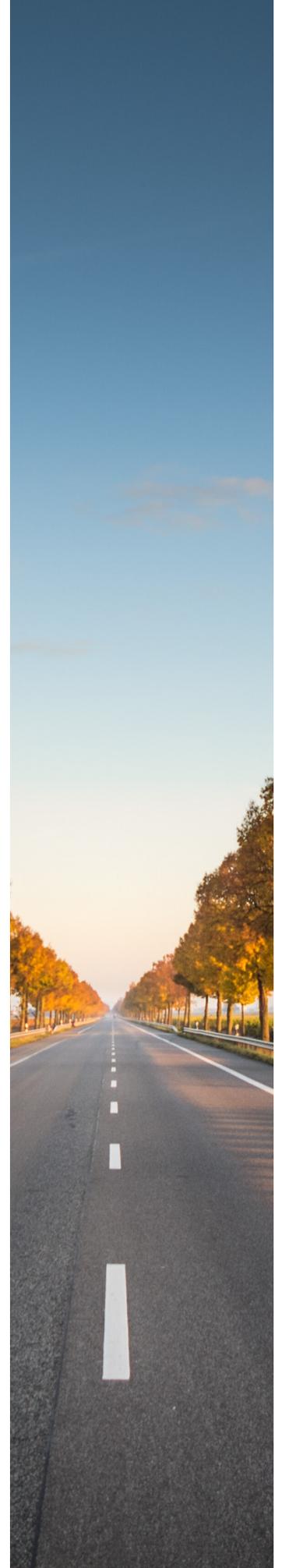
*“I really appreciate the extra effort the company has made to help the drivers stay safe during this virus outbreak. Supplies like disinfectant and rubber gloves really help... Keep up the good work.”*

Comments about Sanitation reached a peak in the second week of April, this subject has been trending down throughout the remainder of April.

Many companies have finally been able to source these products and distribute them to their workforce. In fact, over 30% of the Sanitation comments in the last two weeks of April expressed gratitude for receiving needed sanitation supplies.

Additionally, comments received during the second half of April requesting PPE still made up 48% of comments in the Sanitation theme.

As even more companies are able to provide their workers with proper PPE and sanitation supplies, we expect to see this theme decline moving into May.



## RISK - 15%

(↓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 continue to be highly aware of risks associated with COVID-19 and express concerns about going into areas of community spread. They also know the health risks are greater for older people and those with pre-existing conditions. 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 risks associated with working during the pandemic has decreased throughout in April, yet remains significant at 15% of all feedback.

## WORK - 15%

(↑3%)

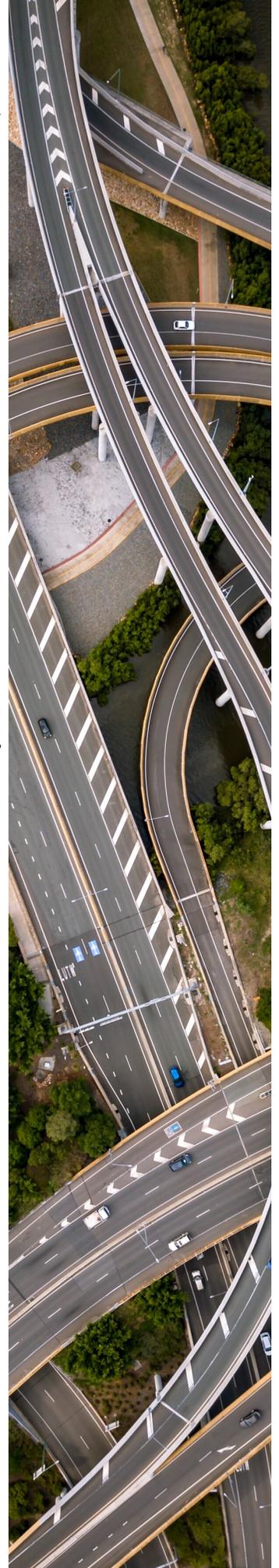
*“No surprises to anyone freight is down tremendously. This downturn is having a deep impact on owner operator finances and some simply won't be able to make it. I hope the economy starts back up soon . My trucks are down at minimum of 40% with miles.”*

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. As the pandemic continues to impact the global supply chain, the percentage of comments concerning drivers' ability to maintain enough work has increased.

*“Although reluctant to pull a dry van, I am doing so because it's work...”*

Carriers are scrambling to find freight to offer drivers, even if it is a freight type or lane that is unfamiliar to the driver. Some companies have taken creative steps to ensure equity in distributing work, like offering additional paid time off.

There is also a renewed focus on customer service from some carriers, who emphasize with their drivers the importance of making appointment times and professionalism to keep customers happy. With excess capacity in the market, unsatisfied customers could easily shift their work to another carrier.



## NECESSITIES - 3%

*“Right now many places we deliver to will not allow us to use the restrooms inside where we are able to wash our hands and some places may provide a porta-john which is the easiest place to contract a virus... if we can't use a real bathroom where we can wash our hands... I do not even want to deliver somewhere after driving hours to get there do not have access to a bathroom.”*

Some drivers have voiced concerns about their inability to get basic necessities. They initially expressed food insecurities as many restaurants have closed their doors. Some even stated that they were having difficulty accessing safe drinking water. These drivers look 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 throughout April. While corporations and communities have come up with many solutions to address these issues, drivers are still looking to their carriers to help ensure that they have access to nutritious, affordable meals.

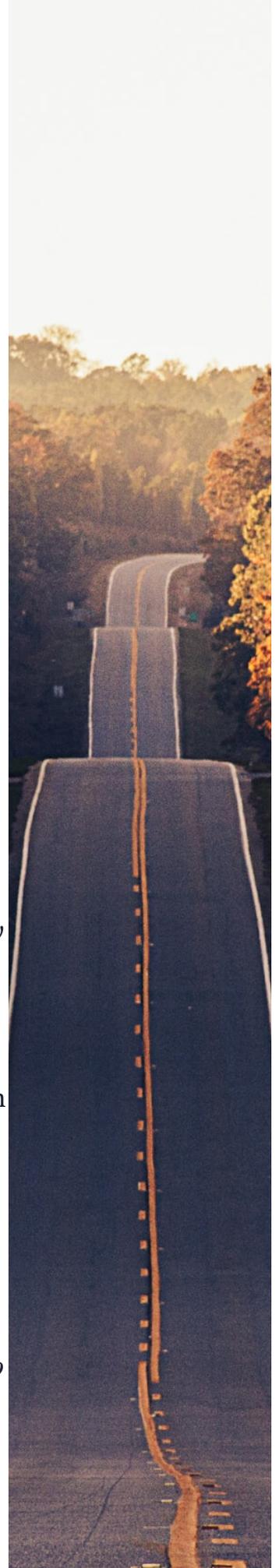
## BENEFITS - 2% (↓4%)

*“Thanks for the temporary pay raise given the current Covid-19 pandemic. Maybe it would also be a great time to incentivize the drivers who have stayed out during this crisis with a free week of paid vacation at the end of this... Just a thought, it would be nice to be able to take a few days off after this without fear of losing vacation time or a paycheck.”*

Drivers are concerned that their health insurance is too expensive or inadequate and are uncertain about the coverage of loved ones. Lack of sick days and pressure to work results in resentment. When companies proactively offer additional benefits like paid time off to maintain health and care for sick loved ones, drivers express gratitude.

*“What happened to spousal coverage on medical? I have to say I'm a bit disappointed. The job posting indeed even says spousal coverage May 2020. I know times are difficult during covid19 but a lot of trucking companies in our area never dropped our wives. I love what I do and who I do it for and will wait for it.”*

Some companies have suspended benefits like matching 401K contributions to cut costs during the pandemic. This has left drivers feeling as though their companies don't value them.



# DENIAL - 0.1%

*“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.”*

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*“...I think it has to do more with profit margins during this time when everyone is freaking out over a virus that doesn't kill you unless you have a weakened immune system....”*

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.

WorkHound will continue to monitor data for any resurgence of this theme. However, due to the consistent low volume of comments, this theme will be excluded from future analysis.

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

Analysis by Mark Eilers, Senior Customer Success Manager, and Corey Banks, Customer Success Manager.



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or to gain an  
understanding of the  
top concerns of your  
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