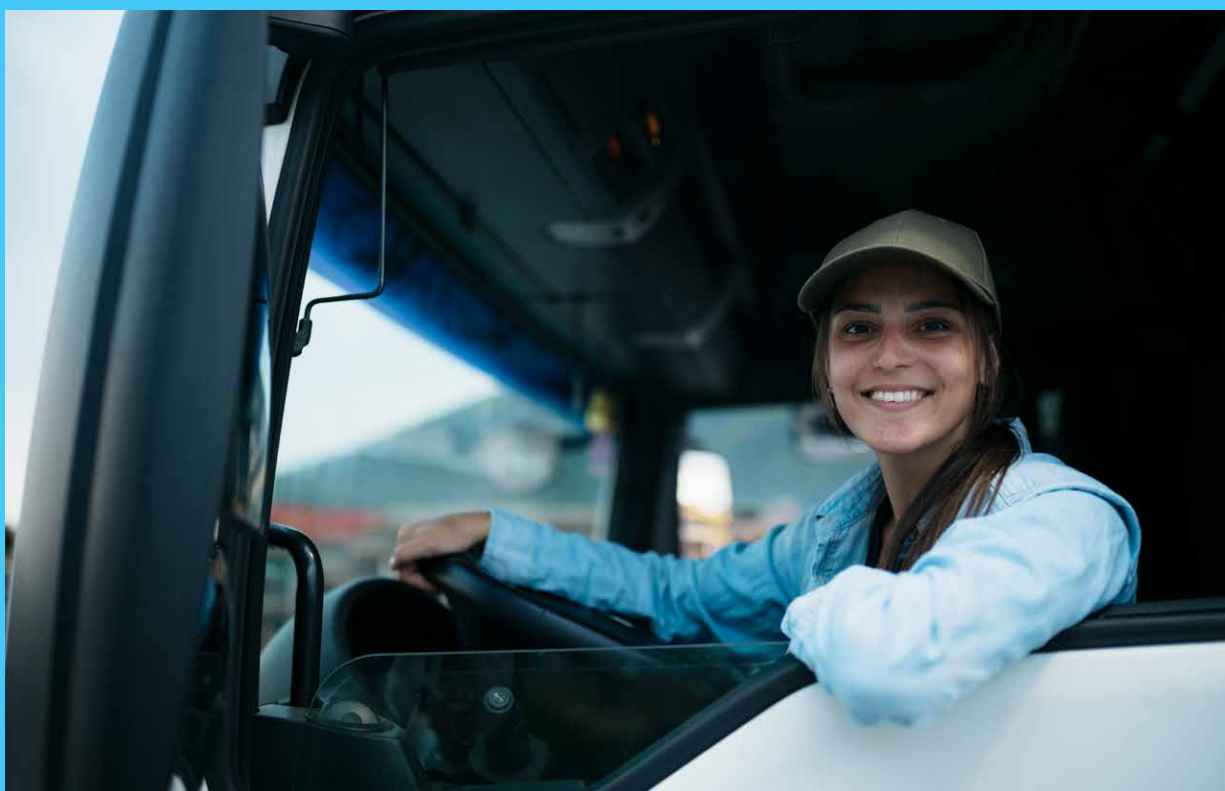


Charter for Women in Road Transport

Recommendations for employers to attract
and retain women in road transport



1. Our vision

Mobility is an essential service provided by road transport, urban transport and logistics industries to the economy and society. Without the effective movement of people and goods, nothing moves: mobility systems and supply chains underperform or break down, economies fall short of their potential, and societies become more fragmented.

Well-trained and highly motivated professionals in driving, logistics, technical and related roles – men and women alike – are the lifeblood of efficient mobility and supply chains, and the backbone of a fair, efficient market and a well-functioning society.

Yet, for more than two decades, a structural and ever-growing problem has been affecting road transport and logistics companies worldwide: the shortage of professional drivers.

The average age of professional drivers continues to rise as fewer young people enter the profession, though the picture varies sharply by market. In Europe, only 5% of truck drivers are under 25, compared with 26% in Uzbekistan and 13% in Mexico – a reminder that “young workforce” and “labour shortage” do not always move together.

At the same time, women remain significantly underrepresented in truck driving in every market surveyed: from just 1% of drivers in China and Uzbekistan up to 9% in Australia – the highest share recorded anywhere – with Europe at 4%, against roughly 23% of the broader EU transport sector workforce.

Passenger transport tells a more encouraging story: in the bus and coach sector, women account for about 15% of drivers in Germany and 17% in Spain, nearly four times the share of truck drivers in Europe.

The implication is consistent across markets: trucking is significantly under-recruiting from a cohort that accounts for roughly half the working-age population. Australia shows that higher participation by women is achievable within the sector. The question for other countries is not whether women can be recruited into trucking, as the data indicates they can, but whether the conditions and recruitment effort to do so are in place.¹



2.9M

**unfilled truck driver roles worldwide
(11% of the workforce)**

13%

**shortage rate in Europe - roughly
502,000 unfilled positions**

2.86M

**truck drivers globally projected to
reach retirement age by 2030**

4%

share of women truck drivers in Europe²

This must change

The IRU Charter for Women in Road Transport recognises that diversity extends far beyond gender alone. However, given the persistently low representation of women in the driving profession, this Charter focuses on supporting women of all ages and backgrounds as they enter, remain and advance in roles as bus, coach, truck, van and taxi drivers.

By equipping employers with tools and best practices to create truly equal opportunities for recruitment, retention and career development, IRU aims to help close current workforce gaps and build a more dynamic, inclusive industry. In doing so, the industry will also open up these pathways to young people of all genders, fostering long-term growth and resilience across the sector.

The Charter is aimed at employers worldwide – companies of all sizes, from large multinationals to small businesses

¹ IRU Global Driver Shortage Report 2025

² IRU Global Driver Shortage Report 2025. Survey covered Australia (9%), Brazil (4%), Europe (4%), Mexico (2%), China (1%) and Uzbekistan (1%)

– and invites them to embrace its principles and apply its recommendations in ways that best suit their individual circumstances. The aim is to significantly increase the representation of women by evolving company culture, management practices and policies, and by setting clear short-, medium- and long-term targets. These targets should begin with achievable milestones, with the ultimate aspiration of reaching gender parity, based on the following main pillars:

- Putting in place a supportive and inclusive company strategy and a dedicated plan to adapt management and policy in terms of recruitment, training, opportunities, benefits, anti-harassment, and conflict management to increase the number of women, including as professional drivers.
- Formulating longer-term targets and specific short-term objectives to attract women and retain them in the company, including by adapting policies, behaviours and incentives.
- For large companies, appointing a staff member to take responsibility for implementing the policy and lead the process of change at company level.
- Carrying out regular reviews of the actions undertaken and measures implemented and taking corrective measures to ensure that both short-term objectives and long-term goals are achieved.

By doing so, it is expected – as all available studies have shown – that mixed teams with at least 30% of the underrepresented gender will significantly improve a company's problem-solving competence and innovative strength, while raising its productivity and return on investment.

In particular, for small and medium-sized and micro-companies, which constitute the large majority of companies in the sector, it is recommended to make use of and, should the need arise, adapt the dedicated checklist of actions and measures to ensure women occupy their central role and place in the company, including as professional drivers.

It is also recommended that the principles and recommendations of this Charter are further developed into:

- Training materials and modules on proactive, supportive and inclusive diversity management, for company managers, to become an essential part of obtaining the company managers' certificate of professional competence.
- Training materials and a module on respecting and encouraging diversity among fellow drivers.



2. Recommended toolkit of actions for small, medium and large companies

While the Charter aims to drive prosperity and chart a brighter future for road transport, it must be recognised that much of the sector consists of small operators. To ensure that the Charter's proposals deliver real impact, they must be tailored according to the size and capacity of all companies.

Accordingly, the following guidance for employers is organised into two tiers:

Quick wins

Practical, low-cost actions scaled to the needs of SMEs

Taking it further

Initiatives that may require additional time or investment

Employers in road and urban public transport should embed gender equality as a core principle in their policies and practices. This means developing targeted initiatives to address sector-specific gender challenges. For example, passenger transport companies should ensure equal access to customer-facing and managerial roles, while freight operators should focus on increasing women's participation in managerial, technical, operational, and logistics positions.



Employers of large fleets should establish and uphold a robust gender equality policy, championed at the very highest level of leadership, to foster an inclusive and attractive work environment for women. This policy should go beyond mere compliance by actively challenging gender stereotypes and embedding equality at every level of the organisation. It should clearly communicate the company's commitment to gender equality and outline concrete measures to promote it in practice by:

- Articulating the company's commitment to gender equality, emphasising the encouragement and valuing of equal opportunities and fostering a work culture free from gender stereotypes.
- Ensuring equality for all employees, with specific measures aimed at increasing women's representation in both passenger and freight transport.
- Detailing the company's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, general harassment, and sexism, along with practical steps to prevent and address such issues.
- Setting a robust plan for disseminating the policy at all levels to ensure all employees understand and support the company's gender equality objectives is highly recommended. National and sectoral organisations can provide support to SMEs by developing and sharing standardised policy templates, sample documents, and implementation guides ([template examples from Canada](#)).
- Establishing a systematic process and tools to regularly track, assess, and report on the Charter's effectiveness. This will be accomplished by incorporating data from IRU's annual driver shortage survey, which will provide a quantitative analysis of the number of members that have implemented the Charter over a two-to-three-year period. Tools and processes must be in place to observe behaviour effectively.

The employer should select the strategy's elements, in alignment with the company's gender policy.



Principle 1

Recruit neutrally

The Charter aims to create a recruitment approach that naturally attracts and considers qualified women alongside all candidates. Through descriptive texts about the role and the workplace, companies present themselves and the type of person they are seeking. Studies show that subtle biases in wording can influence who applies, so we work to use descriptions that appeal broadly rather than inadvertently discourage anyone from applying.

Employers should invite everyone involved in hiring to embrace a recruitment process that is free from bias and discrimination. This means reviewing each stage – from drafting job postings and marketing them to interviewing candidates – to remove any criteria or phrasing tied to pregnancy, maternity, age, marital status, appearance, or other personal traits that have no bearing on job performance.

Quick wins: low-cost actions for every company

- ☐ Adopt **fair, inclusive recruitment and selection practices** that remove barriers for women at every stage. This includes crafting gender-neutral job descriptions and conducting interviews that focus on skills rather than stereotypes. Anonymising CVs can provide a positive push to proactively reach out to qualified women candidates, minimising unconscious biases related to gender, ethnicity or age and creating a more equitable hiring process.
- ☐ Job advertisements should explicitly mention any **available flexible work arrangements** (e.g. adjustable work hours, remote work opportunities, part-time roles), supportive work-life balance measures, and parental leave policies that can improve the attractiveness of the profession to women.
- ☐ When equally qualified candidates apply, organisations are encouraged to give **preference to women** in order to correct structural imbalances in traditionally male-dominated areas of road transport. To reinforce this commitment and provide mutual support, it is recommended to onboard at least two women simultaneously, a practice demonstrated by some IRU members to enhance their sense of belonging and improve long-term retention. Such an approach, sometimes referred to as affirmative action, remains firmly merit-based. It is employed only when candidates' qualifications and experience are demonstrably equivalent and is best implemented in the final stage of recruitment to address deep-rooted barriers and foster a more diverse workforce.
- ☐ Actively **showcase women as role models** by featuring their achievements in company communications, events or speaker series, and mentorship programmes.
- ☐ Organise, where appropriate, **events to present company jobs to young women and girls**, and also engage parents, as they often influence their children's professional choices.
- ☐ Establish **dedicated social and networking events for women** – such as informal “women in transport networking” or after-work meetups – can significantly boost women's retention.

Taking it further: for companies ready to invest more

- ☐ Offer **regular, targeted training for all managers, recruiters and colleagues** – especially those who will work closely with new hires from minority groups, covering gender bias awareness, proactive diversity management, respectful communication and inclusive hiring practices.
- ☐ Put in place **return-to-work and mentorship programmes** to help women re-enter the industry and advance their careers smoothly. Additionally, by including an optional gender question in standard exit-survey processes, employers can analyse departures through a gender lens. This helps identify any disparities and inform targeted improvements without singling out women for separate interviews.
- ☐ Run outreach campaigns **promoting the industry's positive impact** on society.



Principle 2

Empower career development

Employers recognise that ongoing training and reskilling are vital to fostering gender balance and enabling women's career progression throughout the road transport sector. Equal access to learning opportunities – whether when new infrastructure is introduced, technology transforms roles, or employees take career breaks – helps retain skilled women and opens pathways to leadership.

Quick wins: low-cost actions for every company

- ☐ Ensure that **women returning from maternity leave or other breaks retain their accrued status** and easily access refresher courses to update their skills, when needed.
- ☐ Anchor re-entry to existing training obligations where they exist, aligning its timing with the employee's return from leave so it doubles as their re-entry refresher, rather than commissioning a separate programme. Where no such scheme applies, hold a short, informal skills check-in instead, covering any changes to vehicles, routes, regulations, or procedures during the absence.

Taking it further: for companies ready to invest more

- ☐ Ensure that all workers – regardless of gender, age or background – **have the same opportunities** to enter, validate and advance through vocational and technical training where needed.
- ☐ Include a **mandatory gender-awareness and unconscious-bias segment** in every training programme, with dedicated sessions for senior leaders. These modules should challenge stereotypes, spur discussions, and build an inclusive culture. Every training should address gender-specific needs where necessary to ensure that both genders have equal access to learning.
- ☐ When possible, offer **paid apprenticeships, on-the-job training and “positive-action” skill-building** workshops specifically aimed at women technicians.
- ☐ Establish **mentor/buddy networks** to reinforce formal training, share career guidance and expand professional connections.
- ☐ Offer **targeted leadership and mentorship initiatives** – such as intensive leadership bootcamps, peer-mentoring circles and senior-sponsor partnerships – that equip women with the strategic skills, organisational insights and professional networks needed to progress into higher-level, better-paid roles, while addressing structural barriers to advancement.
- ☐ Maintain **gender-balanced representation on training committees**.
- ☐ Share **successful case studies and/or courses** to inspire wider adoption across the industry.



Principle 3

Align pay

Pay women and men equally based on their role, experience and skills rather than their gender, consistent with the principles of the International Labour Organization Equal Remuneration Convention. Support this with transparent remuneration policies and procedures.

Quick wins: low-cost actions for every company

- ☐ Employers should **not discriminate based on gender** when it comes to remuneration, salary increases and bonuses. Therefore, employers should:
 - ☐ Reassess their remuneration policy and include anti-discrimination and equality aspects in the assessment.
 - ☐ Assess and compare the value of work on objective criteria such as educational, professional qualifications and required training, the skills and responsibilities inherent to the position, the nature and complexity of the work, and externally sourced benchmark data for comparable roles, undertaken and the nature of tasks involved to prevent or identify and tackle possible pay discrimination based on gender-biased pay scales.
- ☐ Employers should **reduce the impact of maternity and paternity leave** on the variable part of the salary.
- ☐ Employers could **reduce the impact of the attendance/presence** criterion in the calculation of the annual or performance-based “bonuses”/variable parts of salaries.
- ☐ Employers should **make available to employees the rules and criteria** (e.g. national laws, collective agreements, and sectoral or company rules) **used to determine the variable components of remuneration**, such as payments in kind and bonuses. In case of discrimination, all these measures improve the prospects for successful employees’ claims. This transparency would help companies avoid discriminating in pay.
- ☐ Employers should **enable employees to obtain information on the pay levels** applicable to their category of workers (e.g. professions), for the same work or work of equal value, broken down by gender.
- ☐ Employers should make available **means of redress/complaint** to employees.
- ☐ Employers could inform employees **how to challenge a situation** if they fear that there has been discrimination (e.g. responsible person/department).
- ☐ Employers should disclose **salary ranges in job postings or upon request**, so pay isn’t set through opaque individual negotiation.

Taking it further: for companies ready to invest more

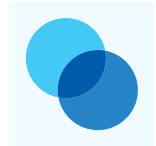
- ☐ Embed **equal-pay and non-discrimination principles** in all people-management training.
 - ☐ This could be done by including modules on the legal and business case for pay equity, and on how implicit bias can skew recruitment, performance reviews and promotion decisions.
 - ☐ Ensure HR professionals, recruiters and line managers complete this training regularly (e.g. annually), with refresher sessions whenever policies or pay frameworks are updated.
- ☐ Introduce **structured, merit-based decision frameworks**, defining clear, role-specific selection and evaluation criteria (skills, experience, competencies) in advance of any recruitment, promotion or salary-review exercise.
- ☐ Use **standardised scorecards**, blinding CV screening and/or automated recommendation tools to generate “shortlists” or pay proposals strictly on those criteria can help minimise ad hoc manager judgments.



- ☐ Audit decisions periodically (e.g. quarterly) to check that outcomes align with the pre-set criteria and to identify any unexplained disparities.
- ☐ Complement training with targeted **awareness campaigns**.
- ☐ Run **periodic internal communications** (posters, intranet features, lunch-and-learn sessions) to keep equal-pay goals and inclusive leadership top of mind.
- ☐ Share **anonymised case studies** showing how structured processes have mitigated bias and improved diversity outcomes.

Principle 4

Work-life balance



Achieving a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal life is essential to attract and retain women in the road transport sector – and benefits all employees. Employers are invited to accommodate family needs and support long-term career engagement by offering flexible working arrangements.

Quick wins: low-cost actions for every company

- ☐ Frame **childcare and family support as a universal benefit**, not limited to parents of very young children, recognising that caregiving needs evolve over time and may include care for older children or other dependents.
- ☐ **Involve employees in planning flexible schedules and workload adjustments** to address their personal needs, ensuring their availability to every employee and across all roles, where possible.

Taking it further: for companies ready to invest more

- ☐ Where feasible, provide **on-site or nearby childcare facilities**, or offer subsidies or reimbursements for childcare expenses. These benefits should be available to all employees – regardless of gender – to promote shared caregiving responsibilities.
- ☐ Put in place **shift-scheduling options**, job-sharing schemes, part-time roles, and reduced-hour contracts to accommodate individual preferences.
- ☐ Offer **inclusive parental-leave packages**, including maternity, paternity, shared parental, and carers' leave, and negotiating additional family-related provisions as appropriate to your national context is highly recommended. Flexible options, such as phased returns or extended unpaid leave, can be valuable additions.
- ☐ Establish **formal career-break or re-entry programmes** to support employees returning to work after extended leave.
- ☐ Leverage **social-dialogue forums** to advocate for work-life balance improvements and align them with customer expectations.



Principle 5

Address conflicts

A culture of respect is key to everyone's health, morale and effectiveness on the job. Inappropriate behaviour, sexual harassment, and sexist behaviour undermine individual dignity, lower engagement, and lead to higher absenteeism and turnover. Even in the strongest teams, disagreements can arise – what matters most is how they are handled.

Employers are strongly recommended to invite all employees to treat one another with kindness and professionalism, making it clear that any form of discrimination or bullying will not be tolerated. Open dialogue, regular briefings and training on respectful conduct, and a zero-tolerance attitude towards inappropriate behaviour experienced by others will help ensure that everyone can thrive in a supportive work environment.

This culture of respect must be backed by a transparent, well-communicated process for raising concerns – especially around harassment or bullying – so that every issue is taken seriously and addressed promptly. Left unaddressed, workplace conflicts erode team cohesion, decrease productivity, and can ultimately drive valued employees away, damaging both morale and an organisation's reputation.

Employers should therefore foster an atmosphere where people feel safe to voice problems, confident that they will be heard impartially, and assured that fair solutions will be sought for the benefit of individuals and the company alike.

Quick wins: low-cost actions for every company

- ☐ Require people in leadership roles to always **model respectful behaviour**.
- ☐ Provide **multiple reporting options** (e.g. hotline, email, trusted HR contacts) where possible. Employers should respond swiftly and fairly to incidents, investigating every report with urgency and impartiality.
- ☐ Commit to **confidentiality and protection against retaliation** for anyone who comes forward. Creating safe spaces for employees to share experiences builds a supportive community and reinforces an inclusive culture.

Taking it further: for companies ready to invest more

- ☐ Adopt a **clear, enforceable anti-harassment policy**.
- ☐ **Define unacceptable conduct** (e.g. unwanted advances, demeaning jokes, sexist remarks) in concrete terms.
- ☐ **Explain that certain behaviours may violate** national or regional laws.
- ☐ Affirm **zero tolerance**: all incidents will be reported, investigated and, where warranted, disciplined.
- ☐ Detail **progressive disciplinary steps** – ranging from warnings to termination – to ensure consistency and fairness.
- ☐ **Communicate the policy widely** (staff handbooks, intranet, posters) and, where appropriate, share its existence with customers and partners to demonstrate your commitment.
- ☐ **Train managers to recognise, address, and resolve complaints promptly and impartially** to prevent inappropriate behaviour, sexual harassment and sexist behaviour.
- ☐ Offer **support services** – such as counselling or legal advice – to anyone affected.
- ☐ In light of an incident, employers should **adopt interim measures** (e.g. temporary reassignments) to ensure the safety and comfort of those involved, as well as follow through with appropriate corrective actions and communicate outcomes to relevant parties.



- ❑ **Collect data on reported incidents, investigation timelines and resolutions.** It is good practice to publicise aggregate results and improvements to maintain transparency and trust, as well as regularly assess the effectiveness of policies and procedures through surveys, focus groups or audits.
- ❑ **Hold training sessions or workshops** for all employees on identifying and preventing harassment and discrimination that include specific modules on bystander intervention and unconscious bias.
- ❑ **Codify in writing** that any form of sexual harassment or sexist behaviour will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. This can be done by embedding it in the company's values, performance evaluations, and/or leadership objectives.

Principle 6

Champion safe, secure, and dignified working environments, ensuring access to appropriate parking, sanitation and rest facilities



Rest facilities at stops and terminal stations

Despite women comprising over 50 % of public transport users, they remain under-represented – and often underserved – in urban transport workforces. Gender stereotypes, non-inclusive recruitment practices, ill-fitting equipment, and a lack of private facilities and safety measures create significant barriers to women entering, staying and advancing in the sector.

Employers and urban transport authorities are therefore urged to adopt proactive, gender-responsive policies across recruitment, workplace design, training and facilities. This includes ensuring all job materials and outreach campaigns feature women in diverse roles; providing ergonomically designed uniforms, tools and vehicles; guaranteeing secure, private rest and sanitation areas on route and at depots; implementing clear anti-harassment protocols and safety audits; and offering flexible work arrangements alongside mentoring and career-development programmes.

Safe and secure truck parking areas

Across major transport corridors, truly convenient, gender-sensitive rest facilities at terminal stops and stations, together with secure parking areas, remain painfully scarce. This is not a regional problem: surveys from Europe, North America, and beyond consistently find that most women drivers report having faced unsafe situations at overnight parking locations.

Rest and parking facilities for road transport frequently lack appropriate amenities, such as toilets, showers, adequate lighting, clean restrooms, and basic rest and dining options. Too often, gender-specific needs – especially those of women drivers – are overlooked, creating additional safety and inclusivity barriers that persist across different regulatory and cultural contexts.

Employers are strongly encouraged to recognise and respond to these gender-specific needs, whether by providing such facilities themselves or by inviting relevant external service providers – municipalities, parking operators, and similar stakeholders – to offer them. This is not merely a matter of convenience: it is a contribution to road safety and long-term workforce stability. Improving fatigue-fighting, high-quality rest facilities is therefore essential wherever in the world a driver operates.

Quick wins: low-cost actions for every company

- ☐ Supply **personal protective equipment (PPE)** in a wide range of sizes and designs that fit all body types, ensuring safety and comfort for everyone.
- ☐ Have **sanitary facilities** in buildings that support standards for privacy and security, considering men and women's perspectives.
- ☐ Maintain **clear reporting channels** for any incident and respond swiftly with support and corrective action.

Rest facilities at stops and terminal stations

- ☐ Use **imagery, language and role models** in all communications that showcase women in driving, technical and leadership roles.

Safe and secure truck parking areas

- ☐ Mark and **reserve a cluster of bays** closest to the security office and restrooms for women drivers.

Taking it further: for companies ready to invest more

- ☐ **Conduct health and safety risk assessments from a gender perspective**, analysing the results and adopting the necessary measures.
- ☐ Organise **mixed-gender teams** for high-risk night shifts or areas to improve security and occupational safety.
- ☐ Pilot reserved, **well-lit parking zones** close to terminals for women (including pregnant employees) working late or overnight.
- ☐ Map routes and depots to **pinpoint violence hotspots**; survey women staff for firsthand risk reports.
- ☐ Provide all employees – especially women – with **security training** and raise awareness internally and with the public of staff safety concerns.
- ☐ Extend **medical check-ups and occupational health services** to account for gender differences in health behaviours, symptom progression and treatment responses.
- ☐ Adopt **risk assessments** for pregnant women and suitable alternative duties during pregnancy.
- ☐ Ensure women drivers (taxis, buses, trucks) have **secure access points**, communication devices, and emergency protocols, particularly during late hours. This should go beyond standard H&S measures.
- ☐ Maintain clear **reporting channels** for any incident and respond swiftly with support and corrective action.

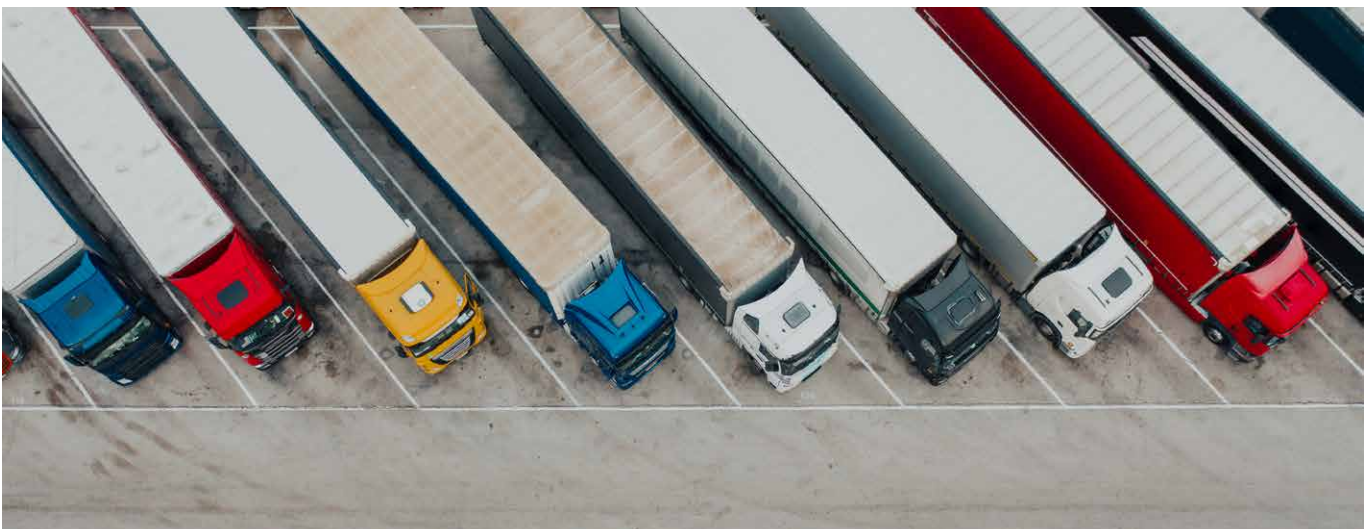
Rest facilities at stops and terminal stations

- ☐ Provide **properly fitted PPE and vehicle controls** that have been assessed via body mapping studies.
- ☐ Publish **clear, confidential reporting channels** for gender-based harassment, plus rapid-response investigation teams.
- ☐ **Train all staff**, including managers, on violence prevention and de-escalation techniques; install panic buttons/ radios in vehicles.



Safe and secure truck parking areas

- ☐ Ensure that all walkways between trucks, restrooms, dining and security posts are **brightly lit, and covered by cameras**.
- ☐ Provide **lockable, women-only restroom blocks** stocked with sanitary supplies, mirrors, seating, and charging points.
- ☐ Create **separate “quiet rooms” or lounges** where drivers can rest, nap, or de-stress, with gender-neutral and women-only options.
- ☐ Use **visible signage** (“Women’s Safe Zone”) and ensure real-time monitoring (e.g. app alerts when spots free up).
- ☐ Station **trained security staff** (men and women) on patrol, with regular foot-and-vehicle rounds of all lots.
- ☐ Make a **“late-shift safety buddy”** available to drivers who wish for company when walking to their vehicle after hours for safety reasons.
- ☐ Place QR code stickers in women’s restrooms and lounges inviting **anonymous suggestions** on safety and amenities.
- ☐ Integrate **feedback channels** with your HR or facilities team for rapid follow-up and visible “you said/we did” updates.
- ☐ Host periodic **focus groups** with women driver associations to co-design improvements before rolling them out widely.
- ☐ Sponsor **mentoring or “ride-along” days** where prospective women drivers visit well-equipped parking facilities.
- ☐ **Require all carrier partners to use only safe and secure truck parking areas** that meet your gender-inclusive benchmarks or provide higher pay/pass-through fees when they do.
- ☐ Run **referral bonuses** when existing women drivers recommend a colleague who signs with you, tied to their use of these facilities.
- ☐ Ensure scheduling staff are **aware of women drivers’ preferences** and always route them to equipped safe and secure truck parking areas.
- ☐ Incorporate **secure parking area safety training** into drivers’ onboarding curriculum.



3. Definitions

- a. “Accrued status”: the seniority, pay level, job title, leave entitlements and other employment-related benefits an employee has built up prior to a period of maternity, parental or other approved leave. Employers should treat such leave as continuous employment for the purposes of these entitlements, ensuring the employee returns at the same status, not a reduced one, as before the leave began.
- b. “Direct discrimination”: where one person has been treated, or would be treated in a comparable situation, less favourably on grounds of sex than another.
- c. “Employer”: for the purposes of this Charter, it refers to any legal entity or organisation operating within the road transport sector – whether public or private – including: freight carriers; scheduled and unscheduled passenger services; urban and regional public transport operators; taxi and ride-hailing companies; logistics providers; and enterprises of all sizes (from small and medium-sized enterprises to large corporations).
- d. “Gender-sensitive”: an approach that acknowledges and addresses the different needs, roles and responsibilities of women and men, striving to eliminate gender-based inequalities. It involves considering how decisions and actions may affect individuals differently based on their gender and taking steps to promote equality and address imbalances.
- e. “Harassment”: where unwanted conduct related to the sex of a person occurs with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- f. “Indirect discrimination”: where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of one sex at a particular disadvantage compared with persons of the other sex, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.
- g. “Pay”: the ordinary basic or minimum wage or salary and any other consideration, whether in cash or in kind, which the worker receives directly or indirectly, in respect of their employment from their employer.³
- h. “Sexual harassment”: where any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, particularly when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.
- i. “Transparency”: all aspects of a company’s pay policy are clear and accessible to every employee: published salary bands for each role; documented criteria (e.g. experience, performance, skills) explaining placement within those bands; centrally available policy materials; regular briefings to explain pay decisions; objective, standardised evaluation processes; and periodic gender-pay audits – with summaries of findings and corrective actions – so that anyone can understand exactly how pay is determined and adjusted.
- j. “Unconscious bias”: refers to the automatic, unintentional stereotypes and attitudes held about people or groups that operate below one’s conscious awareness. These biases can influence perceptions, decisions and actions in subtle ways, often reinforcing existing gender inequalities even when one believes they are being fair.⁴
- k. “Work of equal value”: work that is determined to be of equal value in accordance with the non-discriminatory and objective gender-neutral criteria referred to in Article 4(4).⁵

3 Directive 2006/54/EC

4 EU Commission, Competence Centre on Behavioural Insights: [Behavioural insights for inclusion and equality](#)

5 Directive (EU) 2023/970

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